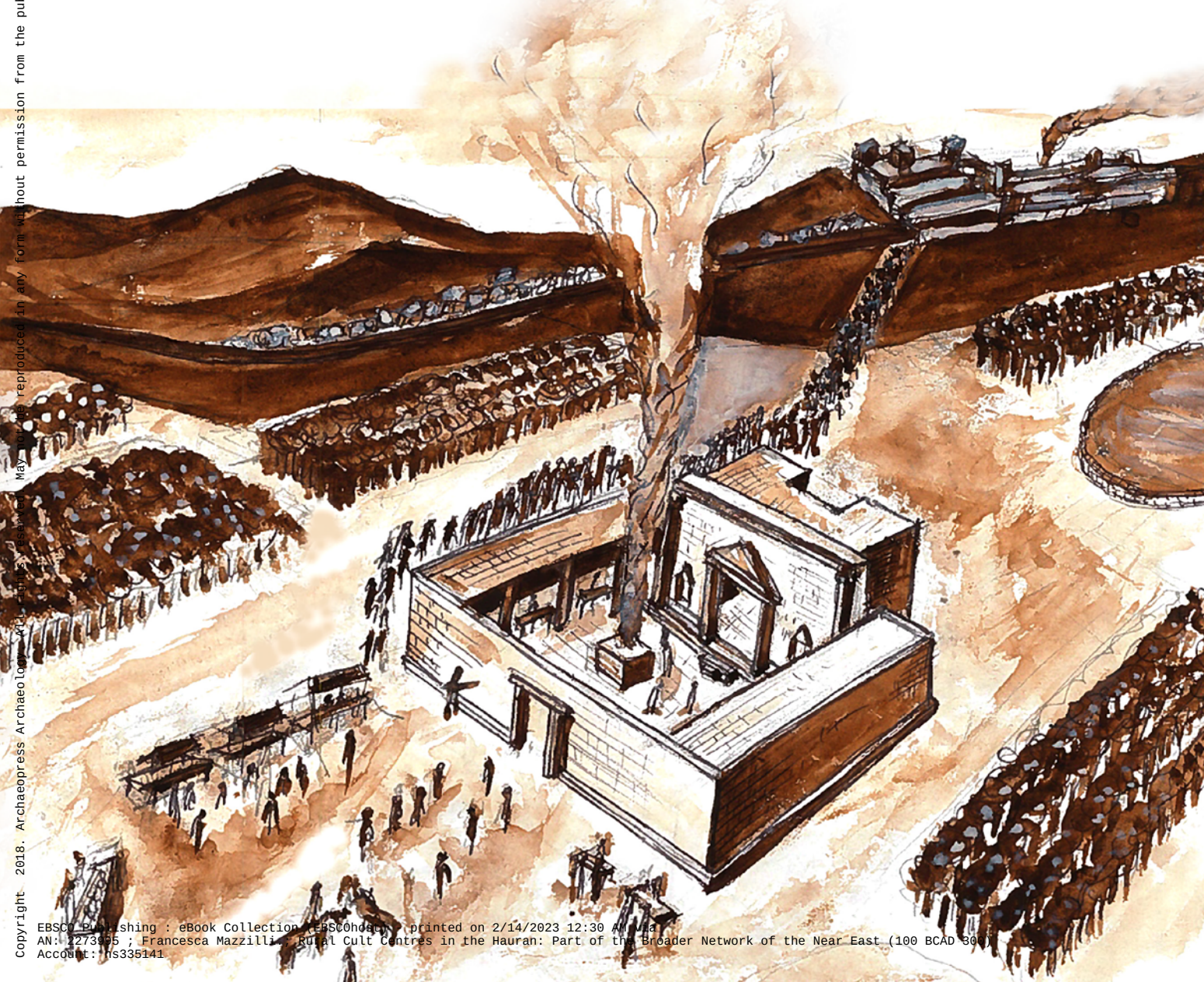
Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 51

Rural Cult Centres in the Hauran

Part of the broader network of the Near East (100 BC – AD 300)

Francesca Mazzilli



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Archaeopress Publishing Ltd
Summertown Pavilion
18-24 Middle Way
Summertown
Oxford OX2 7LG

www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978 1 78491 954 2
ISBN 978 1 78491 955 9 (e-Pdf)

Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 51

Cover: Reconstruction of the cult centre Sī' with Sī' 8 in the foreground by Annarita Mazzilli

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Acknowledgements

This work is only partially derived from my PhD, begun in October 2008 and awarded in 2014. I have been re-working and re-writing many versions of this monograph over the last four years. It has been a very long journey, along which many people have helped and inspired – I cannot thank them enough. Nor can I thank enough my primary PhD supervisor, Anna Leone, for being my mentor since my undergraduate studies, for challenging my ideas, for pushing me continuously as a researcher to improve my work and develop ideas, and for reading too many drafts of the PhD thesis. I also want to thank my second PhD supervisor, Graham Philip, for his comments. I am grateful to Ted Kaizer for discussing my PhD research, for his suggestions, for his amazing library, and for giving me the opportunity to meet scholars from my field at various conferences. Amongst these was the conference in Damascus in 2010, which provided great inspiration for my research and that I attended thanks to Rubina Raja. Thanks to her, I had the opportunity to make major key revisions of this manuscript with the help of significant scholars. I would like to thank David Kennedy and Fiona Baker for letting me work on their amazing project in Jerash in 2010, especially Fiona for teaching me so much in the field: it enriched me greatly both as an archaeologist and as a person. I will never forget 666!! I thank everyone from the Jarash Hinterland Project team who contributed to make this fieldwork experience amazing and enjoyable. An enormous thanks, too, to the researcher and my dear friend Tarek Ahmed, not only for being my companion during my trip to Syria in 2010 to visit to the rural and unknown landscape of Syria, but also for guiding me, sharing his knowledge and his friendship. I cannot thank enough the wonderful and friendly Syrians who made my trip to Syria unique and unforgettable. I hope that they will have the peace and freedom that they have fought for and that soon I will be able to enjoy, once more, their company and country. I want to thank CAMNE (Centre of Ancient Mediterranean and the Near East) from Durham for believing in me as a researcher, for its enthusiasm towards my ideas, as well as for financial support for conference and fieldtrips. I am grateful to the Department of Archaeology for all that its staff has given me since I was nineteen, and, also, for offering me a grant for the first year of my PhD. I also thank the different institutions that sponsored my research trip to Syria: Rosemary Cramp, College, and CAMNE.

I have to thank numerous scholars whom I have met over the last four years at the Department of Archaeology, and the Cambridge Archaeological Unit at Cambridge, and during various conferences: special thanks must go to Chris Evans and Dies Van Der Linde. Cambridge has been a truly inspiring place to develop my love for theory.

Thanks go also to Laïla Nehmé, who helped me with transcriptions from the Aramaic texts, and to all the proof-readers for improving my writing, especially Vicky Harley. I would also like to take this opportunity here to thank the many friends who contributed so much: Cristina, Mariangela, Sarah, Erica, Heba, Kate, Yetli, Nikoletta, Sara, Laura, Liza, Bridget, Claudio, Dani, Marianna and Costanzo. A special thank you also to my family, especially my sisters Mary and Annarita! I will always be indebted to them, for their daily support, encouragement and unconditional love, despite the physical distances at times between us. I could never have achieved what I have without them.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This monograph is the first comprehensive study of rural cult centres in the Hauran in the period immediately before its annexation to the Roman Empire and during the Roman period itself (roughly the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD). The majority of recent scholars have identified these sanctuaries as having a unique character which mirrored local cultural identity in the Hauran. Most earlier, and a few recent, specialists supported the idea of the presence or influence of different political authorities in these religious buildings (mostly the Nabataeans and the Romans, rarely the Herodian kingdom). In all previous studies, scholars adopted a monothematic approach.

My aim, in contrast, is to re-evaluate rural cult centres and the Hauran itself as integral parts of a human network on a macro level. I argue that rural cult centres are dynamic components of Hauran society, functioning in, and therefore influenced by, continuously fluctuating contexts, shaped by interactions of the people who built and used these centres with the wider world. I will attempt to discuss how the people who used those rural cult centres were connected to and influenced, directly and indirectly, by neighbouring cultures and by cultures that did not border the Hauran. I will examine these relations in view of recent theories and approaches in archaeology, such as globalisation and networks, that draw attention to connectivity between people (§ Ch.1.2).

In contrast with previous work, this monograph pursues the study of the social meaning of sanctuaries and adopts an interdisciplinary and comparative approach. I will attempt to reconstruct the role of these sanctuaries in terms of their social meaning in the pre-Roman and Roman periods, which recent scholars have developed when examining buildings (§ Ch.1.2). This means reconstructing the life of these buildings, including what kind of activities were undertaken in them, and the life of the people who commissioned, maintained, visited and used them. Furthermore, my study combines the analysis of sanctuary architecture with a study of gods and benefactors (through the examination of inscriptions and statues) in their socio-cultural landscape. It also compares the aspects of rural cult centres of the Hauran mentioned above with parallel ones in the Near East. I examine why architectural styles and beliefs in the Hauran share so much with those from other parts of the Near East by considering the relationship of the elite of the Hauran to other cultures in the Near East and by looking at the socio-economic and political landscape.

I will undertake a bottom-up analysis starting from the end result of the process of diffusion of elements of rural cult centres (e.g. architectural features, gods) that are recovered elsewhere in the Near East. Common patterns between the Hauran and other parts of the Near East will offer only a glimpse of what the social interactions between people adopting similar religious and architectural elements could have been in the past, and of the social routes that made possible the movement of religious and architectural ideas. This monograph does not aim to offer a new interpretation of the structures of these cult centres or their dating but to use those that have already been published and amply examined by various experts in order to discuss them in the broader context of the Near East.

In terms of the bigger picture, the results of this research aim to suggest that future work on religious buildings or buildings should comprise a comprehensive analysis of various aspects of religious buildings contextualised within the socio-economic landscape, in order to provide a better understanding of the people in the past. This multidisciplinary study will also encourage future researchers to develop a new perspective on past communities, including rural ones, on a macro level. This means to perceive identities of the pre-Roman and the Roman worlds as complex entities shaped by the different surroundings and more distant cultures, and, therefore, to re-evaluate their connection with other cultures.

The Hauran is a small area in present-day southern Syria, roughly south of Damascus, extending to 90 km from east to west and 105 km from north to south. Despite covering a limited area, the Hauran is a valuable and interesting region for the investigation of rural cult centres and the society that used these sanctuaries for two reasons.

Firstly, it was a junction of different kingdoms and cultures: the Herodian and Nabataean kingdoms, the people who used the Safaitic script and the Romans (Map 1). In the 1st century BC it was bounded by the borders of the Herodian kingdom (the north and centre of the Hauran, until AD 93/94) and the Nabataean kingdom (to the south, until AD 106). The territory of the Hauran under Herodian control was integrated into the Roman province of Syria in the late 1st century AD, whereas the territory of the Hauran under the Nabataeans was annexed to the province of Arabia at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. These two politically

separated territories became part of the same Roman province of Arabia at the end of the 2nd century AD (§ Ch.2). In this study, I will refer to the pre-provincial and provincial periods (roughly 100 BC–AD 300) rather than to pre-Roman and Roman times, since the former terms best indicate the political change, namely, from the presence of pre-existing local kingdoms (pre-provincial) to the annexation of Syria to the Roman province (provincial). Using the adjectives pre-Roman and Roman could imply Roman imposition over pre-existing cultures, an imposition that did not actually take place in the Roman Empire, as will be elucidated in Chapters 5 and 6.

Secondly, the Hauran is a valuable and interesting area for the investigation of rural cult centres because of the preservation of many ruins of rural cult centres and inscriptions, together with a minor but still substantial number of statue fragments. Much information about them has been published from the 19th century to the present day. On the basis of this literature, I have identified 57 rural cult centres that will, for the first time, be systematically analysed.

Before going into details of my research framework (§ Ch.1.2), I will explain what type of evidence I take into account. This is to ensure that the reader is aware of the use of cult centres in this analysis and of the constraints of this study, both of which depend on the archaeological and epigraphic evidence preserved, recorded and published by scholars (§ Ch.1.1).

1.1 Cult centres

I deliberately use the term 'cult centre' to emphasise that these religious buildings were places for people: they were public meeting places visited by people who commissioned the temples, made dedications, attended sacrifices and other activities, such as ritual dramas and fairs that were most likely undertaken during religious festivals.[1] The use of a cult centre implies that we cannot consider them as empty buildings: they are entities with a life that can offer us a story about cultures and communities of this region, about the people who visited them and about their interactions with other cultures. People and the buildings they constructed and used did not exist in isolation, but their interaction with others contributed to shaping their own individuality, identity and culture (including the sanctuaries), as this monograph aims to demonstrate.

The term cult centres refers to public religious buildings where evidence of their existence survives. These may be architectural remains and/or inscriptions that inform us about the erection of a temple or a part of a cult centre, such as standing walls to delimit the temenos. Statues of deities or benefactors and written dedications to gods and altars are included only if there is definite architectural evidence of a temple or an inscription that mentions the erection of a temple or a part of it.

Therefore, this study does not include sacred natural places, such as mountains, hilltops, rocks, springs or woods that have been referred to as sacred, because, according to ancient sources, they were inhabited by deities.[2] In these cases, cult activities would have been undertaken but no permanent stone structures would have necessarily been required, as temporary altars and structures would have been adequate to perform rituals. The lack of long-lasting monumental evidence of these cult sites makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify them. As a result specialists have not considered this type of cult site in the Hauran in any detail. Furthermore, I have not included *kalibé* and *naïskoi*, because they are not typical religious public buildings that would have been used as meeting places, although some scholars have suggested their sacred nature.[3] The *kalibé* consists of an elevated, tripartite, apse-shaped open-structure, entered by a staircase, which would have been used to display statues.[4] *Naïskoi* were small niches with reliefs representing gods carved into the rock, which would have held statues or symbolic icons of a certain religious significance.[5]

[1] Nielsen 2002 for ritual dramas; de Ligt 1993 for fairs during religious festivals.

[2] Bradley 2000: 24–7; Horden and Purcell 2000: 412–6 and 440. For instance, according to Pausanias, the Greek geographer of the 2nd century AD, deities were believed to inhabit natural place such as lakes (*Paus.* 3: 23.5), springs, waterfalls and groves of trees (*Paus.* 9: 3.4, 7:18.7).

[3] For the sacred nature of *kalibé*: Zayadine 1989; Clauss-Balty 2008a: 271–3; for the sacred nature of *naïskoi*: Arnaud 1986: 373–97.

[4] Inscriptions named this type of building *kalibé* at Hayāt, Umm as Zeitūn and Shaqqā; they are all situated in southern Syria. Other buildings have been interpreted to be *kalibé* on the basis of their similar layout to the structures that have this name in the inscriptions. Butler claimed that *exedra* of the forum of Philip the Arab at Shahbā and *nymphaeum* at Bosra were also *kalibé* (*PAAES* II: 382). Segal argued that Temple 'C' at Canatha, the hexastyle temple in the city Philippopolis, and the exedra at Bosra could be also *kalibé* (Segal 2001: 2008). *Kalibé* has been interpreted as a religious building because of the adjective 'sacred' that preceded the term *kalibé* on the inscriptions placed on this structure; however, there is no explicit evidence as to whether a god or which god was worshipped (Clauss-Balty 2008a: 271–3). Therefore, the religious aspect attributed to these structures is still debatable (Segal 2001; Class-Balty 2008). This structure could have been used to display statues; their religious subject is uncertain. The sacred adjective associated with this structure could give a sense of a holy structure, but it does not indicate that it was a centre of worship and sacrifice. Ball did not even mention the possibility of the religious character of *kalibé*. He has considered it to be *nymphaeum* because of the similar layout (Ball 2000: 292 ff.). However, this is unlikely as there is no evidence that water could come out from these niches, or they are not close to water sources, such as natural springs or cisterns.

[5] *Naïskoi* are known in high numbers from the Hauran (Arnaud 1986), possibly thanks to the systematic investigation in this area. These could be considered miniature deity-dwellings because of the representation of gods sometimes inserted in a frame with miniature columns and tympanum at the top that could stand for the systematic structure of a temple (Zayadine 1989: 113). Despite the sacred nature of these small niches, they do not function as cult centres.

The term cult centre includes religious buildings ranging from simple temples to more complex sanctuaries, comprising more than one temple and other structures, such as courtyards. However, their variety from small cult centres to multi-structure ones does not necessarily reflect the different nature and proportions of what they were in pre-provincial and provincial times, but may be the result of the following interlinked factors: the preservation of the ruins or their state at the time they were recorded, the standards of the time when they were recorded and what kind of investigation has been undertaken since. The first factor depends on the location of the site within the present-day townscape. Since the ruins of rural cult centres are often in small, present-day villages, it is common to find that their buildings have been altered; their decorative remains or inscriptions have often been removed from the original structure to be reused in modern or late antiquity buildings. They have often become scattered in the modern landscape, or remains are no longer preserved, apart from inscriptions. Because of this, a high number of cult centres (23) have been identified only on the basis of inscriptions, which has been facilitated by a focus on epigraphy in the Hauran from the 19th century to the present day (§ Ch.1.2). Therefore, because of the ongoing phenomenon of dismantling temples, information about these sites is often, but not always, based on records from the late 19th or early 20th century. The early descriptions of sites were not always accurate and may provide a misleading reading of the ruins, as, for example, in the case of the sanctuaries at Sī' and Saḥr (§ Ch.4.1).

While it is true to say that their architecture, layout and, especially, inscriptions have been discussed by more recent scholars, only in few cases has a full assessment of the site been undertaken and published (Sī', Saḥr, Khirbet Massakeb, Shā'rah, Rimet Hazem, Ṣanamein and Sleim). Excavation has been undertaken only at Sī', Saḥr, Khirbet Massakeb and Shā'rah. However, Sī', followed by Saḥr, is the site that has been most intensively investigated and a remarkable quantity of published materials has been produced.

We can group rural cult centres into seven 'types' on the basis of their complexity. This grouping is based on published data and is affected by the preservation of their architectural remains and inscriptions; therefore, their grouping and the identification of the type of these sites can be deceptive.

Sī' and Saḥr appear to be the main rural cult centres of the region (Type 1). Excavation was carried out mostly by a French team in the 1980s and 1990s but their findings exist alongside a record of the first explorers and early scholars in the 19th and early 20th century.[6] More recent interest in these two sites is due not only to the remains of their temples but also to the surrounding structures that have partially survived because of being situated away from present-day villages. Recent scholarly investigation has, therefore, provided more accurate data for these sites than others in the Hauran, and, consequently, the discussion in this monograph will revolve mainly around these two sites. Sī' forms the main religious centre on the top of the hill consisting of three identified temples, all preceded by a courtyard, enclosed by a sacred wall with a monumental gateway between the second and the third forecourt, and another at the entrance of the third forecourt. A pathway from the cult centre leads to the fourth shrine in the valley that is conventionally known as Sī' 8. It consists of a small cella that opens into a courtyard. This sanctuary also includes minor later additions from the provincial period (the monumental gate at the entrance of the third courtyard and a structure of unclear purpose in the north-western part of this courtyard).[7] The sanctuary at Saḥr consists of a reduced cella (adyton) facing a small courtyard with a colonnaded portico where re-worked elevated rocky terrain on the sides could have been used for banquets or seating. An elevated horned altar would have been situated in the middle of the courtyard. The courtyard leads to a bigger courtyard where a statuary complex on a podium is situated almost in the middle. A chapel or *naïskos* was situated at the far end of the courtyard next to the entrance and in axis with the entrance of the small courtyard.[8] The sanctuary is placed next to a 600-seat theatre.[9] Both structures are surrounded by various, possibly multi-functional, buildings.[10]

Although Sī' and Saḥr seem to be the major sanctuaries in the region, there are sites that could potentially have been complex religious centres, as the recovery of the remains of a sacred precinct wall or the mention of a temenos in an inscription indicates a wide sacred area that could have been used for cult activities. This suggests the presence of a substantial religious centre (Type 2). Such sites include al-Mushennef, Dāmā-Dāmit

[6] For Sī': *RAO* I no.11; *CIS* II 163; *Wadd*. no. 2364–7; *PPUAES* III no.767–9, no.772, no.774; *PPUAES* II: 365–99; *PPUAES* IV no.100–1, no.103; *PAAES* III no.427b, no.428, no.428a, no.428b, no.431–2; *PAAES* II: 322–424; *PAAES* IV no.1; Dunand 1926: 328 pl.69; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; *Suw*. 1934 no.15, no.27, pl.8–9; Mascle 1944: no.15, no.27; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64; Dentzer 1985; 1991; Bolelli 1986: 351 no.44–7 pl.11; *Suw*. 1991 INV 15 [190] (5, 23); INV27 [191] (5, 33); Dentzer-Feydy 1986; 1990a: 652 ff. Fig.18; 1992: 76 fig.14; 2003: 189 fig.13; 1993: fig.10; 2010; 2015; Augé 1985; 2003; Milik 2003; Steinsapir 2005: 13–24; Weber 2006, 109–14 fig.41–2; *Hauran* IV: II, 141–5; Kropp 2010a. For Saḥr: *PPUAES* II: 441–6 ill.387–8; *PPUAES* III no.805 1–5; Freyberger 1991: 10, 25; Kalos 1997; 2003; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 90; 2010; Weber 2003a; 2003b; 2006; *Hauran* IV II; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 73–90; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301; Segal 2013: 206–13; *Hauran* IV I.

[7] See footnote above.

[8] *PPUAES* II: 441–6; Kalos 1997; 2003; Weber 2003a; 2003b; *Hauran* IV II; Dentzer-Feydy 2010; Segal 2013: 169–70; *Hauran* IV I: 81 ff.

[9] Kalos 1997; 2003; Nielsen 2002: 246; *Hauran* IV I: 157–68.

[10] Kalos 1997; 2003; *Hauran* IV I: 187–302.

al-'Aliyyah, Deir as-Smeij, Is-Ṣâfiyeh, Kafr Shams, Khirbet Massakeb, Manāra Henū, Rimet Hazim, Ṣanamein, Shā'rah, Ṣmeid, Smeij/Deir Smeij and Sūr al-Lejā on the basis of archaeological evidence, and Ḳaraba,[11] Qrayya[12] and Mseikeh[13] only on the basis of inscriptions that mention the presence of a temenos. Amongst these examples there are some key differences. Apart from an archaic phase of the cult centre (consisting of an altar in an open area circumscribed by walls, from the second half of the 2nd century BC), a later phase of the layout of the cult centre at Khirbet Massakeb (1st century BC–1st century AD) resembles the core of the cult centres at Sī' and Saḥr as it has a reduced cella (like the small adyton at Sī' and Saḥr) facing a courtyard.[14] The fortuitous recovery of a sanctuary at Shā'rah by a French team in 2000 has revealed, not only its presence, but also its complexity in terms of structure and its ritual activities.[15] However, scholars have pointed out the possibility of another sanctuary where fragmentary statues have been identified, next to one intensively investigated (the Mithraeum)[16] as well as the presence of another sanctuary outside the village.[17] However, at present, no full assessment of the last two sanctuaries has been published. Inscriptions from this site were also recovered but it is unclear which cult centre they referred to.[18]

The examples at al-Mushennef, Sūr al-Lejā and Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah have been widely discussed because of the preservation of their architectural fragments together with inscriptions that inform us of the deities worshipped in these centres. The description of these sites is mostly based on the late 19th–early 20th-century record.[19] Their architecture, layout and inscriptions have been discussed more recently but without any further systematic fieldwork.[20] Only Freyberger investigated al-Mushennef as a 'complex' rural cult centre because of its layout together with the cistern behind it.[21] Thanks to a recent systematic study by Dentzer-Feydy, it has been possible to reconstruct the cult centre of Rimet Hazim. It consisted of a rectangular cella on a podium enclosed in a sacred wall, having architectural features and decorative motifs from the provincial period.[22] Although detailed information is not provided, thanks to a recent publication we know that Kafr Shams seems to have a central structure like a podium,[23] and Manāra Henū has a chapel within a sacred enclosure.[24] Furthermore, these sites not only resemble the layout of the large courtyard with a podium in the sanctuary at Saḥr but also its statuary complex.[25] Manāra Henū has additionally inscriptions dedicated by soldiers.[26]

Apart from the preserved provincial architecture of a *Tychaion* (a temple dedicated to Tyche) at Ṣanamein, in front of a cistern together with a substantial set of inscriptions, there are additional architectural remains at the back of the cistern that have been suggested to be either a colonnade that encloses the religious complex or a second temple.[27] It could be the religious building dedicated to the Zeus in the pre-provincial period mentioned in inscriptions.[28]

The presence of a temple within an enclosed sacred area at Deir as-Smeij and Smeij/Deir Smeij has been suggested on the basis of the decoration in a church that resembles those found in other temples in the Hauran, and the preserved pavement that could have been part of the courtyard of the cult centre.[29] Also inscriptions dedicated to gods have been found at both sites.[30] Scholars have only mentioned that the site at Is-Ṣâfiyeh, thought to be a Roman village, has remains of Roman rectangular building, masonry and structures, including remains of walls that would have delimited the temenos.[31] The early 20th-century Princeton University team suggested that there was a shrine on one side of an almost rectangular paved area from a highly altered

[11] *PPUAES* III no.220.
[12] Nehmé 2010: 270.
[13] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 207–8 no.140a.
[14] Kalos 1997; 2003; Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 230–2, 236.
[15] Kalos 2001.
[16] *Hauran* IV II: 114–9 fig. 237–55.
[17] Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 226, 229, fig.5–6.
[18] *PPUAES* III no.693, no.803 1, no.803 2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 103–19.
[19] For al-Mushennef see: *Wadd*. no.2211–2, no.2216; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308, 324; *PAAES* III no.380, no.381a, no.381, no.382; *IGRR* III 1260; *PAAES* III: 346–51; *PPUAES* II: 340; *Suw*. 1934 no.55. For *Sūr al-Lejā see: CIL* III 13.604; *PPUAES* II: 428–31 ill.371; *PPUAES* III no.797, no.797 4, no.797 9. For Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah, see: *Wadd*. no.2453; Ewing 1895: 76; Dussaud and Macler 1903: 242 no.10; *PPUAES* II: 433–4 ill.377; *PPUAES* III no.800 5, no.800 7.
[20] For al-Mushennef, see: Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6; Bolelli 1986: 322, 332, 342, 348 no.7 pl.2; Denzter-Feydy 1986: 286–97; 1990b: 651–2 fig.14–7; 1993: 110; 2003, 97 footnote 237 and 239; Freyberger 1989; 1998: 59–62; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 241; Weber 2006: 117–8; Segal 2013: 213–6.
For *Sūr al-Lejā,* see: Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 81–3, 97 footnote 237, 100, 107 pl.78.8, pl.88.1; *Hauran* IV II: 121–2; Segal 2013: 180–1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 156–9 no.95–7. For Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah, see: Sourdel 1957: 55 no.2, 72 no.4; Sartre 1993: 121; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 266; 2003: 98, 100; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 359–61, 313–4 no.297–299 no.302.
[21] Freyberger 1998: 62.
[22] Dentzer-Feydy 1998.
[23] *Hauran* IV II: 138–9 fig.329–31; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 511–2.
[24] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 97 ff.
[25] For Kafr Shams, see: *Hauran* IV II: 133–9. For Manāra Henū, see *Hauran* IV II: 99–105.
[26] Speidel 1998: no.32–3; Stoll 2001: 468–70 no.87–8; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 97–102.
[27] *PPUAES* II: 315–22 ill.287–92 pl.11 abb.288, 291; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 286–97; Freyberger 1989: 101 pl.23b, 38a–b. 39b–d; 1991, 21; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 81–2, 97, 100, 190–3, pl.65 no.182–4 pl.78; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 68–75, 239–41; Segal 2008: 105–7; 2013: 171–7.
[28] *RAO* V, 27; *Wadd*. no.2413 j; *PPUAES* III no.655 2, no.655 3; Sourdel 1957: 26 no.3–4; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 310; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 545–8 no.558–60.
[29] For Deir as-Smeij, see: *PPUAES* II: 352–54 ill.317; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297; 2003: 85, 97 note 236 pl.79 no.7; Segal 2013: 191. For Smeij/Deir Smeij, see: *PPUAES* II: 108–9 ill.86; Sartre 2011: 105.
[30] For Deir as-Smeij, see: Dussaud and Macler 1903: 648 no.20; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 299 footnote 20. For Smeij/Deir Smeij, see: *RES* no.2031; *PPUAES* IV no.11–2.
[31] *PPUAES* II: 124; Braemer *et al.* 1999: 164; 165, 159 fig.6, fig.12a.

site at Ṣmeid. From this site a fragmentary inscription seems to mention a temenos.[32]

In addition to sites from the group mentioned above (Type 2), ʻAtīl can be included. Although it does not present evidence of a temenos wall, it has two temples, one to the north, the other to the south, implying the complexity of the religious centre, because their similar structure and decoration can suggest that they belong to the same complex. However, no further structure has been recorded in the surroundings and no more intensive fieldwork has been undertaken. Therefore, not much can be inferred about this site apart from its architecture and layout, together with its inscriptions, which are all subjects that recent scholars have discussed the most.[33] Freyberger provides a new interpretation of the two temples.[34]

Hebrān and Ṣalkhad seem to be major pre-provincial cult centres that continued to be used in the provincial period (Type 3). Due to the lack of preservation of their permanent structures, the information available to us is mostly limited to the information gained from inscriptions.[35] Nevertheless, they still inform us about the patrons of these two sanctuaries, their deities and long-term use of these centres. Architectural fragments and inscriptions laid in the backyard of a modern house are the only remains of what used to be a temple at Hebrān; the Princeton University expedition of the early 20th century provided a reconstruction of its layout.[36] In an analysis of architecture at Sī', Dentzter-Feydy included isolated architectural blocks found at Ṣalkhad.[37] Therefore, we cannot overall verify archaeologically the significance of the centres at Hebrān and Ṣalkhad that the inscriptions have identified.

There are cult centres where only the temples are preserved, and their layouts are discernible apart from the recovery of inscriptions (Type 4). They are: Breikeh, Deir al-Meshqūq, Mismiyyeh, Sleim and Tell Ahmar. Researchers have mostly considered Sleim and, occasionally, Breikeh, together with al-Mushennef, ʻAtīl and Ṣanamein because of the extent of their preserved architecture dated back to the Roman period and the resemblance of their layout.[38] Freyberger has undertaken a systematic building survey of the temples only at Sleim and Ṣanamein, and he has used al-Mushennef and ʻAtīl as comparative examples.[39] Scholars have not discussed the temple at Deir al-Meshqūq to a great extent, although its layout is known[40] and the interesting inscriptions associated with this site.[41] Apart from mention of the layout,[42] Mismiyyeh has been discussed recently mostly because of the important association with the Roman army on the basis of the inscriptions.[43] Tell Ahmar, near the village of Mesad, presents a unique cult centre, comprising a cave with secondary rooms, remains of building blocks and an altar.[44] Segal has recently provided a description of 12 rural cult centres amongst the major rural cult centres in the Hauran that are mentioned in the types of site so far listed, but he does not often include new and recent interpretations of the sites. They are: al-Mushennef,[45] ʻAtīl,[46] Breikeh,[47] Deir as-Smeij,[48] Hebrān,[49] Mayāmas,[50] Mismiyyeh,[51] Saḥr,[52] Ṣanamein,[53] Sī',[54] Sleim[55] and Sūr al-Lejā.[56]

[32] *PPUAES* III: 415–6 no.786, no.786 6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 545–52.

[33] For architecture, see: Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 102–6; *PAAES* II: 343–46, fig.120; *PPUAES* II: 355–6; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 286–97, pl.15a; 2003, 81–2 pl.78; Freyberger 1991: 21; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 39, 106–9, 169–71; Segal 2008: 103–05; 2013: 200–5; Freyberger 2015: 290–2. For inscriptions, see: *CIG* 4609; *Wadd*. no.2374a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 105, 322; *PAAES* III no.427a; *IGRR* III 1238; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 302.

[34] Freyberger 2015: 290–2.

[35] For Hebrān, see *CIS* II 170; *PPUAES* III no.659, no.663, no.665; *Suw*. 1934 no.172, no.176, no.178–9 pl.3, pl.35. For Ṣalkhad, see *CIS* II 182–4; *Wadd*. no.1990; *PPUAES* III no.155; *PPUAES* IV no.23–4; Cantineau 1932: 16–7; *Suw*. 1934 no.200, no.374–5, no.377; 1991 INV311 [218] (5, 32); Mascle 1944: no.311; Milik 1958: 227–8 no.1; Sourdel 1957: 24.

[36] *PPUAES* II: 323–5, pl. 20; Dentzer-Feydy 1986; 1990b: 653 fig.25; 2003, 85, 96 footnote 219, 96, 100; Segal 2008: 102–3; 2013: 218–9.

[37] Schlumberger 1933: pl.27: 2; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 81–2, 100.

[38] For architecture at Breikeh, see *PPUAES* II: 409–12 fig.352 pl.29 ill.371; Denzter-Feydy 2003: 107, pl.88.1; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 139–41; Segal 2008: 109; 2013: 184–6. For inscription at Breikeh, see *Suw*. 1934 no.20 pl. 8; 1991 INV20 [12] (5, 31); Mascle 1944: no.20; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 458–9 no.405. For architecture at Mismiyyeh, see Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 286–97; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 103–6, 132, 217–21; Segal 2008: 109–12; 2013: 163–70. For inscription at Mismiyyeh, see *Wadd*. no. 2525–8, no.2528a, no.2530–2, no.2536a; *RAO* 5, 367–8; 6, 372–3; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 316–8; *PPUAES* II no.800 1; Sourdel 1957: 24, no.1 no.7, 48 no.4, 92 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104, 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 38–42, 44, 46–7, 51–3 361–2 no.1–5, no.7, no.11, no.13, no.17–20, no.300; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 303. Statues at Mismiyyeh have also been recovered, see Weber 2006: 59–60; *Hauran* IV II: 109–10, 112–3. For architecture at Sleim, see *PPUAES* II, 356–9 fig.319–20 pl. 26–7; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 266, 277–9; 1990b: 646, 651–2 fig.7–8 fig.19–20; 1992: 76–77 fig.16; 1993: 110; 96 footnote 219, 97 footnote 237; Freyberger 1991; 1998: 55–62; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 65, 115; Segal 2008: 99–101; 2013: 191–4. For inscription at Sleim, see *SEG* VII 1107; *PPUAES* III no.765 3, no.765 4. Statues at Sleim have also been recovered, see *Suw*. 1934 n.73; Bolelli 1986: 322, 332, 342, 348 no.6 pl.2; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 76 fig.16; *Hauran* IV II: 161–2.

[39] Freyberber 1989; 1991.

[40] *PPUAES* II: 129–31 ill.106; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 266.

[41] Dussaud and Macler 1903, 277 no.109; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 321; *IGRR* III 1335, *PPUAES* IV no.27; Milik 1972: 341.

[42] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 286–97; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 103–6, 132, 217–21; Segal 2008: 109–12; 2013: 163–70.

[43] *Wadd*. no. 2525–8, no.2528a, no.2530–2, no.2536a; *RAO* 5, 367–8; 6, 372–3; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 316–8; *PPUAES* II no.800 1; Sourdel 1957: 24, no.1 no.7, 48 no.4, 92 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104, 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 38–42, 44, 46–7, 51–3 361–2 no.1–5, no.7, no.11, no.13, no.17–20, no.300; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 303.

[44] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.

[45] Segal 2013: 213–6.

[46] Segal 2013: 200–5.

[47] Segal 2013: 184–6.

[48] Segal 2013: 191.

[49] Segal 2013: 218–9.

[50] Segal 2013: 218.

[51] Segal 2013: 163–70.

[52] Segal 2013: 169–70.

[53] Segal 2013: 171–7.

[54] Segal 2013: 206–13.

[55] Segal 2013: 191–4.

[56] Segal 2013: 180 –1.

For Amra, Bteineh, Bu'aḍān, Deir (South), Dhakīr, Mashāra, Mayāmas, Hit, Inkhil, Lubbên, Qirata, Saneh, Sawarat al-Kebireh, Shaqrā and Tsil we cannot identify the layout of the temple but scattered remains of statues, decorative motifs or inscriptions can still suggest the existence of a religious centre because of the following elements associated with temples (Type 5): architectural decorations that resemble those used in other rural cult centres in the Hauran (as in the case of Deir (South),[57] Mashāra,[58] Mayāmas,[59] Muṭā'iyyeh[60] and Dhakīr);[61] statues of deities (Mashāra,[62] Mayāmas);[63] statues of most likely dedicators (Dhakīr);[64] inscriptions that offer information about the deity who might have been worshipped in the cult centre (Amra,[65] Bteineh,[66] Bu'aḍān,[67] Deir (South),[68] Khabab,[69] Mseikeh,[70] Muṭā'iyyeh,[71] Hit,[72] Qirata,[73] Tsil,[74] Saneh,[75] Sawara[76] and Sawarat al-Kebireh[77]), and/or about a temple's dedicator (Mseikeh[78] and Shaqrā[79]) or inscriptions that mention the temple's treasurers who dealt with non-religious matters related to the religious centre (Lubbên[80] and Inkhil).[81]

Despite their fragmentary nature, the analysis of the scattered remains of these sites will reveal and contribute towards the information regarding decorative style, deities, potential dedicators, or the elite of the local community in the Hauran, the organisation of temples and their non-religious activities.

Not much information can be gained about the following rural cult centres apart from their possible existence suggested by scholars (Type 6): they are: (mid 2nd century AD) Būsān,[82] (1st century) Dneibeh,[83] Khurāyeb,[84] and Sahwit il-Khidr.[85] Finally, although it was initially thought a *Tychaion*, or more than one, had been constructed at Obṭ'a, Zebīreh and Tibneh on the basis of inscriptions (Type 7),[86] only recently Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre have reinterpreted the inscriptions in these three instances as dedications to Tyche or as small altars or *ediculae* that were dedicated to Tyche.[87]

1.2 Towards a new perspective and approach

The research described in this monograph originated from the need to look at the different aspects of rural sanctuaries in the Hauran together from a more up-to-date perspective.

After an initial focus on recording inscriptions, architectural remains and statues,[88] the presence and influence of the Nabataean kingdom on rural cult centres in the Hauran has been discussed for over a century, but there is still no unanimous picture of the matter (§ Ch.4.1).[89] Some specialists mention the occasional presence of Herodian honorific statues in some rural cult centres and architectural elements at Sī' that are also used in the Herodian realm (§ Ch.4.2).[90]

Most recent scholars – Dentzer, Dentzer-Feydy, Sartre, Bolelli, Kropp, Freyberger, Wenning and Alpass – have concurred on the unique character of these sanctuaries

[57] *PPUAES* II: 101–5; Sartre 2011: 93.
[58] Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80; 2003: 96 footnote 129; 2008: 87, 96 footnote 219–20.
[59] *PPUAES* II: 326–29; Denzter-Feydy 1986: 297; Segal 2013: 218.
[60] *PPUAES* II: 88–91; Sartre 2011: 131.
[61] Bounni 1991; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297; 2008: 87. Inscriptions were also recovered; for them, see Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 576 no.498; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306 footnote 89.
[62] Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80 fig.20; 2008: 87, 96.
[63] Seyrig 1949: 28–32 pl.2; 1971: 94–7; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2629 ff. pl.8 fig.20; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 83–6 fig.27 a–c.
[64] Bolelli 1991: 75, 77; *Suw*. 1991 INV566 [343], (8, 36), INV608 [341] (7, 22), INV568 [346] (7, 28) pl.18–9; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 73, 76; *Hauran* IV II: 124–5.
[65] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298–9 footnote 18.
[66] *Wadd*. no.2127; Dussaud and Macler 1901: no.1; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 8.
[67] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 605–6 no.611.
[68] *PPUAES* III no.58; Sartre 2011: 94 no.9571.
[69] *Wadd*. no.2514; Sourdel 1957: 41, 51; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 8, 11; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 129–32 no.74–6; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 300 footnote 25.
[70] *PPUAES* II no.795, no.795 1, no.797–8; Sourdel 1957: 2, 22, 96 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 204–8 no.137–9, no.140a, no.141; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[71] *PPUAES* II: 88–91 no.42; Sartre 2011: 131–2 no.9642.
[72] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 15.
[73] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 13, 16.
[74] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 12.
[75] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 45.
[76] Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 14; 2007: 4–5 no.2; 2015: 301 footnote 39; Sartre 2011: 293–4 no.9882.
[77] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 48.
[78] *PPUAES* II no.795, no.795 1, no.797–8; Sourdel 1957: 2, 22, 96 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 204–8 no.137–9, no.140a, no.141; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[79] *Wadd*. no.2506; *Suw*. 1934, 80 no.164; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 217–21 no.152–4.
[80] *Wadd*. no.2455, 2456; Ewing 1895: 69–70; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324–5; *PPUAES* II no.793, no.793 1.
[81] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 447–9 no.461a.
[82] *PPUAES* II: 386–7; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297.
[83] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 289.
[84] *PPUAES* III: 105–6; Sartre 2011: 95.
[85] *CIS* II 188; *PPUAES* IV no.96–7; Lewis and Macdonald 2003: 75 no.34.
[86] *Wadd.* no.2512; Dunand 1950: 152 no.336, no.355; Sartre-Fauriat 2006: 8, 11; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 143–7 no.90.
[87] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 348–9, 564–5 no.363, no.578.
[88] Amongst them are: Seetzen 1805; Burckhardt 1810; 1812; von Richter 1815; Buckingham 1816 in *Hauran* I and Fauriat-Sartre and Sartre 2014; *Wadd*.; de Vogüé 1865–77; Dussaud and Macler 1901; 1903; Dussaud 1927; 1955; Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904–9; *PUAAES* I–IV; *PPAES* I–II.
[89] For scholars who have argued for the Nabataean presence in the Hauran, see *PPUAES* II: 380, 385–90, Glueck 1942: 7 ff.; 1966: 6 ff.; Dussaud 1955: 57; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64, 100–3; Dussaud 1955: 57; Hammond 1973: 62–4, 79 ff.; Peters 1977: 263–75; Negev 1977: 613 ff.; Busink 1980: 1255–320; Wenning 1987: 25–51; Gawlikowski 1989: 329–30; Patrich 1990: 45; Ball 2000: 343; Netzer 2003: 102–15; Bowersock 2003: 347; Segal 2013: 45–7. For scholars who discredited idea of the Nabataean presence and influence in rural cult centre, see Freyberger 1998: 52, pl.32d; 2008: 131, 134 fig.6; 2013: 154; 2014: 132; Healey 2001: 62; Alpass 2013: 166–99. For scholars who favoured the idea of a minimal Nabataean presence and influence in the Hauran, see Starcky 1985; Dentzer 1986: 414; Wenning 2007: 37; Dentzer-Feydy 1979: 332; Dentzer 1986: 282–3.
[90] Lichtenberger 1999: 170; Japp 2000: 150; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 96–8, 101; Weber 2003a: 356; 2003b: 162; *Hauran* IV II: 71–88; Kropp 2013a: 261 ff.; Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014.

in the pre-provincial period, which mirrored local cultural identity in the Hauran (§ Ch.5).

Dentzer, Dentzer-Feydy, Sartre, Sartre-Fauriat and Bolelli are the main French specialists working on the pre-provincial and provincial phases of the Hauran with contributions published in five monographs on this region,[91] three catalogues of Greek and Latin inscriptions in the north of the Hauran (Leja),[92] in the south (Bosra)[93] and in the east (Jawalan),[94] and a catalogue of the finds from the museum of as-Suweidā',[95] as well as various articles.[96]

Dentzer discussed the main features of the religious architecture in the Near East[97] especially of Sī'[98] and offered an overview of the population of the Hauran (§ Ch.5–6).

Dentzer-Feydy focused on the architecture across the Hauran in the pre-provincial and provincial periods,[99] with a particular interest in the architectural decorations;[100] whereas Bolelli provided an overview of statues across the Hauran from the same timespan[101] (§ Ch.5–6). Apart from an interesting article on the impact of soldiers in the Hauran,[102] Sartre-Fauriat focused on the gods mentioned in isolated inscriptions and in cult centres, arguing for the predominance of local deities,[103] although she pointed out the presence of foreign deities in the pantheon of the Hauran.[104] Her work is on the same lines as Sourdel's work in 1957, which divided the gods worshipped in the Hauran between different Semitic/Arabic gods and foreign deities.[105]

Weber, working jointly with the French team, has examined statues in the Hauran with a particular emphasis on statue fragments recovered at Saḥr; he has catalogued the statues, including those displayed and stored in the Museum of Damascus,[106] and has also published some articles.

Freyberger has conducted his own continual research on sanctuaries in the Hauran over the past 30 years.[107] Kropp has published a single paper about Sī'.[108] Wenning has dedicated a section of his book to the Hauran when discussing the Nabataeans and published an article.[109] Alpass devoted a chapter of his monograph on the Nabataea to the sanctuaries in the Hauran[110] (§ Ch. 4–5).

Providing an understanding of cultural identity when discussing the data from sanctuaries is a common practice because religion is a key aspect of that cultural identity. Religion delineates an individual's identity, as it shapes and reflects the system of values by which a person lives his or her life: this is especially pertinent in the case of the Roman Empire.[111] By 'cultural identity' I mean a sense of individuals recognising themselves as belonging to a group with shared meanings and cultural traits, such as language, style and material culture. This is a short definition that is conventionally used by scholars, although it is far from being exhaustive.[112] As we deal with data associated with rural sanctuaries across the Hauran, rather than simply cultural identity, it is more appropriate to talk about religious cultural identity – this is the term that I will use in this monograph.

When considering the architecture of rural sanctuaries from the end of the pre-provincial to the provincial period, some scholars, such as Segal and Freyberger, have stressed that they followed Graeco-Roman models,[113] whereas others, such as Dentzer, Dentzer-Feydy, Ball and Butcher, have maintained that the architecture of the sanctuaries still expressed a region's individuality, although it adopted some Near Eastern elements in the pre-provincial and the provincial periods.[114] Both currents of thought focused mostly on a small number of examples in the Hauran or an aspect of these sanctuaries, often when scholars offered an overview of the religious architecture in the Near East (§ Ch. 6).

Steinsapir is the only scholar who has examined in detail the cult activities in the rural cult centre at Sī', by offering a phenomenological perspective of the sanctuary and the ritual landscape, when looking at rural sanctuaries in Syria[115] (§ Ch.7).

From this extremely synthetic outline of previous work on rural cult centres, which will be fully discussed in the following chapters, it is clear that there is no comprehensive study of rural cult centres in the

[91] *Hauran* I; II; III; IV I and II; V.
[92] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014.
[93] Sartre 2011.
[94] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016.
[95] *Suw.* 1934, 1991.
[96] Dentzer 1989; Dentzer-Feydy 1989; 1990a; 1990b; 2003; Sartre-Fauriat 2005; 2007; 2015.
[97] Dentzer 1989.
[98] Dentzer 1986.
[99] Dentzer-Feydy 1986; 2010; 2015.
[100] Dentzer-Feydy 1989; 1990a; 1990b; 2003.
[101] Bolelli 1986; 1991.
[102] Sartre-Fauriat 2005.
[103] Sartre-Fauriat 2007; 2015.
[104] Sartre-Fauriat 2015.
[105] Sourdel 1957.
[106] Weber 2006; *Hauran* IV II.
[107] Freyberger 1989; 1991; 1998: 46–62; 2013; 2014.
[108] Kropp 2010a.
[109] Wenning 2001.
[110] Alpass 2013: 166–99.
[111] Geertz 1973: 90; Rives 2000: 245, 257.
[112] Hall 1997; Grahame 1998: 159; Huskinson 2000: 5 ff., 10 ff.; Hodos 2010: 3.
[113] Freyberger 1989; 1991; 1998; Segal 2008; 2013.
[114] Dentzer 1989; Dentzer-Feydy 1989, Ball 2000: 357–8, 394, 396; Butcher 2003: 274.
[115] Steinsapir 2005: 13–24.

Hauran. Only through a comprehensive analysis of these cult centres, together with a comparative study of other examples in the Near East, can we move away from considering sanctuaries as simply expressions of a local identity in the Hauran or the result of the political authorities that previous scholars discussed when looking at some aspects of rural cult centres and at only some of the 57 rural cult centres in the Hauran. Only through this type of approach is it possible to grasp the complexity of these centres and of the people of the Hauran whose identity and rural cult centres were shaped by the different cultures that entered the Hauran and the different cultures that the people of the Hauran could have encountered over time.

This new perspective on rural cult centres in the Hauran has been specifically nurtured by various approaches and theories applied to archaeology and Roman archaeology, in particular, that have been fully developed in the last 20 years, but have not been considered by other scholars when looking at rural cult centres in the Hauran. They are: the social meaning of buildings (e.g. research by Johnson, Pearson and Revell),[116] Alcock's work on Greece in the Roman period in 1993,[117] the recent theory of globalisation (e.g. work by McGrew, Pitts and Versluys),[118] the concept of network analysis, along the lines of Collar's research,[119] and recent scholarly interests in discussing religion and identities as more dynamic aspects of the Roman Empire. In my research I have neither aimed to verify nor follow any of the specific theories and approaches listed above, but have used their key concepts to offer a better understanding of rural cult centres and of the people who used them, as I explain below.

With regards to the social meaning and role of buildings, scholars, such as Johnson, Pearson and Revell,[120] do not view the aesthetic of the buildings but their use and the people who built, maintained and used them, since they, including temples, are steeped in cultural traits of these people which can be recognised by an analysis of these buildings. Similarly, Steinsapir aims to provide a partial social meaning of one the major sanctuaries in the Hauran (Sī'): she especially focuses on the religious role of Sī' and devotees' experience in the sanctuary. However, she does not unravel the diversity of people who visited and shaped not only the building but instead all aspects of a sanctuary as a public gathering centre, including the people who built it, which this monograph aims to do. Furthermore, a single example will not enable us to fully understand the complexity of one or multiple communities in a region. Thus, I have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of all cult centres recovered across the Hauran.

According to Alcock, we should not consider Greece, her case study in her monograph, as an isolated area with a quality of 'uniqueness', but instead as an active part of the empire and comparable to many other examples within the Roman Empire, as well as other empires, such as the British Empire.[121] Likewise, I consider the Hauran not as an isolated region with a quality of 'uniqueness' but as a part of a Near Eastern network, comparable to other areas and cultures of the Near East.

In addressing the concept of 'globalisation',[122] I do not propose a flat cultural homogeneity[123] but rather a 'world as a single social place' reshaped by 'the patterns of human interaction and awareness', to adopt McGrew's definition.[124] This theory does not imply the imposition of Roman rule over local cultures and one-way influence from Rome to indigenous people. Cultural change, due to Roman rule, has instead been viewed as multidirectional, simultaneously encouraging unity and differences in pre-existing provincial societies and the centre of the empire.[125] Therefore, the concept of globalisation operational here does not exclude the presence and

[116] Nicolet 1980; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994; Johnson 1997; Revell 2008; 2013; 2015.
[117] Alcock 1993.
[118] McGrew 1992a; Versluys 2015; Pitts and Versluys 2015. The earliest studies on globalisation have discussed some of its aspects (e.g. the role of networks and connectivity) but they have not discussed its concept in detail (Pitts and Versluys 2015: 19–20). Some of the major works are: Horden and Purcell 2000; Hingley 2005; Malkin 2005; Morris 2005; Malkin, Contantankopoulou and Panagopoulou 2009; Van Dommelen and Knapp 2010; Versluys 2015; Pitts and Versluys 2015; Witcher 2015. Horden and Purcell's work has been considered as an account on globalisation only because of its emphasis on connectivity and flows (Witcher 2015, 199). Hingley titled one of his books, *Globalizing Roman culture* where, while providing valid discussion on Romanisation and identity, he ended up discussing the drawbacks of the concept of globalisation in the Roman Empire and the risks of using it nowadays as an excuse for global capitalism (Hingley 2005), as Witcher similarly argued (Witcher 2000). Since the late 1990s, historians and archaeologists have employed the concept and/or the vocabulary of globalisation also for Iron Age/Hellenistic Mediterranean (Hodos 2010) and for early medieval Europe (Heather 2010).
[119] Collar 2012; 2013. Collar is the only scholar who has applied network analysis when discussing religion; she examined the distribution of one of the main gods of the Roman army (Dolichenus) across the Roman Empire, including the Near East. For network theory in sociological research: Granovetter, 1973. Amongst the earliest important contributions on network theory in antiquity: Horden and Purcell 2000; Malkin 2005; Van Dommelen and Knapp 2010; more recent references on networks: Graham 2006; Collar 2013; Seland 2013; 2014; Brughmans 2013; 2014; Brughmans *et al.* 2014; 2015. For ongoing research on network analysis to archaeology and history, see http://connectedpast.net/ and https://archaeologicalnetworks.wordpress.com/
[120] Nicolet 1980; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994; Johnson 1997; Revell 2008; 2013; 2015.
[121] Alcock 1993.
[122] Alongside the concept of local identities, the theory of globalisation associated with the Roman Empire started indirectly in the 1990s in contraposition to the concept of Romanisation (Pitts and Versluys 2015: 19–20).
[123] McGrew 1992a: 65; 1992b: 262.
[124] McGrew 1992a: 65.
[125] Wells 1999: 192–3; Witcher 2000; Laurence 2001; Hingley 2005; Sweetman 2007; Pitts 2008; Versluys 2013; Pitts and Versluys 2015: 19.

persistence of local identities but considers them to be connected with each other and part of a global system.[126] Similarly, I wish to disregard the erroneous notion of Roman imposition over local cultures. Rather, I consider that the fact of belonging to the same Roman province, as other parts of the Near East, favoured human interactions between the pre-existing cultures in the Near East and the Hauran; moreover, I suggest that the building of a Roman road network in the Near East facilitated these interconnections. Similarly the local population of the Hauran and their cult centres can be considered as part of a world interconnected with other cultures of the Near East. This was not determined and dictated by the Roman rule but by human interactions (i.e. the contacts, over time, of the elite of the Hauran with other cultures of the Near East). These interactions were developed from the pre-provincial period and facilitated by caravan routes in the pre-provincial period as well as by Roman roads in the provincial period. These social interactions in the provincial period were eased by the fact that different cultures, including the Hauran, were under the same political authority and belonged to the same Roman province.

Bearing in mind that the problematic nature of the theory of globalisation in the Roman Empire is still a challenge,[127] the monograph takes inspiration only from the general concepts of networks, which is a central part of this notion shared with the network analysis.

Recent scholars, such as Brughmans, Seland and Collar, have discussed network analysis in detail and have applied it to archaeological matters.[128] Network analysis considers the dynamic interactions that shape and dissolve networks as significant factors that affect cultural change and influence ideas and their accomplishment.[129] Networks not only link different cities together in various ways, but they also incorporate every point between them, including any rural settlements, from humble farmsteads upwards.[130] These networks are created from relationships (called ties) between individuals (agents or actors) (called nodes) that, by carrying information (e.g. commerce, culture, their own ideas, their customs), are able to transfer, spread and influence people's decisions and other individuals' ideas.[131] Therefore, actors and actions are interdependent.[132] This interdependency makes the world interconnected and 'globalised', where the action of an individual in one place may have consequences on an action somewhere else. Networks are not static: they evolve on the basis of the decisions that people make, and networks also influence those decisions.[133] The different types of information that spread between actors/agents also include religious beliefs that spread thanks to social relationships, as demonstrated in sociological research by Granovetter.[134] For instance, Collar has applied network analysis to research into the diffusion of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, eased by the military networks of the Roman army, the Jewish Diaspora in the West and the cult of Theos Hypsistos.[135]

This monograph does not create or use different network models to estimate and measure the different ties between actors.[136] Rather, it uses principles from the network analysis as heuristic concepts,[137] in order to propose that there were relationships (which would have been called 'ties' by researchers working on network analysis) between the population of the Hauran and other Near Eastern cultures. Such relationships could have shaped the culture of the Hauran itself, including its religious life (which would have been called 'flows' in network terms).

Especially Bendlin, Kaiser and Butcher but also scholars in recent volumes on Roman religion in the Near East, from the series *Contextualising the Sacred*, have considered religion and religious identities as dynamic aspects. They have focused on interaction between native and Roman and Greek cultures which resulted in local response to Roman and Greek religious traditions on different levels.[138] Specifically in 1997 Bendlin argued, as endorsed by Kaizer in 2000, that religion was an open system and the form it took resulted from this constant renegotiation

[126] Whitmarsh 2014: 2.

[127] Insoll 2006; Hingley 2015. Some scholars argued that globalisation cannot be applied to the Roman world or any ancient cultures because overall they considered globalisation as a phenomenon associated with the 20th century and modern society and capitalism (Giddens 1990; Tomlinson 1999; Witcher 2000; Hingley 2005; 2015; Naerebout 2006–7; Greene 2008). However, the idea of belonging to a whole and common entity was already embraced in Roman culture in 160–120 BC and in the 2nd century AD according to ancient authors. According to Polybius (*Polybius, Histories* 1.3) every action in a region, such as Italy and Africa, would have triggered other events in another region, such as Asia and Greece, despite their distance, and they would have determined common outcomes. According to the Greek orator Aelius Aristides, in the middle of the 2nd century AD contemporaries were aware of the fact that they inhabited a common connected and organised world – thanks to the Roman rule that 'bridged the rivers in various ways, cut carriage roads through the mountains, filled the desert places with post stations and civilized everything with your way of life and good order'. His narration was a panegyric speech, so its purpose was to please and compliment his Roman audience (Sommer 2015). The Roman world had several typical traits of forms of globalisation in the past; some of them have been identified, namely: the increased connectivity, the existence of a common market, the domestic impact of market, integration, the idea of belonging to one world (Rothschild 1998; Hopkins 2002: 24; Jennings 2015: 9, 12; Pitts and Versluys 2015: 15–9).

[128] Collar 2012; 2013; Seland 2013; 2014; Brughmans *et al.* 2015.

[129] Collar 2012: 1.

[130] Graham 2006: 49.

[131] Brughmans 2013: 625, 632.

[132] Wasserman and Faust 1994: 4.

[133] Graham 2009: 683.

[134] Granovetter 1973; Collar 2012: 110.

[135] Collar 2012: 110; Collar 2013.

[136] This is oversimplified; for a better understanding of network analysis and different network models, see Knappett 2013; Brughmans 2013; http://connectedpast.net/, for instance.

[137] Fulminante 2014.

[138] Bendlin 1997: 52–4; Kaizer 2000: 225–6; Butcher 2003: 335; Blömer et al. 2015; Raja 2017.

of religious elements between imperial dominion and local response.[139] This dynamic interaction is not limited to these two dual forces but also between multiple non-Roman, specifically Near Eastern cultures in the case of the Near East, as Kaiser discussed.[140] Religion and religious identities have been considered dynamic entities because they responded by circumstances and various factors including political and socio-economic powers.[141] Therefore, in the study of religion there has been a recent emphasis on the geographical, historical, socio-political and cultural context where religion and religious identities developed.[142]

Additionally, the joint Roman Archaeology Conference and Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference in 2016 was an extremely inspiring forum to discuss religion and identities in the Roman Empire from different angles. The following sessions and papers were of a particular interest: 'Dynamics of cults and cult places in the expanding Roman Empire' organised by Tesse Stek, 'Diversity and Identity in Roman Iudaea/Syria Palaestina' organised by Adi Erlich, 'Religious diversity in the Roman Province of Dalmatia: new approaches and challenges' organised by Nirvana Silnović and Dora Ivanišević, and the paper 'Worshipping the Roman emperor: uneven and combined developments?' by Dies van der Linde, together with my own paper, 'Marxist dialectic vs. the predominant notion of local identities: the study of cult centres in the Hauran (southern Syria) (100 BC–AD 300)' from the session 'Marxist tradition in Roman archaeology' organised by Andrew Gardner and Mauro Puddu. Together, they also convey the diversity of approaches to religion and identities in the empire along with their validity. Their findings fuel the perception of the annexation of pre-existing cultures to the Roman Empire as resulting in a complex, variable and dynamic phenomenon between those 'pre-existing' and 'new' traditions arriving with the Romans. Based on these premises, the monograph will seek this constant dynamic renegotiation between different cultures but on multiple levels. It will not limit attention to the dual discourse between local culture and imperial dominion, but will also view how religious elements used in different cultures were integrated or adopted in the Hauran.

I have undertaken a comparative study, which is a widely used method, together with a more innovative approach, landscape analysis. However, I use a systematic comparative study of multiple datasets, instead of an aspect or an element of rural cult centres of the Hauran. In contrast to previous work, I also question resemblances by considering concepts from recent work and theories on religion and cultures as mentioned above. They are: the social meaning and role of sanctuaries, interactions of different cultures that influenced and shaped religious and building traditions, and the multidirectional dialectical changing discourse over time derived from different cultures in the Near East.

By a systematic comparative study I mean looking systematically at resemblances of multiple aspects of rural cult centres (architecture, gods, onomastics of benefactors and dedicators) in the Hauran, firstly, with those from the territories that had the same political authorities as the Hauran (the Nabataean and the Herodian kingdoms) (§ Ch.3), and, then, with those from neighbouring populations and cultures that did not border the Hauran but did share common patterns and beliefs with the study area (people associated with Safaitic script, Palmyra and Parthia in the pre-provincial and the provincial periods) (§ Ch.4–5).

The people of the Hauran represented by the rural cult centres and who can be identified through analysis of cult centres were a segmented part of the population of the Hauran, i.e. its elite. They would have been benefactors of rural cult centres as they played the major role in the religious life of monumental public cult places: they had the funds for building temples; they commissioned major dedications and statues; they were responsible for performing the cult acts and deciding which gods people would worship.[143] However, the study of cult centres can provide us with information about a wider spectrum of people of the Hauran than just its elite. While the identification of benefactors can offer up the identity of a segment of Hauran society, the identification of the character of a deity (e.g. a local or a widely worshipped god in the Near East) might indicate who commissioned a temple and local and non-local devotees who visited. Sanctuaries were not just expressions of a wealthy individual but expressions of a collective agency; of worshippers who could have come from different social classes and who could still have shared common beliefs and religious traditions and participated in rituals during religious festivals. This is reinforced by some examples of rural sanctuaries in the Hauran, for instance those at Dâmit Il-'Alyā[144] and Lubbayn[145] where village communities commissioned the cult centre. Sanctuaries were public centres and meeting places for communities. Devotees would have worshipped the god that a temple was dedicated to and participated in religious practices in a sanctuary only if they recognised the god represented as their own and if they were familiar with the space where they worshipped. So looking at the layout of cult centres, their architecture and gods can give us an

[139] Bendlin 1997: 52–4; Kaizer 2000: 225–6; 2002: 27; 2013: 66–7.
[140] Kaiser 2015.
[141] Frood and Raja 2014; Blömer et al. 2015.
[142] http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=CS
[143] Rives 2000: 258.
[144] *PPUAES* III no.800 2, 8.
[145] *Wadd.* no.2045–6; Ewing 1895: 69–70, Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324–5; *PPUAES* III no.793.

insight into a broader spectrum of the society than just the elite.

It is necessary, therefore, to analyse a comprehensive series of datasets in order to have a better understanding both of the elite and of who visited these sanctuaries.

The aspects of the rural cult centres that will be considered are: the layout of cult centres; the style of their architecture and decoration; the style of statues; the gods that the sanctuaries were dedicated to and the gods mentioned in inscriptions that can be identified as belonging to the cult centres; the benefactors mentioned in inscriptions and those represented in statues; and epigraphic and archaeological evidence of cult and economic activities associated with these sanctuaries.

The type of script used in the inscriptions (i.e. Greek, Nabataean or Aramaic) will not be considered as a separate determinant in understanding the society of the Hauran, but it will be included in the discussion of rural cult centres, bearing in mind some limitations. Macdonald argues that the use of a specific writing is not a matter of ethnicity or a political expression, as suggested by the following examples. In several papyri in the Nabataean kingdom some members of a Jewish community wrote in Nabataean, whereas others used Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. A man who specified that he was Nabataean commissioned an inscription in the Palmyrene language only because he happened to be working in the area of Palmyra. Nabataeans who were out in the desert, east of the Hauran, wrote graffiti in Safaitic. Therefore Macdonald points out that we should not assume that whoever wrote or commissioned a Nabataean inscription considered themselves as ethnically or politically Nabataean. It is the same for whoever writes in English – he/she is not necessarily English by nationality or ethnicity.[146] The choice of the script may be related to different external factors. They can be: the socio-political background where the inscription was placed, the socio-political background of its commissioner or scribe, and the socio-political background of the addressees of inscriptions. The location where inscriptions were placed, and therefore their recipients, seem to be key factors, as the following case can elucidate. Although Greek was the main official language in the Near East,[147] many other scripts were used, for instance at Palmyra there is a high number of bilingual inscriptions.[148] This interplay of languages in inscriptions in the Near East[149] must be triggered by the presence of different cultures. As in the wide use of English today or Greek in the Near East, the choice to use one script instead of another may also be due to the necessity of communicating to a wider audience. The choice to use Greek in the Near East may be an expression of elite wealth and propaganda, as inscriptions were everlasting monuments of glory and power(§ Ch.4.1). Therefore, the script of inscriptions is a supplemental element that I will integrate into my research, especially when discussing other aspects of rural cult centres, such as their deities, benefactors and dedicators(§ Ch.4.1).

Scholars have already compared the architectural and sculptural styles in the Hauran with those from other cultures in the Near East and have seen certain resemblances. However, they did not fully explore the influence on the architectural and sculptural style in the Hauran from neighbouring and more distant cultures (§ Ch.5). In addition to previous research, I take the results from this comparative study a stage further to delineate the connections between the Hauran and the cultures that shared common features with it. Additionally, I consider the diffusion of an architectural or statuary style, or a god, in the Hauran. This enables us to distinguish the geographical concentration of a type of architecture, statue or god, and to discuss implications as to why a particular concentration occurs in one area instead of another. It further allows us to seek out the relationships between cultures that shared similar architectural styles, or the worship of the same gods.

This monograph will start by comparing rural cult centres and sanctuaries in the territory ruled by the same political authority (the Nabataean and the Herodian kingdoms, the Roman Empire, in particularly the Roman provinces in the Near East) (§ Ch.3). The use of similar sculptural and religious architectural styles and the worship of the same gods in rural cult centres and in the territory ruled by the same political authority imply that the architecture and the beliefs of rural centres were deeply influenced by their political government. Therefore, the rural cult centres were more a reflection of the historical situation that they lived in. A variation in architectural structures or the changing of gods during the Roman period might imply that social dynamics were due to political changes, as maintained by the French team.[150] The presence of honorific statues of any members of the different political authorities mentioned above will also be examined, as they will give an insight into the political power.

The third term of comparison is the religious architecture, the sculptural style, and the gods of cultures that did not border with the Hauran. I have taken Palmyra and Parthia as a sample from the various cultures in the Near East that might have some similarities with the cult centres in the Hauran, because they appear amongst the most frequently mentioned by previous scholars when looking for architectural and sculptural resemblances (§ Ch.4). This does not mean

[146] Macdonald 2003c: 39.
[147] Parca 2001: 71; Isaac 2009: 43.
[148] For instance, see Millar 1993: 232–3; Kaizer 2002.
[149] This term is used by Millar (1993: 233).
[150] Dentzer 1986: 308.

that the rural cult centres of the Hauran did not share common patterns with other sanctuaries or cultures elsewhere in the Near East.

Recurrent similarities between two territories can suggest direct or indirect connections between communities that were not under the same political control. This needs to be verified by further evidence of contacts, when it is possible.

When discussing benefactors in the analysis of rural cult centres, it is necessary to differentiate between those who commissioned a temple (patrons) and those who dedicated an inscription, an altar or a statue to the god of a cult centre (dedicators). Their different financial contribution towards a cult centre can mirror their different levels of significance within the elite of the Hauran.

The identification of patrons and dedicators is also achieved by examining inscriptions and statues. However, we need to bear in mind the difficulty of identifying the subject of statues when there is no pedestal associated with them.

The role of benefactors in a sanctuary and their importance in the society of the Hauran can also be understood by looking at the location of their inscriptions within the architectural framework[151] and their visibility.[152] For instance, an inscription on an altar or a statue's pedestal is different from one on a lintel on the façade of a temple, as the latter is part of the temple's structure, and everyone could see it, which is unlikely in the case of pedestals. In the former case, the benefactor would have played a significant role in the cult centre. Inscriptions should be considered as monuments of glory and power because the visual impact of the inscriptions is more significant than the actual text. The basis for such reasoning is that inscriptions at a higher elevation would not have been legible from below. Although literacy was not widespread,[153] it is most likely that the local attendants of the cult centres were already aware of the meaning of these inscriptions and what they represented, and who the benefactors were. The names of the patrons might have been declared during the opening of the sanctuary or during religious festivals; for instance, in some cases decrees were displayed and read aloud for the illiterate worshippers.[154] Alternatively, the name of the patron might have been transmitted by word of mouth. Taking into account the location of the inscriptions is also valuable in terms of discerning the role of the benefactor, especially when the text is fragmentary or does not explicitly mention the erection of the structure the inscription commemorates.

The identity of benefactors and dedicators is not a straightforward process. In some cases, inscriptions explicitly mention members of local villages, or of a local community, as dedicators or major benefactors. It is more difficult when only the names of individuals are mentioned. We can suggest that individuals with striking and distinctive names found in other parts of the Hauran, or in specific places or cultures, might have shared the same origin or might have had a strong connection or influence, as names were traditionally derived from the family, as well as partially affected by fashion and beliefs.[155]

In short, through the analysis of statues and inscriptions, patrons or dedicators of rural cult centres are fully discussed in this monograph, as this matter has not been previously fully interrogated by scholars. The roles of the following types of individuals or groups that can be approximately identified in rural cult centres will be investigated: Nabataean individuals or kings, Herodian kings and soldiers (§ Ch.3), individuals associated with people who made Safaitic graffiti (§ Ch.2 for a description of these groups) (§ Ch.4.1), Roman soldiers (§ Ch.5.1) and individuals bearing a 'Roman' name (§ Ch.5.3). Adopting a Roman name suggests a strong connection between the population in the Hauran and the individuals with non-local cultures, and it indicates integration of a non-local or non-pre-existing custom into the culture of the population in the Hauran (§ Ch.5.4 for a better explanation of the matter). Identifying the role of these individuals from different cultures and influenced by non-local cultures leads to the core of my argument. Namely, it will indicate the complexity of the rural society of the Hauran and emphasise its potential connection and integration with the broader network of the Near East in the pre-provincial and provincial periods.

With regards to identification of cult activities, starting with a detailed analysis by Steinsapir of rituals, I will, then, examine archaeological evidence in rural cult centres across the Hauran that can determine what kind of ritual practices and on what scale they were undertaken (this analysis will be mostly concentrated on their layout) (§ Ch.6). The identification of the scale of rituals can lead us to perceive to what extent sanctuaries were complex entities that transcended religious purposes. Rituals involved the gathering of a large number of people for religious festivals; thus, they became key interactions not only between the gods and the individuals, but also between the individuals

[151] Février 1989: 75.
[152] Newby 2007: 6.
[153] Petrucci 1986; Corbier 2006: 12–3.
[154] Corbier 2006: 47.
[155] Sartre 2007a: 200.

themselves.[156] These were perfect occasions to hold periodic markets. Merchants would have profited from the large numbers of people attending the event and in some cases would have benefited from a tax reduction on their sales, as markets were associated with sanctuaries according to written sources.[157] This is the case in the cult centre at Baetocaece, in northern Syria, on the basis of inscriptions.[158] Therefore, because of the connection between religious festivals and markets, the identification of major ritual practices for religious festivals becomes a key factor to investigate not only commerce but also other types of economic activities (e.g. pottery production). Goods produced by the sanctuary itself could have been sold during religious festivals. Periodic markets and other economic activities associated with rural cult centres in the Hauran are investigated at this stage. Occasionally the personnel who managed the sanctuary finances and economic matters are mentioned in inscriptions: identifying them means an accumulation of information towards the reconstruction of the life of rural cult centres as well as deciphering the complexity of cult centres in terms of internal organisation, including the economic activities of sanctuaries.

Throughout the monograph, in combination with the comparative study of archaeological and epigraphic data, landscape analysis is undertaken in order to explain the presence of shared patterns (e.g. same god, same benefactors) across sites in the Hauran and across the Near East, to evaluate the importance of a sanctuary for its ritual activities and to identify the presence of any economic activities, especially periodic markets. By 'landscape analysis'[159] I mean the contextualisation of cult centres of the Hauran and distribution patterns of similar types of data, within their natural and socio-cultural, political and economic landscapes.

For instance, the linking of sites by roads would have facilitated the dispersal of similar cultural traits. Moreover, the concentration of sites with similar data patterns would enable us to circumscribe either the same community or communities that shared the same religious traits, and questions the reasons for this distribution by looking at the surrounding natural and socio-political landscape. Additionally, for example, the location of a sanctuary on a road might suggest that it stood at a crossroads in terms of the movement of people, and thus indicate whether or not the sanctuary was a main religious centre and whether or not commercial activities took place.[160] For instance, markets associated with religious festivals occurred in the sanctuary at Mamre, on the road linking Hebron and Jerusalem.[161] Additionally, on the one hand, markets in sanctuaries that did not produce their own goods and were isolated from other settlements would have found it necessary to provide for pilgrims' primary needs such as food; on the other hand, periodic markets associated with religious festivals would have provided a great opportunity to sell the sanctuary's products.

The following chapters will gradually define the life of rural cult centres in the Hauran and of the people who used them, by reconstructing the activities of these centres, and, especially, by unravelling the relationships and influences between rural cult centres in the Hauran and therefore the elite and those associated with them, and the religious centres and cultures in the Near East that bordered or did not border with the Hauran over time.

Chapter 2 provides a brief description of the geography of the Hauran and its historical and socio-economic background from the pre-provincial to the provincial period to emphasise the connection and integration of the people who inhabited the Hauran with those other cultures that neighboured or did not border with the Hauran.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 reassess the scholarly argument of the local character of rural cult centres of the Hauran. They will re-evaluate the nature of the centres and place them and the Hauran as part of broader networks in the Near East in the pre-provincial (§ Ch.3–4) and provincial periods (§ Ch.5). In Chapter 3, I firstly re-examine the Nabataean presence and influence in rural cult centres of the Hauran, which has been the topic most discussed over the centuries, and, then, the Herodian impact, as these were the two main political authorities that controlled the region in the pre-provincial period. In Chapter 4, the actual identification of the benefactors and main dedicators of rural cult centres in the Hauran in the pre-provincial period will be investigated through the analysis of inscriptions and the main gods worshipped in these centres. When considering the main benefactors and

[156] North 2000: 44.
[157] MacMullen 1970: 335 ff.
[158] *IGLS* VII no.4028 A–E.
[159] 'Landscape archaeology is concerned with the analysis of the cultural landscape through time. This entails the recording and dating of cultural factors that remain as well as their interpretation in terms of social, economic and environmental factors. It is assumed that the natural landscape has been reorganised either consciously or subconsciously for a variety of religious, economic, social, political, environmental or symbolic purposes. Evidence includes traces of earth-moving activities, patterns or sequences of vegetation, traces of fields or gardens, settlements and various types of land-use practices' (Wilkinson 2003: 3–4 adapted from Metheny 1996, 384). Some references on landscape studies, although this list is far from being exhaustive, include: Cosgrove 1984; Cherry 1983; Aston 1985; Tilley 1994; Metheny 1996; Fisher and Thurston 1999; Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Rossignol 1992; Feinman 1999: 685; Stoddart and Zubrow 1999; Thomas 2001; Wilkinson 2003; Chapman 2006.
[160] MacMullen 1970: 333.
[161] Magen 1993: 939.

dedicators, the presence and influence of the people who made Safaitic graffiti will be discussed. Chapter 4 concludes by discussing influences on architecture and statues from rural cult centres in the Hauran in the pre-provincial period from distant cultures (Palmyra and Parthia), and highlights significant connections between these areas. Chapter 5 discusses who shaped the rural religious cultural identity of the Hauran in the provincial period and how it was defined by influences and connections with other cultures in the Near East in the provincial period. This will be accomplished by discussing the main benefactors and dedicators of rural temples in the provincial period (Roman soldiers and individuals who used 'Roman' names), by looking at the cult of 'new' gods (e.g. Mithras, Apollo and Nemesis) and by assessing the development of the architectural style of rural cult centres in the provincial period (through a comparative study with examples across the Near East).

Chapter 6 attempts to reconstruct the life of these centres, by considering their religious and non-religious activities and their personnel.

This study of rural cult centres in the Hauran will put religious buildings, rural areas and this region into a new perspective: reappraising them as an integral part of the broader network of the Near East. The conclusion (§ Ch.7) will bring together the findings of the five chapters of analysis outlined above (§ Ch.3–6).

Chapter 2

The geographical and historical background of the Hauran

This chapter aims to contextualise the research described in this monograph by providing a brief description of the geography of the Hauran (§ Ch.2.1) and its historical and socio-economic background from the pre-provincial to the provincial period (from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD). This chapter discusses the historical and socio-economic background of the region, firstly, through an overview of historical sources (§ Ch.2.2), then, through a study of epigraphic and archaeological evidence (§ Ch.2.3), and, finally, through a description of the road network of the region (§ Ch.2.4).[162] In contrast to the previous work which mostly focused on the local identity of the region (§ Ch.1.2, Ch.4), this chapter aims to emphasise the Hauran as the crossroads of different cultures facilitated by a road system. This will help us comprehend the ultimate aim of this monograph – that of perceiving the rural cult centres of the Hauran and the region itself as integrating part of a human network on a macro level.

2.1. Topography

The Hauran includes micro-regions with different landscapes and climatic conditions (Map 1).

The northernmost part, Leja,[163] has the most hostile terrain, because of the lava which forms a plateau,[164] and an arid climate – the average yearly rainfall is roughly 150 mm. Therefore it is mostly suitable only for livestock rearing.[165]

Djebel al'Arab,[166] to the south of Leja, is a volcanic mountain range, from 1000 to 1839 m high.[167] It has reliable rainfall (annual average of precipitation 350 mm),[168] also facilitated by the presence of the mountain massif of the Djebel al'Arab (Map 1).[169] Therefore Djebel al'Arab has a favourable terrain and climatic conditions for viniculture, olive growing and arboriculture.[170] To the north-east of the Djebel al'Arab, Saceea is a more fertile area as a result of its climate, due to its high altitude (over 1000 m), and the presence of water coming from the nearby mountains.[171] However, it is an extremely small plateau, less than 100 km^2, therefore its agricultural production and income must have been limited.

The western part of the Hauran, specifically between the Golan Heights, in the west, and Leja, in the east, has a hilly terrain similar to that in the Djebel al'Arab (Map 1). The water descending from the massif of Mount Hermon on the north-eastern side permits similar kinds of agriculture to Djebel al'Arab, despite lower annual rainfall (over 250 mm).[172]

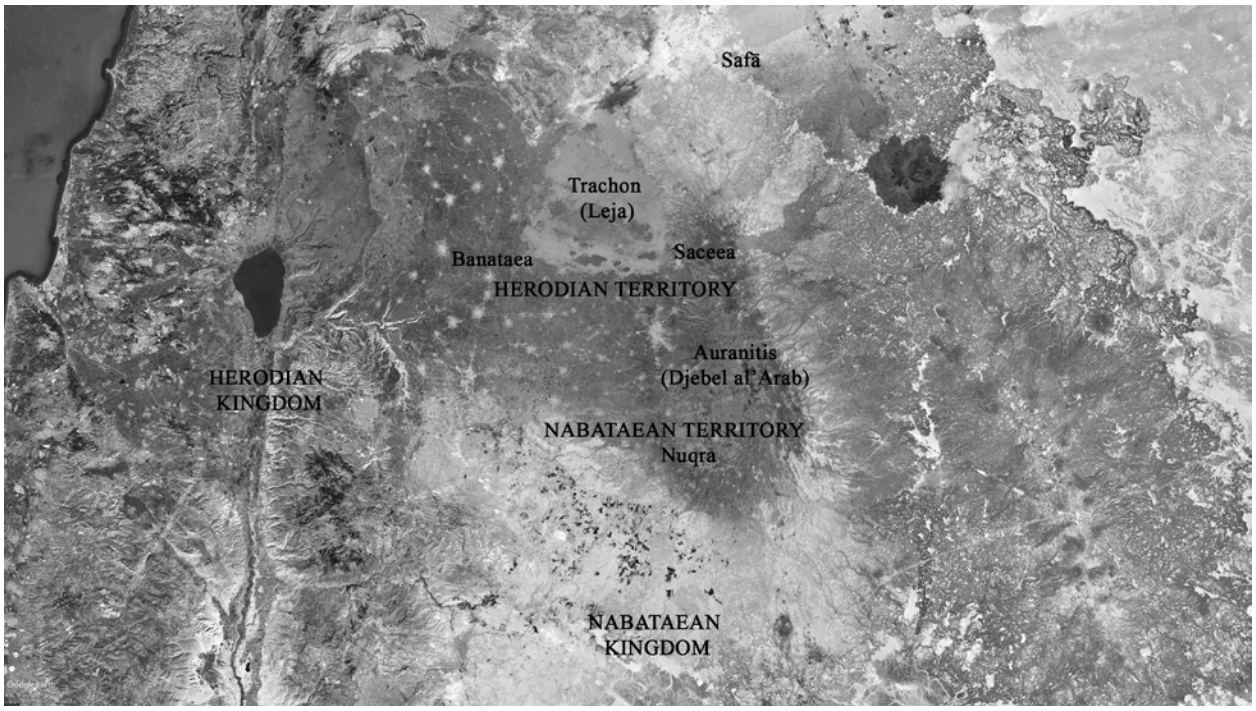
Nuqra lies to the south-west of the Djebel al'Arab (Map 1). It is the only fertile plain of the Hauran, between 600 and 1000 m high, with a yearly rainfall of 200–350 mm. These conditions enable cereal production.[173]

2.2. Historical background according to historical sources

The main historical sources that provide an insight into the Hauran are from the 1st-century historians Josephus and Strabo. They do not discuss the Hauran as a single territory, but refer to three zones: Trachonitis or Trachon (today Leja), Auranitis (now Djebel al'Arab and Saceea) and Banataea[174] (between the Golan Heights and Leja).[175] The plain of Nuqra, with the main city Bosra (see below), is thought to be the area that ancient texts called Auranitis, although it may be to the south of Banataea[176] (Map 1). These zones did not have clear geographical borders; it is arguable that they were based on the different populations that lived there, although there is no clear structural division.

Historical sources inform us that the Hauran was a territory of conflicts and disputes between different kingdoms from the 3rd–2nd century BC to the 1st century AD (the Seleucid Empire, the Ptolemaic Empire, the Nabataean kingdom, Jewish kingdoms and the Ituraean principality). These conflicts brought a long period of instability to the region, including raids by

[162] For a comprehensive historical background of the Hauran, see Dentzer 1986: 387 ff.; Engels 2007; for Leja, see Fauriat-Sartre and Sartre 2014: 1 ff.
[163] It is also named Ledja.
[164] Dentzer 1999: 241.
[165] Gentelle 1985: 23.
[166] It is also called Djebel Hauran, Jabal al-Arab, Jabal al Druze or just Druze.
[167] Villeneuve 1985: 56, 121.
[168] Gentelle 1985: 21, 26.
[169] Dentzer 1985: 401.
[170] Villeneuve 1985: 70.
[171] Villeneuve 1985: 71.
[172] Villeneuve 1985: 70.
[173] Villeneuve 1985: 70.
[174] It is commonly identified with the territory of Bashan mentioned in the Bible, but the limits of this area and the evidence are blurred and partial. For a better understanding on the matter, see Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 4 ff.
[175] Jos. *AJ* 15. 345–48, 352–64; *BJ* 1. 366, 399–400; Strab. *Geog.* 16. 2, 16, 20.
[176] Sartre 2011: vii.



Map 1: The Hauran (the author)

robbers and outlaws, up until the Roman occupation.[177] Since the 3rd–2nd century BC, the region had become a matter of conflict between the Seleucids and the Ptolemaic Empire,[178] despite its belonging to the Seleucid Empire.[179]

Historical sources, mostly Josephus and Strabo, offer some information that is far from clear and exhaustive about the involvement of the Hauran in conflicts between the Nabataean and the Jewish kingdoms and the intrusion of bandits, as follows.

Historical sources refer to the Nabataeans as nomadic people of the 4th century BC.[180] Their origin is uncertain: they could have come from the Fertile Crescent, according to Graf's argument, based on the linguistic affinities between Nabataean writing and the script used in the Fertile Crescent.[181] Then, once the Nabataean population settled in north Saudi Arabia and southern Jordan, they could have merged with the Edomites (an indigenous population in southern Jordan), as some of the customs of this population, such as the worship of the Edomite god Qos, persisted in the Nabataean culture.[182] Our understanding of the Nabateans is clearer from the 2nd century BC, when it has been possible to determine a clear chronological succession of kings up to the end of the kingdom, thanks to literary and epigraphic evidence and coins.[183] Nabataean territory encompassed the southern part of Transjordan (modern-day Jordan), the Negev (southern Israel), the Hijaz (north-west Arabia),[184] the southern part of the Djebel al'Arab and the plain of Nuqra, with Bosra. Bosra was the main centre from the 1st century BC,[185] but it acquired major political significance from the mid 1st century AD onwards until the end of the kingdom, as it became the capital of the Nabataean kingdom, in place of Petra.[186] The Zenon Papyri (259 BC) and a stele in the Damascus Museum narrate that the Nabateans had been in the Hauran since the 3rd century BC, although exactly where, and their role in the region, are unknown.[187] They also temporarily controlled Damascus in 84–72 BC and Auranitis for a few years in the 1st century BC (before 23 BC, perhaps 30–23 BC) on the basis of Josephus' account. He narrates that a certain Zenodorus (ethnarch of the Iturarean territory of Lysanias) sold Djebel al'Arab to the Nabataeans in 30 BC.[188] This also implies that at some point before that date, the Djebel al'Arab belonged to the Iturarean principality. The Ituraeans, of unclear origin, essentially occupied present-day Lebanon (Mount Lebanon and anti-Lebanon mountains and the Beqaa valley) and part of northern Israel (Hermon and

[177] Jos. *JA* 13. 374 ff.; *BJ* 1. 89 ff., Jos. *AJ* 15. 345–8, 352; 16, 271; Strab. *Geog.* 16. 2, 20.
[178] Dentzer 1986: 387 ff., especially 394.
[179] Sartre 1989.
[180] Diod. Sic. 19. 94 ff.
[181] Graf 1990: 46, 67.
[182] Healey 2001: 126.
[183] Wenning 1993.
[184] Starcky 1966; Negev 1977; Bowersock 1983; Butcher 2003: 96; Wenning 2007.
[185] Sartre 2007b: 9–12.
[186] Bowersock 1983: 73; Sartre 1985; Dentzer *et al.* 2007: 31–8.
[187] Bowersock 1983: 17–9; Starcky 1985: 167–8.
[188] Jos. *AJ* 15. 345, 352.

the Golan Heights) from the 2nd century BC,[189] while also expanding towards Damascus and the Hauran. The Romans seemed to put an end to this kingdom in the 1st century BC after Pompey's successful campaigns against the Ituraeans, according to Strabo.[190] Although some modern scholars have considered the Itureans as outlaws and nomads,[191] there is no a clear evidence for this.[192] The Ituraeans only threatened Damascus in 84 BC[193] and supported the outlaw bands of Leja, especially during the raids against Damascus in 23 BC, according to Josephus' narration.[194]

Although the Ituraeans have been considered to be Arabs,[195] some scholars, e.g. Myers and Aliquot, suggest that the Ituraeans belonged to a principality that adopted some aspects of Hellenistic culture, such as Greek legends on coins and the predominant use of Greek language, which the names of Ituraean rulers also demonstrate.[196] Written evidence informs us that the main Ituraean settlements were Chalcis of Lebanon and Abila of Lysanias.[197] It is difficult to identify archaeological evidence of the Ituraean principality due to the lack of knowledge of distinctive characteristics, for example pottery or architectural style. Some surveys and excavations in Hermon and the Golan Heights, the site at Dar for example, have revealed cult places with enclosures and evidence of cult feasting and sanctuaries dated to the Hellenistic period, when the Ituraean principality was ruling in this territory. At these sites, pottery produced in the Golan territory has also been found[198] and has been classified as Ituraean.[199] However, to support this classification such pottery would have to be recovered across the Ituraean territory, and, in fact, nothing has yet been found.[200]

The Jews first appeared in the Hauran when the region was involved in the Maccabean revolts against the Seleucid Empire. The Jews marched towards the Hauran, where they entered into conflicts with nomadic Arabs and the Nabataeans, conquering and destroying cities and villages, including Bosra in 163 BC.[201] Then the Hasmonean realm of Judea (Israel), an independent dynasty from 129 BC, which was similar to the model of Seleucid Hellenistic rulers, expanded under Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BC), to the east of Jordan. The territory of this kingdom included Galilee and the Golan Heights (named Gaulanitis in ancient sources), just west of Banataea, after the victory against the Nabataean king Obodas at Garada in Gaulanitis.[202] During the conflicts of this kingdom with the Nabataeans and the Roman interventions in the 1st century BC, Pompey reduced the Jewish territory to Judaea, Galilee and Peraea.[203]

Because of disputes over the Hasmonean succession, Rome decided that the next king would be Herod; he named the kingdom after himself (the Herodian kingdom) and became a Roman ally.[204] After a punitive expedition led by Varro against the raiders in Trachon,[205] Augustus decided to give Trachon, Auranitis and Batanaea to Herod in order to secure the region against lawless elements, whose raids were directed especially against Damascus.[206] Two Herodian military bases were, in fact, founded in the Hauran: one at Bathyra, and the other consisting of Idumaean settlers, the exact location of which is unknown.[207] According to Josephus, the Zamarids, soldiers of Babylonian origin, were settled by Herod in Bathyra in 10 BC.[208] Bathyra has been identified as the present-day Basir on the north-western fringe of Leja on the basis of their toponym.[209] More recently it has been suggested that Bathyra may have been Shā'rah, because an inscription from this site is dated according to the year of a colony, which could refer to the colonists from the Herodian kingdom, and Herodian soldiers settled at Bathyra, but it is not specified in any inscriptions.[210] Interestingly, pottery finds indicate evidence of occupation at Shā'rah from the Bronze Age to the Ottoman period, including during the Herodian kingdom.[211] However, the best evidence of a military presence at Shā'rah is in Roman times on the basis of a Mithraeum (§ Ch.5.2). Continuity of military presence in this village since the Herodian kingdom is a possibility, but it cannot be confirmed by compelling evidence.[212]

Herod divided his kingdom into three for his sons, Archelaus, Antipas and Philip, but Augustus refused to grant the title of king to them all. Archelaus was the ethnarch of Judaea. Being unable to handle religious and political situations, he was deposed by Augustus in AD 6. The territory under his control was annexed to the province of Syria. Antipas ruled two separate regions: Galilee and Peraea. As a consequence of the failure of his diplomatic marriage to the daughter of Aretas, king of

[189] Aliquot 1999–2003; 2009: 28 ff.; Myers 2010.
[190] Strab. *Geog.* 16. 2.18–20.
[191] Sartre 1992: 49; Scharrer 2010: 272.
[192] Jones 1931: 269; König *et al.* 1993; Gawlikowski 1997b: 41; Scharrer 2010: 272.
[193] Jos. *AJ* 13. 392–3, *BJ* 1. 103–4.
[194] Jos. *AJ* 15. 344–8; Denzter Feydy 1986: 399.
[195] Aliquot 1999-2003: 185, 187, 190–1, 293.
[196] Aliquot 2009: 35–7; Myers 2010.
[197] Aliquot 2009: 35–7; Myers 2010.
[198] Myers 2010: 42 ff.
[199] Dar 1993.
[200] Myers 2010: 77.
[201] Dentzer 1986, 390.
[202] Jos. *AJ* 13. 374 ff.
[203] Butcher 2003: 94.
[204] Butcher 2003: 94–5.
[205] Jos. *AJ* 15. 344–8; *BJ* 1. 398–400.
[206] Jos. *AJ* 15. 344–8; *BJ* 1. 398–400; Strab. *Geog.* 16. 2, 20; Sartre 1991: 63–4; Isaac 1990: 62–6.
[207] A military colony of 3000 Idumeans (Jos. *AJ* 16, 282).
[208] Jos. *AJ* 17. 23–8.
[209] Cohen 1972: 83–95; Isaac 1990: 62–65, 329–31; Kokkinos 2007: 294.
[210] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 104, 112–4 no.62a.
[211] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 104.
[212] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 104.

Nabataea,[213] Aretas invaded and inflicted a major defeat on the Herodian kingdom.[214] Antipas was then deposed by the emperor Caligula.[215] Philip ruled the Hauran (Batanaea, Trachon and Auranitis) until the end of his life in AD 33/34, when the territory was controlled by the Romans for a short time (AD 34–37).[216] Subsequently, the grandson of Herod, Agrippa I, was granted the title of king by the emperor Caligula and he also received the territory that had been under Antipas's rule (Galilee and Peraea) and Gaulanitis, the Batanaea and Trachon in AD 37, and, then, Auranitis, with the kingship of Judaea in AD 41–44, which was granted by the emperor Claudius.[217] His successor was his nephew, Agrippa II (AD 53–93/94), who ruled Trachon, Gaulanitis, Batanea and Abila (Jordan).[218] When Agrippa II died in AD 93/94 his territory was annexed to the Roman province of Syria.[219] The territory of the Hauran, roughly northward from Bosra, was part of this province and it was only later annexed to the Roman province of Arabia[220] under Septimius Severus at the end of the 2nd–beginning of the 3rd century.[221] By contrast, the southern part of the Hauran, comprising Bosra and its surroundings, was already integrated into the Roman province of Arabia with the rest of the Nabatean kingdom after its ending in AD 106.[222]

2.3. Archaeological and epigraphical evidence

The scanty archaeological evidence and the absence of monumental architecture up to the 1st century BC can be read as a consequence of the period of instability and insecurity described by historical sources. This period of instability provided no opportunities for building long-lasting monumental buildings, a process that mostly started at the end of the 1st century BC and into the 1st century AD, reaching its peak mostly in the provincial period when the region acquired a certain stability.[223] Across the Hauran, the earliest cult places were not monumental temples. Dated to the second half of the 2nd century–1st century BC, the earliest phase of Khirbet Massakeb (near Sī') consisted of a rectangular enclosure with massive orthostatic walls, where a door in the façade opened eastwards and an altar was at the centre of the courtyard.[224] Dated to the mid 1st century BC, the earliest phase of the cult centre at Saḥr was a finely made pavement with a stele or a *betyl* and a sort of apsis, formed by the rocky surface, on the eastern border of the paved area.[225] Pottery and animal bones dated to the 2nd–early 1st century BC on the hill, together with an inscribed stele mentioning the cult of four deities in 105–104 BC recovered in the valley, are first evidence of cult practices at Sī'.[226] The first actual temple was built at Sī' at the end of the 1st century BC.[227] Although a significant construction boom in temples took place in the pre-provincial period (with the construction of 15 cult centres), a higher percentage of rural cult centres was built in the provincial period in the Hauran (60% if we include sites that should be provincial but no accurate dating evidence is provided). This figure increases if pre-existing sanctuaries modified in the provincial period are included, or those that were still in use then (74%, including sites that should be provincial but no accurate dating evidence is available, or 66%, i.e. 29 out of 44 examples accurately dated) (Appendix).[228]

This pattern of ongoing growth and wealth from the 1st century AD, and especially in the provincial period, can be seen in the increasing quantity of settlement, for instance, in Leja, where the French team undertook a systematic archaeological investigation of the subject. There is an extremely low number of sites from the 2nd century BC until the 1st century AD. Eight sites have been identified from the 2nd century BC and nine from

[213] Jos. *AJ* 18. 109–15.
[214] Jos. *AJ* 18. 109–19.
[215] Butcher 2003: 95–6.
[216] Jos. *AJ* 18. 106–8.
[217] Jos *AJ* 18. 224–37; 19. 274–7; *BJ* 2. 214.
[218] Jos *AJ* 20. 137–40; *BJ* 2. 247.
[219] Jos *AJ* 17. 28.
[220] Millar 1993: 95–6. The Roman province of Arabia extended across the wadi Arabah (Dead Sea in Jordan) into the Negev (southern Israel) and Sinai, including Amman (ancient Philadelphia), Jerash (ancient Gerasa) and probably Adraa, which were part of the Roman province of Syria earlier on (Millar 1993: 95–6).
[221] Millar 1993: 123.
[222] Dio Cas. 68. 14, 3. Incorporation of the Nabatean kingdom into the Roman province of Arabia by decree of the governor of Syria, Cornelius Palma (Bowersock 1983: 81; Healey 2001: 32). It apparently took place without a struggle or violence (Bowersock 1983: 81; Healey 2001: 32), as supported by inscriptions on coins minted in Rome under the Emperor Trajan that referred to the Roman Province of Arabia as *Arabia Adquisita* (gained) not *Arabia Capta* (captured) (*RIC* II, 278).
[223] Engels 2007, 89–90.
[224] Kalos 1999; Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 230.
[225] Kalos 2003: 160, 164–5 fig.2-3, *Hauran* IV I: 85–150, 175.
[226] Dentzer 1985.
[227] *PPUAES* IV no.76, no.78.
[228] in the pre-provincial period 11 rural cult centres were built: (Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah, Dneibeh, Kafr Shams, Khārayib, Khirbet Massakeb, Qrayya, Sahwit il-Khidr, Saḥr, Sūr al-Lejā, Smeij/Deir Smeij and Umm is-Surab). One cult centre can possibly be dated from this period on the basis of the fragmentary decorative fragments (Muṭā'iyyeh). Eight rural cult centres were either built in the pre-provincial period and continued to be used in the provincial period, with later additions, or have pre-provincial elements, but their layout preserved until now was from the provincial period (al–Mushennef, Mashāra, Mayāmas, Ṣalkhad, Ṣanamein, Sleim and Sī'); one of them was built at the end of the pre-provincial period and continued to be used in the provincial period (Rimet Hazim). 21 rural cult centres were built in the provincial period ('Arīqah, 'Atīl, Amra, Breikeh, Būsân, Dā'il, Deir (South), Deir as-Smeij, Deir al-Meshqūq, Dhakīr, Hayat, Hebrān, Inkhil, Khabab, Lubbên, Manāra Henū, Mseikeh, Mismiyyeh, Shā'rah, Shaqrā and Zebīreh). 13 cult centres could have been from this period but there is no dating evidence to assess it with accuracy (Amra, Bteineh, Bu'aḍān, Ḳara'ah, Harrān, Hit, Is-Ṣâfiyeh, Obṭ'a, Qirata, Saneh, Sawara, Sawarat al-Kebireh, Ṣmeid, Tibneh and Tsil). From this group, evidence of cult centres consists of Greek inscriptions that were used in the 1st century AD and in the provincial period; these were often dedicated to deities that appear to be worshipped in the 1st century AD and in the provincial period. From this group, scholars working on Is-Ṣâfiyeh have only mentioned the Roman remains of what could be the precinct of a temenos, masonry blocks and decorative elements used in other cult centres in the Hauran (Appendix).

the 1st century BC. There is an increase in number in the 1st century AD to 14 sites altogether, with major growth in the 3rd century AD (78 sites) and in the Byzantine period (103 sites).[229] This figure is also most likely biased by the issues of dating archaeological sites and houses dated before the Byzantine period, which will be fully explained below in this section when looking for archaeological evidence of settlements and houses in detail (§ Ch.2.3).

The period of instability is suggested by the fact that Herodian military garrisons were required in Leja to secure the region against lawless elements on the basis of historical sources (§ Ch.2.2). However, remains of a fortification, dating to the 1st century AD,[230] and an epitaph of a commander who served Agrippa II, both recovered at Sūr al-Lejā (in the south-eastern part of Leja), represent the only archaeological and epigraphic evidence of an Herodian military garrison in the Hauran.[231] It remains unclear whether this was the base of the Zamarids or Idumeans (§ Ch.2.2) mentioned in historical sources, or was another Herodian military garrison (§ Ch.4.2).

Despite the poor archaeological evidence of the Herodian army in the Hauran, the result of their presence may be indirectly seen by growth and wealth of the region from the 1st century AD onwards. By that time, in fact, archaeological and epigraphic evidence offers us the first insight into the structural organisation, the economy, settlements, and, possibly, the population of the Hauran.

Looking at the southern part of the Hauran, the city of Bosra was the main centre from the 1st century BC, but there is hardly any archaeological evidence until the mid 1st century AD, when it underwent a major phase of building activity, as demonstrated by the Nabataean archway complex. This was a result of Bosra becoming the capital of the Nabataean kingdom.[232] Bosra seems to have controlled its surrounding rural landscape, as inscriptions explicitly mention the presence and control of civic officers (βουλευτής, meaning 'councillor') from Bosra throughout the countryside.[233] Evidence of ancient terraced fields, the chronology of which is unknown,[234] an irrigation system[235] and environmental samples attributed to the provincial period[236] illustrate land exploitation for cereal production in this part of the Hauran. The concentration of Nabataean inscriptions, in the territory south of an arbitrary line al-Karak–Hebrān (roughly 20 km north/north-east of Bosra), suggests that this area was part of the Nabataean territory.[237] However, on the basis of the available evidence, we cannot define a clear border between the Nabataean and Herodian kingdoms.[238] I will next investigate how the two realms could have influenced the whole Hauran, especially considering that it was situated at the borders of both kingdoms (§ Ch.4).

Moving to the Herodian territory of the Hauran, Canatha (modern-day Qanawat)[239] was the earliest city founded in this part of the region. As well as being referred to by Pliny as one of the cities of the Decapolis in the 1st century BC,[240] the earliest coins that mention the mint of Canatha are from AD 38–39: only three examples are known. The majority of coins minted at Canatha are dated to the reign of Commodus (AD 180–92) (28 coins).[241] In this later group the full name of the city Canatha Gabinia, was used. Canatha Gabinia was named after Aulus Gabinius who was the founder of the governorship of Syria between 55 BC and 53 BC.[242] Dion (Tell al-Ash'ārī) was another city of the Decapolis known with certainty from the 1st century AD according to Pliny.[243]

The cities of Adraa (Derʿā) (AD 165),[244] Dionysias (as-Suweidā') (AD 185),[245] Philippopolis (modern day Shahbā) (AD 244)[246] and Maximianopolis (Shaqqa) (AD 293–313)[247] were founded in the late provincial period (late 2nd–3rd century AD) (Map 2). The site as-Suweidā' was known as a village named Soada on the basis of an inscription dated to AD 149[248] and it appeared to acquire the title of a city, named Dionysias, at the end of the reign of the emperor Commodus (AD 180–92) on the basis of an inscription.[249] Costantia was founded in the

[229] Rohmer 2010: 128. This type of systematic investigation of archaeological sites was undertaken and published only in Leja. For evidence of settlements in the Hauran in the Bronze Age, see Braemer *et al.* 2010a; 2010b; Nicolle 2010. For the use of a water-catchment system at the borders of Leja and Djebel al'Arab since the Bronze Age, see Braemer 1988; 1990; Braemer *et al.* 2010. For evidence from Iron Age to the 1st century AD, see Rohmer 2010. For a brief and generic understanding of the archaeological evidence in the Hauran before the 1st century BC, see Denzter-Feydy 1986: 285.
[230] Rohmer 2010: 129, 133 fig.7, 10.
[231] *PAAES* III no.797 1; *IGLS* 15 no.103.
[232] Sartre 1985; Dentzer *et al.* 2007: 31–8.
[233] Sartre 1987.
[234] Villeneuve 1985: 56.
[235] Braemer 1988.
[236] Willcox 2003.
[237] Starcky 1985: 173–4 fig.1.
[238] Starcky 1985; Dentzer 1986: 387.
[239] For the discussion of the identification of the city Canatha with the modern-day city Qanawat, see Sartre 1981.
[240] Pliny *HN* 5. 18, 74.
[241] Spijkermann 1978: 92–5 pl.18.
[242] Tcherikover 1959: 97; MacAdam 1986: 74; Sartre 1992: 142 ff.; 2001a, 455.
[243] Pliny *HN* 5. 18, 74; 4. 16, 18. For more information about the site and the city, see Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 243 ff.
[244] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 21 ff., especially 30, 79–80 no.66a.
[245] *Wadd.* no.2307; Jones 1971: 285–7; Sartre 1981: 354; 1982b: 50–1; 1999: 200.
[246] Jones 1971: 285–7; Sartre 1999: 200.
[247] Jones 1971: 285–7; Sartre 1999: 200.
[248] *Wadd.* no.2307.
[249] *Wadd.* no.2309.

4th century AD according to an inscription;[250] it has been thought that it is most likely in the modern city of Buraq, but its exact location is not confirmed.[251] The foundation of the cities mentioned above indicates a major increase in urbanisation in the provincial period, especially in late provincial time. Functionaries from these cities do not often appear in inscriptions from the rural landscape, where only village communities and officials are mentioned. This could imply a certain level of autonomy of rural settlements from the cities.[252] Further indication of an organisation based on villages is the foundation of so-called *metrokomiai* from the end of the 2nd century AD, and mostly diffused in the 3rd century AD.[253] *Metrokomiai* means 'mother villages', which implies most likely villages of higher rank.[254] Their location supports their significant role of control over the rural territory: they were situated on Roman roads or on the borders of Leja, which were strategic points to regulate the raiders and robbers attested in Leja. This monitoring role of *metrokomiai* is confirmed by the presence of military delegations in these settlements.[255] This type of responsibility attributed to *metrokomiai* reinforces the idea that this territory was based on a village-centralised power.

Environmental samples from the provincial period suggest olive and vine cultivation in Djebel al'Arab.[256] Springs and cisterns used in the pre-provincial and provincial periods,[257] along with water-channels[258] dated to the provincial period, support practice of agriculture in the territory.[259] The south of Nuqra, in contrast, was only systematically cultivated in the provincial period, despite being fertile land.[260] Leja might have been, in contrast, an ideal place for livestock breeding, due to the combination of arid climate and semi-desert terrain.[261] Cultivation of crops could not have taken place because of the hostile terrain.[262] Aerial photographs from 1920s show early traces of pens in Leja; they cannot, nevertheless, be dated.[263]

Because of the type of terrain and economy in Leja and the Djebel al'Arab, Villeneuve and Dentzer have suggested a nomadic population of shepherds in Leja, and a sedentary population of farmers that extended in the eastern part of the Djebel al'Arab and the borders of Leja from the 1st century AD into the provincial period.[264] The identification of people from Leja with nomads and outlaws is misleading and inaccurate, as also recently pointed out by the French team.[265] Although people of Leja have been identified as nomadic, the population in Leja may have bred livestock; animal husbandry was not an activity strictly related to nomads but also one for a sedentary population, as verified also by remains in Leja of animal pens in villages.[266] People from Leja have been identified as Arab Trachonitai by Ptolemy,[267] but the key element of the lifestyle of Arab populations was not being nomad, but as having husbandry as their main activity. Similarly, the people of Leja would have been shepherds, with a certain mobility, who could have, and seemed to have, settled on the borders of Leja and in southern parts, where there were pockets of fertile land in Leja, because of the environmental constraints in this region are augmented by this being a rocky semi-desert lava plateau. In these small fertile pockets no extensive or classical farming would have been taken place.[268] Furthermore, historical sources mention not nomads but robbers, mostly in Leja and partly in the Djebel al'Arab (§ Ch.2.2). Similarly in Syria and Palestine historical sources mostly mention bandits.[269]

Sartre argues that the population in Djebel al'Arab consisted of at least some of the Safaitic nomadic tribes that became sedentary from the 1st century AD onwards.[270]

Sedentarisation was based on the foundation of new villages, according to inscriptions from the 1st century AD onwards.[271] Archaeological evidence of sedentary life (remains of houses) has been recorded across the Hauran but it is difficult to date them. Most of the large houses are dated to the Byzantine period and possibly into the 6th century AD.[272] Remains of late Roman and Byzantine settlements are stone-built and more monumental than earlier settlements – they were most likely superimposed on previous ones.[273] For example, at Canatha a 2nd-century architectural structure appears to have been originally a large house that had

[250] *Wadd.* no.2537a–b.
[251] Jones 1971: 285–7; Sartre 1999: 200.
[252] McLean Harper 1928; Jones 1971: 270–2; Sartre 1987: 251.
[253] Sartre 1999. Only one example (Borechatch, modern-day Breikeh) is dated to the 4th century (AD 326–327) (*Wadd.* no.2396; Sartre 1987: 256; 1999, 200). The other *metrokomiai* are Akraba (modern-day Aqrabāt) (AD 285–305) (*RAO* II 359; *RAO* V 396; Sartre 1999, 198, 200), Phaina (Mismiyyeh) (AD183–7) (*Wadd.* no.2524; Sartre 1987: 255; 1999: 198), Zorava (Ezraa) (AD 222–35) (*Wadd.* no.2480; Sartre 1987: 256; 1999: 198), Neela (Inkhil) (AD 286–293) (Sartre 1992, 113–7; 1999: 198, 200), Rayfa (possibly Sheikh Meskin) (unknown date) (Sartre 1999: 201–202) and Saura (Sūr al-Lejā) (AD 285–305) (*PAAES* III no.797 2; *Suw.*1991, 147–8, no.10, 14).
[254] Sartre 1987: 256.
[255] Sartre 1987: 256; 1999: 212–3.
[256] Willcox 2003.
[257] Braemer *et al.* 2010.
[258] *Wadd.* no.2296–7, no.2308; Braemer 1988.
[259] Gentelle 1985: 56; Villeneuve 1985: 121.
[260] Engels 2007: 76.
[261] Gentelle 1985: 56.
[262] Villeneuve 1985: 116–8.
[263] Villeneuve 1985: 116.
[264] Villeneuve 1985: 116–8; Dentzer 1986: 399–406.
[265] *Hauran* IV I: 254–6.
[266] Villeneuve 1985: 117–8.
[267] Ptolemy V, 15, 26.
[268] *Hauran* IV I: 254–6.
[269] Jos *AJ* 17. 285; 18. 274; 20. 124; Jos *BJ* 1. 204; 2. 228–9, 253, 271; Luke 10. 30; John 10. 1.
[270] Sartre 1982a; 1982b; 1991: 333; 1992: 43–4; Villeneuve 1985: 116–17.
[271] McLean-Harper 1928.
[272] Villeneuve 1985: 89–116, especially 113.
[273] Clauss-Balty 2008b.

been used for long time; however, we cannot trace the exact date of its building before the 2nd century AD.[274] This shows how houses were built on pre-existing buildings, making it almost impossible to recognise earlier structures and date them. Therefore, recovery of evidence of permanent rural occupation before the 1st century AD, or even in the provincial period, as without intensive fieldwork this becomes difficult. In fact, Roman villages have been mostly identified by inscriptions.[275]

The argument that the people who became sedentary were Safaitic nomadic tribes is based on the increasing number of Greek and local Aramaic inscriptions in this part of the Hauran that bear names of tribes and individuals who also appear in Safaitic graffiti.[276] These graffiti have a distinctive writing that set them apart from other Semitic languages[277] in its lack of vowels, gaps between words and diphthongs.[278] They were erroneously called 'Safaitic' because they were originally believed to be geographically distributed, for the most part, in Safā, the volcanic area east of Damascus and north-east of Leja.[279] Safaitic graffiti (*c.* 28,000 examples)[280] were, instead, spread across the Near East: including the desert in southern Syria, western Iraq, north-eastern Jordan, northern Saudi Arabia,[281] and, in a small quantity, in the Palmyrene area,[282] at Palmyra,[283] at Dura Europos[284] and its surroundings.[285] These graffiti were mostly inscribed on rocks but occasionally appear on vessel fragments. They are badly preserved and consist of short grave-markers or prayers; sometimes the name of the graffiti maker and his genealogy are mentioned.[286] These graffiti are not dated: their timeframe could range from the Hellenistic period, with a possible reference to Pompey in Syria (in the 1st century BC)[287] to the 4th century AD, as they occasionally mention Herodian, Nabataean and Roman battlefields and events.[288] The recovery of Safaitic graffiti in the ruins at Pompeii[289] could potentially stretch the dating of the Safaitic graffiti to one or two centuries earlier than the Greek inscriptions in the Hauran.[290] This only means that Safaitic graffiti in Pompeii were made before the eruption of Vesuvius in Pompeii (AD 79). It does not imply that they were dated before the 1st century BC.

The original nomadic nature of people in the Hauran and of the people who wrote Safaitic graffiti has also been supported by the mention of tribes in provincial inscriptions in the Hauran and an inscription at Tarba (Djebel al'Arab) that mention the chief of a nomadic camp.[291] However, the latter inscription could only have been a one-off occurrence of a nomadic group of unknown provenance in the Hauran, and the inscriptions that mention tribes are dated to the provincial period, when they are dateable, after which time the so-called nomadic people became sedentary in the Hauran.

An inscription mentions a *syndikos nomadon*, an 'advocate of the nomads', named Theodoros.[292] According to Moors he was an official whose function was to be in contact with nomads.[293] The inscription may come from a village, but we cannot be certain. There are many officials from villages who were *syndikoi* on the basis of inscriptions,[294] but when the term nomad is not explicitly stated, it is unlikely that every mention of *syndikoi* in inscriptions refers to advocates of nomads. An inscription from a village in the Hauran mentions a certain Iulius Malchus a *syndikos* of the *Aouorenoi*.[295] This ethnic group does not appear in Safaitic graffiti: it is an indigenous group, but its character is not clear.[296] It is not clear if the *syndikos nomadon* was a nomad or a sedentary dweller looking after the interests of nomads. This inscription implies interactions between the sedentary and the nomadic people,[297] but who they both were and their role in the society in the Hauran remain unknown.

The fact that the occurrence of Safaitic graffiti is not associated with any archaeological remains in the desert does not mean that they never existed; it shows that they did not survive, which is rather common in the Near East, considering that even where there are

[274] Villeneuve 1986: 113.
[275] McLean Harper 1928; Sartre 1987; 1993.
[276] Milik 1980; 1985; Sartre 1982a; 1982b; 1991: 333; 1992: 43–4; Graf 1989: 368.
[277] Some scholars (Sartre 1982b; Graf 1989; Negev 1991) pointed out onomastic resemblances between names inscribed in Safaitic graffiti and those in the Nabataean inscriptions, whereas MacDonald (1993: 381) suggested the influence of Aramaic and Jewish writing on Safaitic script. Despite the resemblances between names inscribed in Safaitic graffiti and those in the Nabataean inscriptions that will be highlighted in Ch.4.3, it is not possible to determine the predominant influence from Nabataean, Aramaic or Jewish languages in Safaitic script and the origin of the latter that has its own distinctive linguistic characteristics.
[278] Macdonald 1998: 183.
[279] Macdonald 1993: 305–7, 383.
[280] There is an up-to-date online database of the Safaitic graffiti recorded so far: (http://krcfm.orient.ox.ac.uk/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=AALC_BDRS&-loadframes), which should be around 28,000 (http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/aalc/index.php/projects/safaitic-database-online).
[281] Milik 1985: 184; Macdonald 1993: 311; 2000: 45.
[282] Ingholt and Starcky 1951: no.1. 4, 8, 21, 34. 3, 54b, 60, 63. 2, 63. 4; 80–2b.
[283] Drijvers 1976: 34.
[284] Baur and Rostovtzeff 1931: 172–7; Milik 1972: 334.
[285] *CIS* V 5175–80; Moors 1992: 283; Macdonald 2005.
[286] Macdonald 1993: 383.
[287] Sartre 1992: 41; Macdonald 1995.
[288] Sartre 1992: 41; Macdonald 2000: 45.
[289] Sartre 1992: 42.
[290] Sartre 1992: 51–2.
[291] Villeneuve 1985: 117.
[292] *PPUAES* III no.383.
[293] Moors 1992: 331–2.
[294] Moors 1992: 396–401, 417–9.
[295] *PPAES* III no.401a.
[296] Scharrer 2010: 296.
[297] Scharrer 2010: 296.

monumental inscriptions that indicate the existence of villages, archaeological evidence does not survive.

According to Scharrer in his article on nomadic allies in the Roman Near East, the people who made Safaitic graffiti were nomadic shepherds, because[298] Safaitic graffiti refer to the moving of sheep, camels and livestock towards the desert and heading eastwards,[299] as well as the keeping of sheep and camels together.[300] Nomadism is about mobility associated with transhumance.[301] However, as Macdonald argues, and Scharrer concurs, the people who made Safaitic graffiti do not appear to be typical nomads or Bedouins as they did not only have camels.[302] Furthermore, there are differences between transhumants, who had at least a fixed place to stay, usually in the mountains, and nomadic shepherds who moved every day on a fixed route. There are also variations within these two categories.[303] Therefore we cannot apply the traditional idea of nomadism with respect to Safaitic tribes, if we can apply it at all.

The wide geographical extent of the recovery of Safaitic graffiti could imply that people who used this writing travelled long distances and entered into contact with different sedentary populations, such as those from Palmyra, Dura Europos and Lebanon, but it does not mean that they did not have permanent settlements. Considering the peculiar nature of the people who made Safaitic graffiti, we can propose different reconstructions of their life. They may have lived in one area, for instance in the Hauran. They may have merged with other cultures. They may have moved around only for a specific period of the year as shepherds and travelling traders, but had a permanent base in a specific place.

Furthermore, the identification of the people who made Safaitic graffiti as tribes does not necessarily imply that they were nomads,[304] as people from a tribe could also have belonged to a small community, a family clan or people with the same ethnicity.[305] We cannot talk about those who made Safaitic graffiti as a specific ethnic unit for the following reasons.[306] Apart from names of individuals, in Safaitic graffiti and in local Aramaic and Greek inscriptions that include Safaitic names, there are collective names referred to as a 'l',[307] φυλή in Greek; one of its meanings is tribe, but it can also stand for a clan, a family,[308] or even an ethnic unit in villages[309] – where 'l' is used for city and village dwellers.[310] An example is a bilingual local Aramaic and Greek inscription from Sī': in the Aramaic part Obaisenoi (in Aramaic, 'l'bs't) has been referred to as a tribe because this name is preceded by 'l', whereas in the Greek part the Obaisenoi (ὁ τῶν Ὀβαισηνῶν) are referred to as ὁ δῆμος,[311] instead of φυλή, and δῆμος is also used for people from a village.[312] It is possible to argue, but it is not certain, that the writer of the inscription was not absolutely fluent in Greek and its terminology, and did not properly transliterate the word 'l', as the Greek version of the inscription is defective.[313]

The involvement of people bearing Safaitic names, whether they were nomads or not, in the construction of cult centres or buildings does not prove or disprove that some of them were sedentary or others were nomads.

In this respect, some scholars are sceptical about nomadic groups becoming sedentary in villages. Although Sartre argues that the commissioners of these dedicatory inscriptions with names appearing in Safaitic graffiti were some of the Safaitic people who became sedentary, he doubts whether they were integrated into the villages' social structures,[314] for example by being involved in the administration of the villages.

Macdonald, instead, argues that there is no firm evidence to support general sedentarisation of nomads, especially of nomadic groups that used the Safaitic script, in the Hauran on the basis of the following factors. There is no Safaitic graffiti in the villages of the Djebel al-Arab (or even in Leja). There is a major difference between Safaitic graffiti on rocks consisting of a few words, and monumental commemorative formal inscriptions in the Greek language, recovered in the Hauran.[315] Macdonald also suggests that use of certain unusual names, among others common in an area (in this case, the Hauran), does not necessarily suggest movement of people; it may be due to fashion.[316] He considers a case study showing that in 17th-century England Jewish names increased, despite the absence of Jewish people: this new fashion could be explained by the widespread availability of the Bible, the rise of Puritans and the predilection for the Old Testament. I believe that even if it was a fashion beginning and developing in England,

[298] Scharrer 2010: 251.
[299] Scharrer 2010: 251; Winnett and Harding 1978: 1700a.
[300] Scharrer 2010: 251; Winnett and Harding 1978: no.1023.
[301] Scharrer 2010: 241–4.
[302] Macdonald 1991: 102–3; 1993: 327; Scharrer 2010: 251, 253.
[303] Sartre 1992: 44–5.
[304] Sartre 1982a: 85–99; MacDonald 1993: 353.
[305] Sartre 1987.
[306] Sartre 1982a: 122; 1997: 298; 2005: 234; Macdonald 1993: 304–10; Zeinaddin 2000: 267.
[307] Scharrer 2010: 252–3, footnote 118.
[308] Macdonald 1993: 353–4; 1995: 97; 1999: 260; 2003b: 278–9; Zeinaddin 2000: 276.
[309] Zeinaddin 2000.
[310] Grushevoi 1985: especially 54.
[311] *CIS* II 164; *PPUAES* III 428a; *PPUAES* IV no.104.
[312] Grushevoi 1985: especially 54.
[313] Scharrer 2010: 254.
[314] Sartre 1992: 47–8, 52.
[315] MacDonald 1993: 313, 352–4.
[316] MacDonald 1993: 383.

the use of the Bible was still an external factor that did not originate in England but arrived in England, even if it was a long time before this new fashion of using Jewish names began. Even though the onomastic resemblance between names from Hauran inscriptions and Safaitic graffiti could simply indicate the fashion of using names from Safaitic graffiti, the situation is a little different from the case study used by Macdonald. Safaitic graffiti rarely appear in the Hauran, although they are recovered across the Near East, especially to the east and the south-east of the Hauran. Names that appear in Safaitic graffiti are also used in inscriptions in the Hauran but do not appear to be used elsewhere in the Near East to that extent. Therefore, even if the use of those names in inscriptions was due to fashion, such a custom still implies a movement of ideas, which was triggered by some sort of contact between people from different places or by word of mouth. This implies that the rural population of the Hauran was not alien to the world beyond their countryside but influenced by its surroundings, absorbing influences and cultures from elsewhere or from people that were moving across the Near East. As the diffusion of this fashion was circumscribed in two areas, the Hauran and where the Safaitic graffiti are recovered, this implies a tie between the Hauran and whoever made these Safaitic graffiti. This link needs to be reconsidered and I will be reassessing it in this monograph, by looking for further resemblance or evidence of connection between the population of the Hauran and the people who used the Safaitic script. However, as this is not the major focus of this monograph, this link will be considered only in relation to inscriptions from rural cult centres bearing names that also appear in Safaitic graffiti (§ Ch.3.1–2).

Considering the ambiguity, arising from the various elements discussed above, related to the presence of nomads in the Hauran, the nomadic nature of the people who made Safaitic graffiti and their role in the Hauran, I am less inclined to automatically associate the term nomadic, in particular, but also the term tribe, with people who made Safaitic graffiti or people who commissioned inscriptions in the Hauran bearing names found in Safaitic graffiti. Therefore, I will refer to this group, often identified by scholars as a Safaitic nomadic population, as people or ethnic groups who made Safaitic graffiti.

The structural organisation, the economy and settlements show some differences between the south of the Hauran (roughly Nuqra and south of the Djebel al'Arab) and its north-centre (roughly north-centre of Djebel al'Arab, Leja and west of Leja). These differences reflect the political division of the region from the pre-provincial period until the end of the 2nd to the beginning of the 3rd century AD, where the southern territory of the Hauran was first under the Nabataeans and later part of the Roman province of Arabia; the rest of the Hauran was first part of the Herodian kingdom and later of the Roman province of Syria.

When looking at the population, instead, scholars have swiftly presented a different geographical dichotomy (nomads in Leja and Safaitic nomadic tribes that became sedentary in Djebel al'Arab) but they have been demonstrated to be based on ambiguous and questionable evidence. Providing a clear picture about the population of the Hauran becomes more difficult due to the complexity of the subject.

As rural cult centres are widespread across the region from the pre-provincial to the provincial period, information about the population in the Hauran will be gleaned by considering the elite of the Hauran on the basis of the identification of benefactors and dedicators of temples.

As delineated above, the Hauran seems to have been a crossroads of different cultures. Due to their plurality, rural cult centres across the Hauran can form ideal subjects to investigate the different cultures that left evidence of their presence or influenced the people of the Hauran; amongst these different cultures this chapter has pinpointed: the Herodians, the Nabataeans, the Romans and people or ethnic groups who made Safaitic graffiti. The road network of the Hauran, which will now be discussed, also shows that this region was inserted into a broader network of the Near East.

2.4. The road network

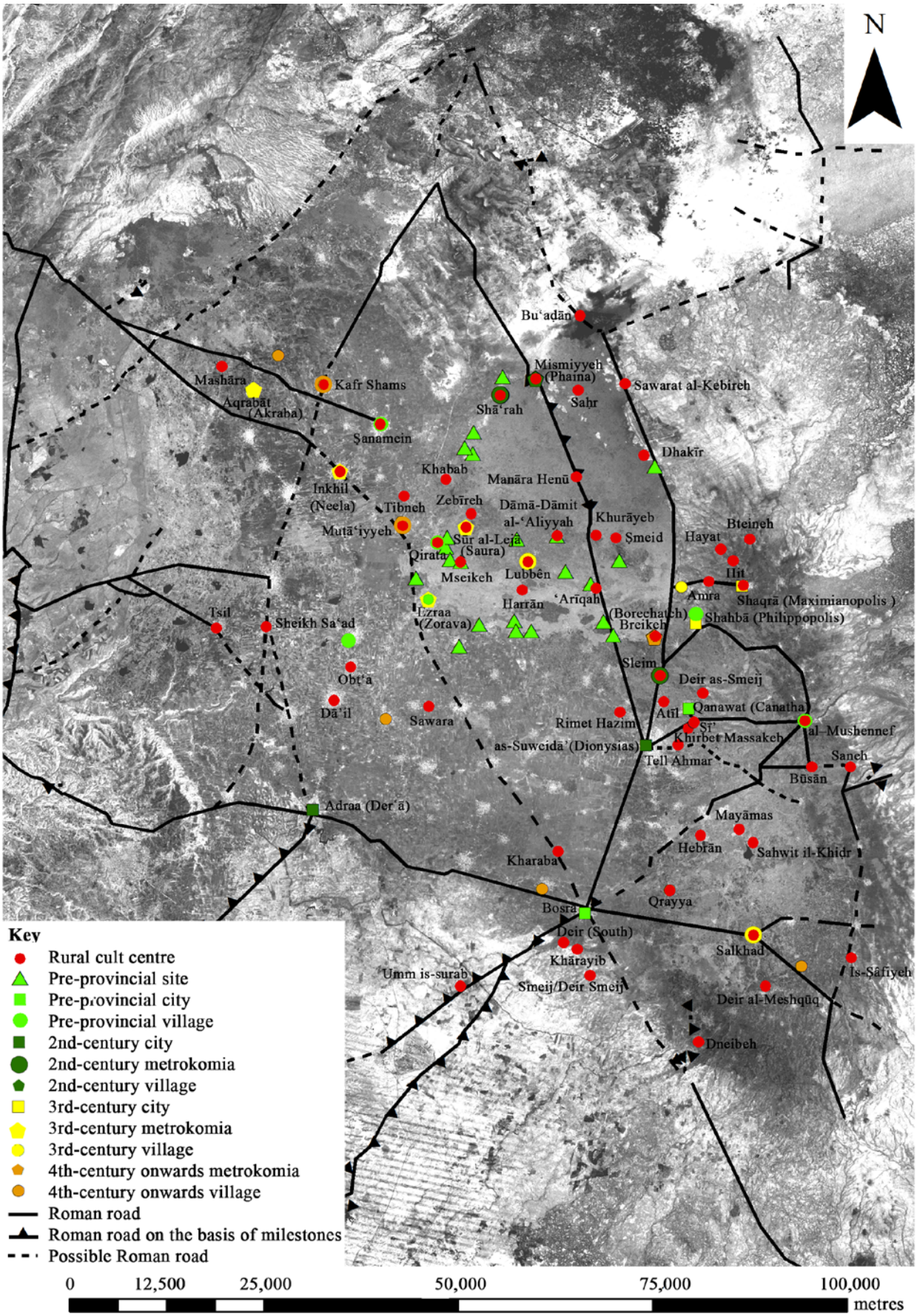
Looking at the road network (Map 2),[317] it is possible to see that two main 2nd-century roads ran north–south from Damascus to Bosra: one cutting through Leja and Dionysias, the other following the eastern border of the lava of Leja. Damascus is a crossroads for caravan routes to Lebanon and Palmyra (§ Ch.2.1) (Map 3). The Hauran was connected to the hinterland of the Near East in the East, through the road to Palmyra from Damascus.[318]

The Hauran was connected with the central part of the Herodian and Nabatean kingdoms and the cities of the Decapolis through routes directly from Bosra or Dera'a. From Bosra, a 2nd-century road goes to Amman (Philadelphia), Petra and further south, to Aqaba, on the coast of the Red Sea (ancient Roman Aila) (Maps 2, 3).[319] It is possible to get to the heart of the Herodian

[317] Bauzou 1985; 2003. Understanding of the road network in the Hauran is based on French research that looked at the data from aerial photography, the recovery of towers, forts and milestones, and the remains of Roman roads (Bauzou 1985).

[318] There is a minor road (roughly 75 km long) that ran to the East from the village of al-Mushennef, to reach en-Namara. This road was most likely used in the late Roman period, as en-Nemara is a small oasis in the steppe where there are traces of military presence in the 3rd–4th century AD (Millar 1993: 137, 434).

[319] Millar 1993: 138–9.



Map 2: Rural cult centres in relation to settlements and roads of the Hauran (the author)

Map 3: Roman roads in the Near East (the author, after Sartre 1982 map 1)

kingdom from Dera'a (route to Tiberias in Galilee), and to Jerash (Gerasa) either from Dera'a or Bosra (Map 3).

With regard to the north-western part of the Hauran, some Roman villages on the west of Leja, like those in Nawa[320] and Ṣanamein (called Aire in the inscriptions),[321] were connected to Mount Hermon, and so to Lebanon and to Damascus (Maps 2, 3).

The road network in the Hauran also includes secondary roads.[322] They are in the heart of Djebel al'Arab: the routes as-Suweidā' to Sāleh, Qanawat to sanctuary Sī', as-Suweidā' to al-Mushennef through Sī', the road from the Sleim to the East crossing Shahbā. Their dating is uncertain as they do not have milestones. Modern roads are often superimposed on earlier ones, as shown by aerial photography from the 1920s, when the modern intensive road network had not yet begun to appear.[323] We can date the secondary road Qanawat–Sī' after the 1st century BC because it had been constructed around two tombs (tombs V and W) dated to the 1st century BC.[324]

Therefore, the road system, together with the historical and socio-economic background and geography, suggests that this region has great potential to be a central focus for a re-evaluation of rural cult centres and the population of the Hauran as part of a broader network of the Near East in the pre-provincial and provincial periods. Subsequent analytical chapters will clarify and carefully evaluate which populations, from the regional to the more remote cities and cultures, shaped and had an impact on rural cult centres of the Hauran, and who the people of the Hauran were and to what extent they entered into contact with other cultures (§ Ch. 3–5). This investigation will start by discussing the impact of the Nabataean and Herodian reigns (§ Ch.3), people associated with Safaitic graffiti and cultures that did not border with the Hauran, like the Parthians and Palmyra, on rural sanctuaries in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.4), followed by a discussion of the impact of the Roman Empire, and other groups and cultures in the provincial period (§ Ch.5).

[320] Bauzou 1985: fig.1.
[321] *PAAES* II no.655, *IGR* III 1128; Bauzou 1986: fig.1.
[322] Bauzou 1985: 152.
[323] Bauzou 1985.
[324] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 215.

Chapter 3

Rural cult centres in their pre-provincial political context

Having provided an outline of the socio-political context of the Hauran (§ Ch.2), we can now investigate rural cult centres in the Hauran in relation to the two political authorities that controlled the Hauran in the pre-provincial period under examination (1st century BC–1st century AD): the Nabataean and the Herodian kingdoms.

Dentzer, in fact, points out how the historical situation and the political background could, and did, have some impact on the architecture and gods of rural centres.[325]

The Nabataean presence and influence on rural cult centres in the Hauran has been a major scholarly topic of discussion for over a century, but there is still no unanimous view of the matter (§ Ch.3.1). In contrast, the Herodian presence and influence in rural cult centres in the Hauran has rarely been discussed (§ Ch.3.2), although this power was the main political authority in the Hauran in the pre-provincial period, alongside the more marginal Nabataean authority in the south of the region (§ Ch.2). The following analysis will delineate to what extent both political authorities influenced the religious cultural identity of the Hauran, starting with the viewss of previous scholars on the matter.

3.1. The Nabataean influence

For over a century until the 1980s, scholars have frequently argued that the Nabataeans were in the Hauran, or, at least, had an impact on those main rural cult centres of the Hauran that were not part of the Nabataean territory, such as Sī' and Saḥr.[326] This was based on an erroneous reading of the following data that were identified as Nabataean: the layout of the main rural temples of the Hauran (especially Sī', but also Saḥr and Sūr al-Lejā), the Aramaic inscriptions from Sī' that were believed to be Nabataean, and the cult of Dushara at Sī'.

Only a few recent scholars (Patrich, Ball, Netzer, Bowersock and Segal) still consider the sanctuary at Sī' (in particular, temples 1 and 2), and the rural temples at Saḥr and at Sūr al-Lejā, to be Nabataean. This conclusion was based on an outdated reading of their layout by the Princeton University team in the early 20th century that has been revised by recent archaeological investigations.[327]

However, the majority of recent scholars have discredited the Nabataean presence and influence in rural cult centres. Amongst them, Healey, one of the main specialists on the Nabataeans, asserted that the people of the Hauran had little to connect them with the Nabataeans, with the exception of the Nabataean city of Bosra;[328] Alpass concurred with Healey's argument.[329] Freyberger maintained that there was a complete lack of Nabataean influence in the main rural cult centres in the north and centre of the Djebel al'Arab.[330] In opposition to this viewpoint, other scholars, such as Starcky, Dentzer and Wenning, argued the Nabataean presence was mostly to the south of the Hauran, on the basis of the concentration of Nabataean inscriptions in this area, but that this did not affect the single local cultural identity of the Hauran.[331] Additionally, according to Wenning, the Nabataean presence in this part of the Hauran may be supported by the fact that one of the tribes living in the south of the Djebel al'Arab, the Rawahu, was related to the Nabataeans on the basis of epigraphic evidence.[332] He has also argued that the population of the Hauran at Sī' differed from the Nabataeans of Petra in terms of culture, art and script.[333] His conclusions were a revision of his previous argument, where he also claimed a Nabataean presence in the north of the Djebel al'Arab.[334] Dentzer-Feydy and Dentzer have pointed to the sporadic but peculiar evidence of the Nabataean influence at Sī' on the basis of the use of Nabataean capitals.[335]

Therefore, contrasting arguments on the Nabataean impact in rural cult centres need to be re-evaluated

[325] Dentzer 1986: 308.

[326] *PPUAES* II: 380, 385–90, Glueck 1942: 7 ff.; 1966: 6 ff.; Dussaud 1955: 57; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64, 100–3; Dussaud 1955: 57; Hammond 1973: 62–64, 79 ff.; Peters 1977: 263–75; Negev 1977: 613 ff.; Busink 1980: 1255–320; Wenning 1987: 25–51; Gawlikowski 1989: 329–30.

[327] Patrich 1990: 45; Ball 2000: 343; Netzer 2003: 102–15; Bowersock 2003: 347; Segal 2013: 45–7. Although Segal, at first, defines these temples in the Hauran as Nabataean, as they do not have a roof, they may be a version of cult high places used in Nabataean religious architecture. Thus it would be more appropriate to call them 'cult high places like temples'. Thus, they would be a local creation of 'concentric Nabataean temples' (Segal 2013: 45–7). The term concentric has not been associated with this type of 'Nabataean' temple, I suggest he means circumambulatory (see the main text on the following page for its explanation).

[328] Healey 2001: 62.

[329] Alpass 2013: 166–99.

[330] Freyberger 1998: 52, pl.32d; 2008: 131, 134 fig.6; 2013: 154; 2014: 132.

[331] Starcky 1986; Dentzer 1986: 414; Wenning 2007: 37.

[332] Wenning 2007: 38; for further details on the matter, see Macdonald 1993: 358 ff.

[333] Wenning 2001: 312; 2007: 38.

[334] Wenning 1987: 25–91.

[335] Dentzer-Feydy 1979: 332; Dentzer 1986: 282–3.

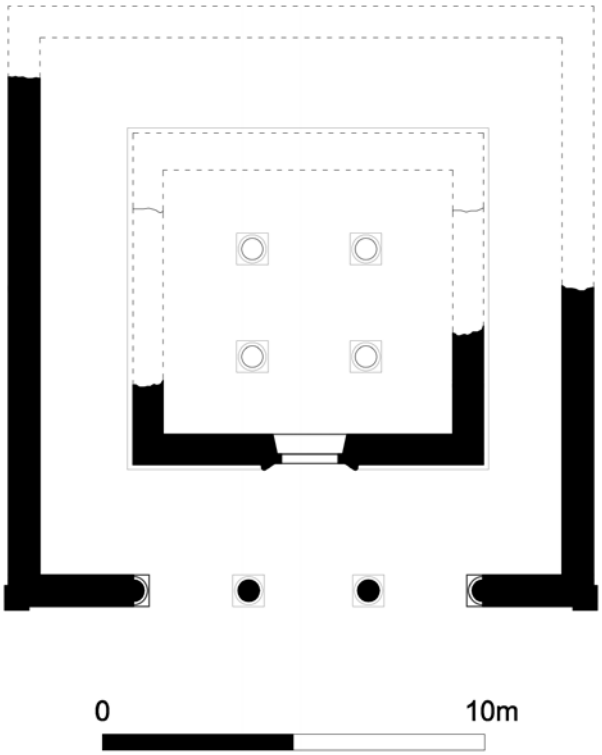


Figure 1: Plan of temple 2 at Sī', reconstructed in the early 20th century (the author, after *PPUAES* II ill. 387).

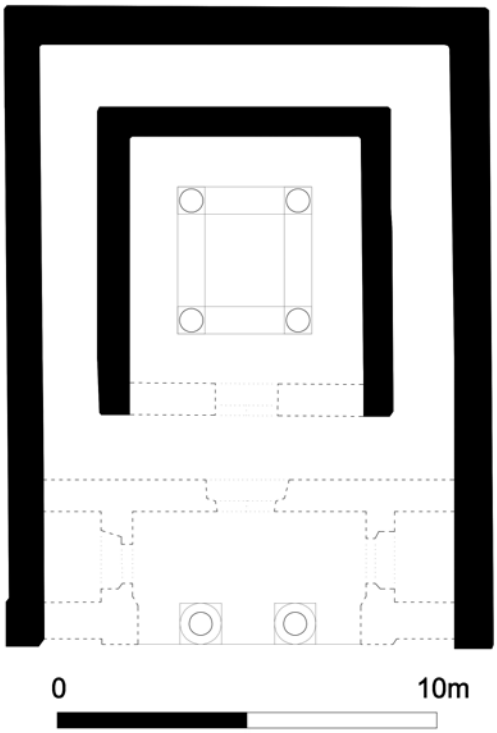


Figure 2: Plan of the cella at Saḥr, reconstructed in the early 20th century (the author, after *PPUAES* II ill. 336).

through a first in-depth reassessment of all the data that scholars used to support their arguments, which this first section of the chapter will undertake. It is first necessary to reassess the layout of the main rural temples of the Hauran (especially Sī', but also Saḥr and Sūr al-Lejā), the inscriptions from Sī' that were both originally considered to be Nabataean, the cult of Dushara at Sī', and the Nabataean capitals at Sī'. When talking about the use of the script initially thought to be Nabataean at Sī' a more in-depth discussion of this writing across the Hauran will be provided to attain a more comprehensive picture. Similarly, the cult of Dushara across the Hauran will be considered after the scholarly argument, principally focusing on Sī'. Furthermore, to conclude the account of the cults of gods worshipped in the Nabataean kingdom in the Hauran, the cult of Isis at Sī' will be discussed, as it was a widely followed in the kingdom.

In addition, other types of evidence will also be considered that have not, so far, received adequate attention by scholars, and can, I believe, offer a more comprehensive picture of Nabataean presence and influence in rural cult centres in the Hauran. These are: statues of eagles; statues of male characters in rural cult centres in the Hauran; and statue heads from Sī'.

Starting from the layout of the temples at Sī', Saḥr and Sūr al-Lejā, the Princeton University team reconstructed them as circumambulatory cellas, meaning a squared cella inside a smaller square chamber. They also had four columns placed in a square at the centre of the inner cella (Figures 1–2).[336] This type of layout is used in the Nabataean temple of the Lion Gate at Petra and in Nabataean rural temples at Khirbet et-Tannur, Khirbet adh-Dharih and Ramm.[337]

However, recent archaeological investigations have not confirmed this type of layout of the cellas at Sūr al-Lejā, Saḥr and Sī'. At Sūr al-Lejā, the French-Syrian mission has recorded the wall of a rectangular *edicula* at the centre of the temenos[338] and at Saḥr identified the cella as an adyton that leads to a bigger room with benches on the two sides (Figure 3) (§ Ch.4.5).[339] An *edicula* is a monumental monolithic structure, roughly 3m in height and decorated with niches, and occasionally with four columns at the four corners; it can also serve as a monumental altar, depending on the presence of a staircase and a flat roof at the top.[340] It is possible to see only a small rectangular elevated structure for temple 2 at Sī' (Figure 4) (*c.* 5m by 4m) situated at the back of a larger monumental façade facing a courtyard (§ Ch.4.5) (Figure 5).[341] A modern hut built on the south-western part of cella 1 prevents us from reconstructing its plan.

[336] *PPUAES* II: 380, 385–90.
[337] Dentzer 1990: 73.
[338] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 155.
[339] Kalos 1997; 2003.
[340] Dentzer 1990.
[341] Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 232.

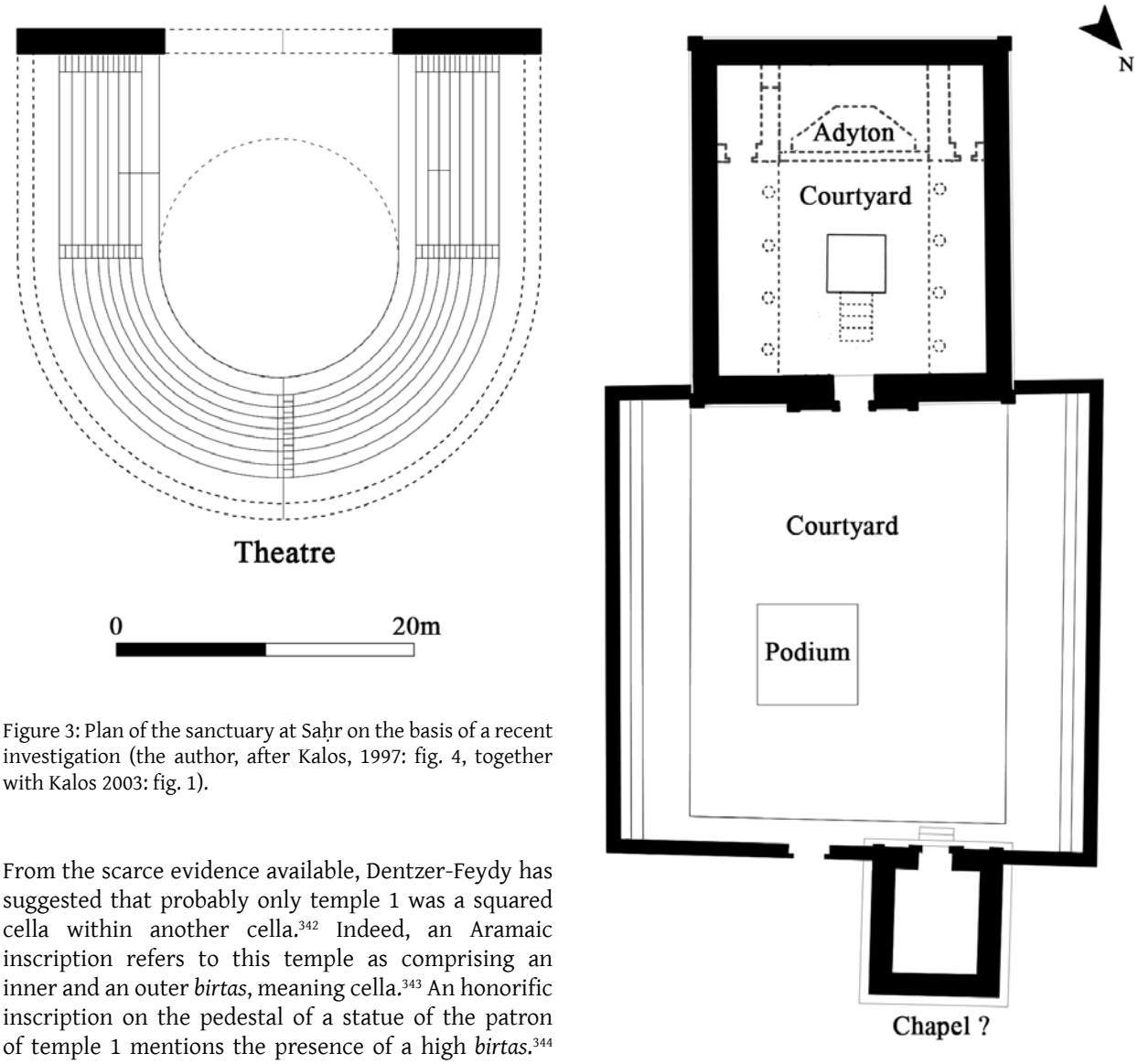


Figure 3: Plan of the sanctuary at Saḥr on the basis of a recent investigation (the author, after Kalos, 1997: fig. 4, together with Kalos 2003: fig. 1).

From the scarce evidence available, Dentzer-Feydy has suggested that probably only temple 1 was a squared cella within another cella.[342] Indeed, an Aramaic inscription refers to this temple as comprising an inner and an outer *birtas*, meaning cella.[343] An honorific inscription on the pedestal of a statue of the patron of temple 1 mentions the presence of a high *birtas*.[344] Considering the topography of the site, the high *birtas* could refer to the temple situated on the rocky surface that is on a higher level than the stepped courtyard that precedes it.[345]

Even if we want to compare temple 1 at Sī', being a probable squared cella within another cella, with the circumambulatory temples from the Nabataean kingdom, the latter are from the second half of the 1st century AD to the 2nd century AD; that is, they are all later than the examples in the Hauran (from the end of the 1st century BC to the beginning of the 1st century AD) (Appendix). Furthermore, the circumambulatory layout has not only been found in the Nabataea[346] but can be also traced back to earlier examples in the Near East from the Achaemenid Empire.[347] Having a religious icon in the cella is a common feature in temples across the Near East in the pre-provincial and the provincial periods. In particular, the circumambulatory layout with a cult icon (which can be a cult stone or an *edicula*) at the centre has Near Eastern origins, as it developed in Phoenician, Canaanite and Mesopotamian

[342] Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 232.
[343] *CIS* II 163; *PAAES* IV no.1; *PPUAES* IV no.100; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1985: 175.
[344] *CIS* II 164.
[345] Tholbecq 2007: 294.
[346] There are circumambulatory temples at Khirbet Tannur (late 1st century–early 2nd AD) (McKenzie *et al.* 2002; Tholbecq 1997: 1079–80), Khirbet adh-Dharih (late 1st century–early 2nd AD) (Al-Muheisen and Villeneuve 1994; McKenzie *et al.* 2002: 72–73), and Ramm (end of 1st century AD) (Rickmans 1934; Savignac and Horsfield 1935; Kirkbride 1960).
[347] There are circumambulatory temples at Susa (5th–4th century BC) (Hopkins 1942: 14–5; Schippmann 1972; Boyce and Grenet 1991: 35–9), at Persepolis (2nd century BC) (Schippmann 1972; Ghirshman 1976: 197–200) at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris (1st century AD) (Hopkins 1942, 5), in the temple of Sun at Hatra (second half of 1st century AD) (Hopkins 1942: 6), at Kuh-i-Khwaja (1st century AD) (Herzfeld 1941: 66), in temple A at Hassan Madhur (in the desert north-west of Palmyra) (mid 2nd century AD) (Schlumberger 1951: 93, 95 fig. 46), at Bishapur, Sayyid Husain, Tepe Hisar, Chahardeh, and Parashban (3rd century AD to 7th/8th century AD) (Hopkins 1942: 5; Schippmann 1972; Boyce and Grenet 1991: 38 ff.; Ball 2000: 343, 349 fig.105).

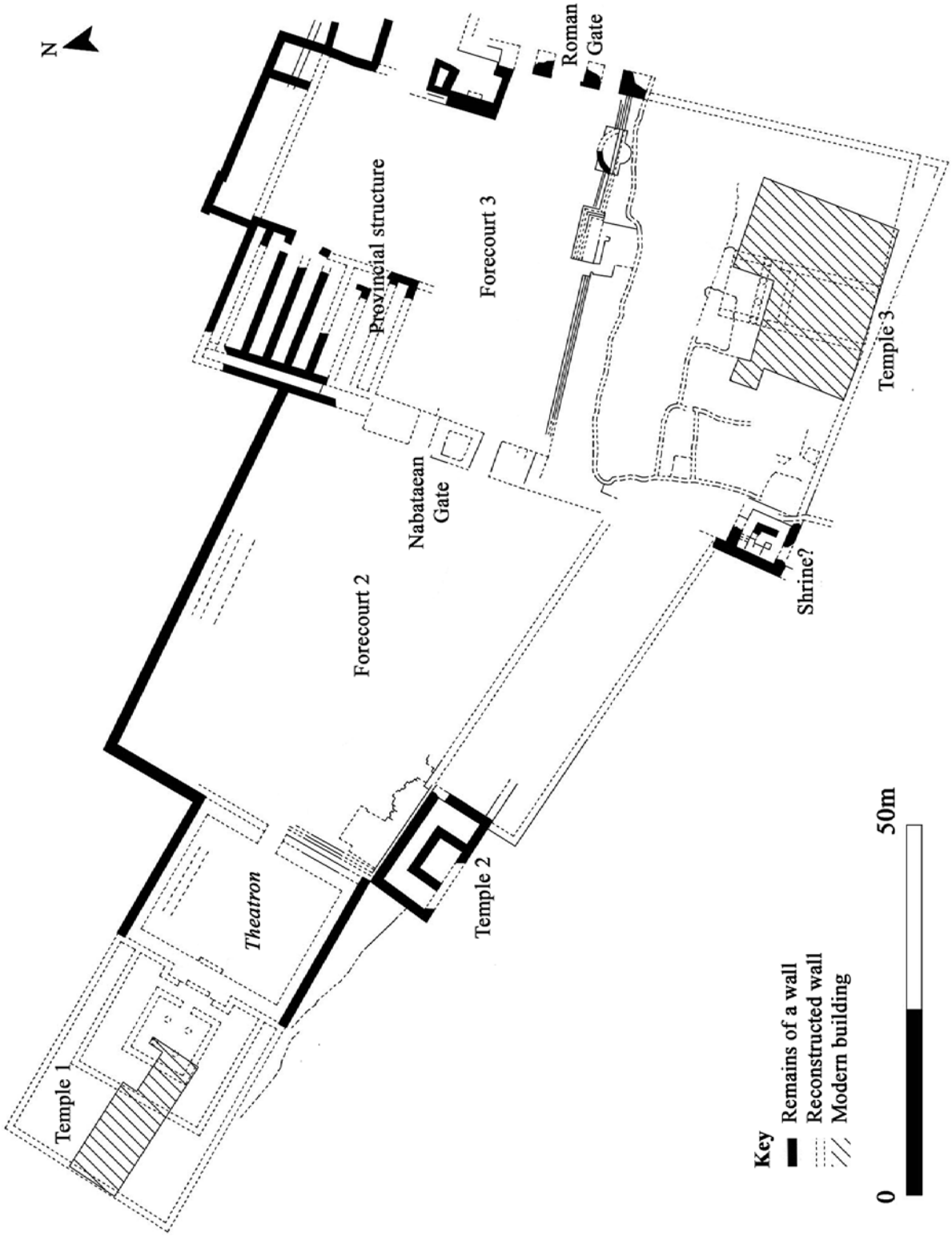


Figure 4: Plan of the sanctuary at Si' on the basis of a recent investigation (the author, after Dentzer-Feydy 2015: fig. 1).

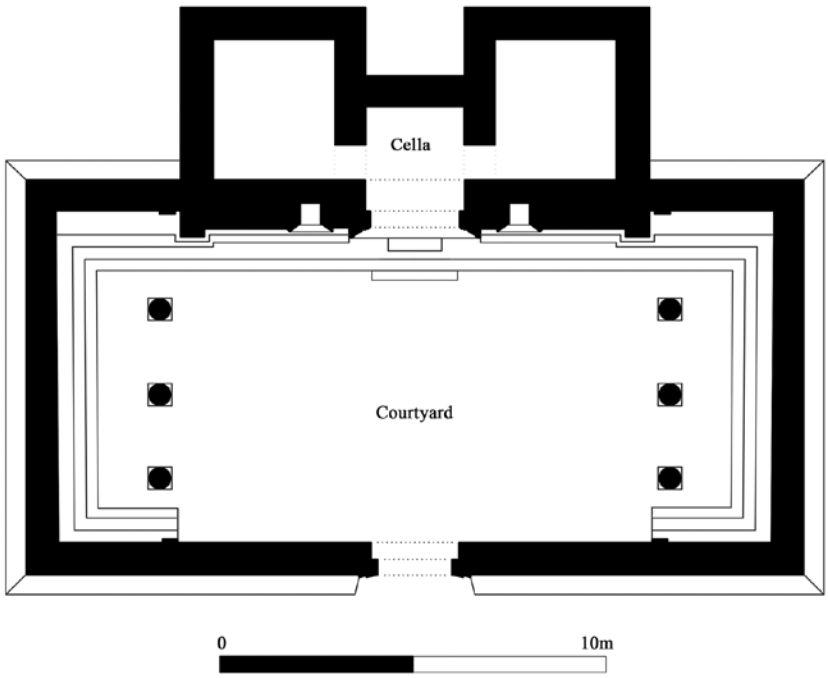


Figure 5: Plan of Sī' 8 (the author, after Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 60).

cultures.[348] Therefore, while the hypothesis of the circumambulatory cella in the Hauran being Nabataean has been unquestionably discarded, I interpret this layout as an initial element to support my argument for the Hauran being integrated within the broader network of the Near East because it is a feature embedded in the religious building tradition of the Near East.

Moving to the next piece of evidence used to support the Nabataean presence in rural cult centres in the Hauran, inscriptions from Sī' were thought to be Nabataean.[349] A more detailed and more recent reading has, however, ascertained that they were written in a local Aramaic script that had a similar root to the Nabataean writing from which other Aramaic languages also derived.[350] The local Aramaic has a tendency to keep the letters separate and ligatures are relatively rare, in contrast to the Nabataean script from Petra.[351] Macdonald argues that the variation of Nabataean script was due to the training and background of a particular scribe.[352] However, it seems odd that the scribe made mistakes or did not properly deliver what was paid for by the person commissioning the inscription. We cannot be certain that the inscription's commissioner, and other people who viewed the inscription, would have noticed the difference between the two scripts. However, considering that we are talking about monumental inscriptions of a cult centre, especially in the case at Sī', a major sanctuary in the region, and this territory was not part of the Nabataean territory (§ Ch.2), it is very unlikely that the selection of the language was not due to a personal choice of the patron of this temple. Furthermore, the two earliest local Aramaic inscriptions at Sī' (the stele from the 2nd century BC and the one that commemorates the erection of temple 1) did not refer to a Nabataean calendar but the Seleucid one for dating the inscription.[353] This series of observations prompts the suggestion that the script used in the inscriptions, especially in this example, would have been the personal choice of whoever commissioned them: either the individual wanted to be associated with a specific script that an ethnic group adhered to,[354] or to be differentiated from a particular ethnic group, in this case, the Nabataeans, or he wanted to be understood by the local communities – no Nabataean inscriptions, in fact, appear in rural cult centres in this part of the Hauran. Even if the choice of the script was strictly and only due to the scribe's background, this variation of Nabataean script, differing from that at Petra, would still indicate a weak Nabataean influence at Sī'. The use of a local variation of the Nabataean script at Sī' and in the Hauran is not exceptional as variations of the Nabataean script occur in other inscriptions and in other parts of the Nabataean territory, as it was a language in continuous development.[355]

When looking in more detail at the writing of the inscriptions, not only at Sī', but in rural cult centres across the Hauran, we can, nevertheless, point out the following interesting patterns that stand out compared with other parts of the Nabataean kingdom. In one of his articles in 2003, Macdonald stated that 180 Nabataean and local Aramaic inscriptions in the Hauran were published,[356] 22 of which were recovered in rural cult centres on the basis of my dataset from published materials (Appendix). The total number of inscriptions recovered in the Hauran (180) is minimal if we compare

[348] Dentzer 1990: especially 69.
[349] *PPUAES* II: 380; P*AAES* IV no.1; *PPUAES* IV no.100; Glueck 1942: 7 ff.; 1966: 6 ff.; Hammond 1973: 62–4, 79 ff.; Peters 1977: 263–75, Negev 1977: 613 ff.; Busink 1980: 1255–320; Dentzer 1986: 392, 411.
[350] Starcky 1966: 930–2; 1985: 173; Dentzer 1986: 411; Macdonald 2000; Healey 2001: 62; Wenning 2007: 37.
[351] Macdonald 2003c: 54.
[352] Macdonald 2003c: 54–6.
[353] *CIS* II 163; *PPUAES* IV no.100; *PAAES* IV no.1; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1985: 175; Milik 2003.
[354] Steinsapair 2005: 19.
[355] Macdonald 2003c: especially 51–2.
[356] Macdonald 2003c: 44.

it with other areas of the Nabataean kingdom; for instance the quantity of inscriptions in the Hauran is equal to the total of Nabataean inscriptions recovered at a Nabataean site, Hegra, and it is only a quarter of the number of Nabataean inscriptions known at Petra.[357] This comparison stresses even more the minor Nabataean influence and presence in the Hauran.

Although I have not found a comprehensive evaluation of the writing of all Nabataean and local Aramaic in the Hauran (whether they were all written in Nabataean from Petra or local Aramaic), as the published information available is mostly from the record of over a century ago (made by the Princeton University team in the early 20th century and the *corpora* of inscriptions from the 19th or early 20th centuries), some remarks can be made thanks to the recent assessment about the writing of inscriptions from the following rural cult centres: Sī', Hebrān, Ṣalkhad, Khārayib and Qrayya.

Apart from three fragments of inscriptions,[358] at Sī' there are five local Aramaic inscriptions, including three bilingual, dated from the 2nd century BC to the beginning of the 1st century AD. This is the only rural sanctuary, apart from Hebrān, presenting non-Greek inscriptions in the Herodian territory of the Hauran. At Sī' there are two bilingual inscriptions that are not transliterated but roughly provide the same type of information (one referring to the cult of Seeia[359] and the other the statue of Malikat).[360] Then there is an inscribed statue in local Aramaic in honour of a certain Gallis dated to AD 29/30 found at the front of temple 2.[361] The Greek fragmentary inscription on the other side of the base differs from the Aramaic: it only mentions the name of the man who made the statue and his title, *hierodoulos*[362] (§ Ch.6.3 for information about *hierodoulos*).

Steinsapair suggested that perhaps the use of bilingual inscriptions was a straddling between two eras and cultures: the Aramaic language was associated with the memory of the past and ancestors (the commemorative inscription of the erection of the temple of Baalshamin and the *theatron* was local Aramaic), whereas Greek was used to communicate to a wider group and as a marker of status[363] (§ Ch.4.3 for a more comprehensive discussion of the use of Greek in inscriptions from this site and cult centres in the Hauran). The use of two languages can be interpreted as a necessity caused by the co-presence of pre-existing devotees with a new set of visitors coming into the sanctuary, as it was in the phase of expansion, considering the erection of a temple (temple 2) and courtyard 2 in the early 2st century AD (Appendix).

Hebrān presents only an inscription originally thought to be local Aramaic, but on the basis of a more careful reading Macdonald suggested it consists of a mixture of local Aramaic writing used in the Hauran together with Nabataean script from Petra.[364] This linguistic combination can be explained considering that it was a site at the edge of the Herodian territory, bordering the Nabataean territory according to scholars (§ Ch.2.3).

The other Aramaic (possibly Nabataean) inscriptions most likely associated with rural cult centres are situated in the Nabataean territory. They were recovered at Deir al-Meshqūq (AD 124),[365] Khārayib (AD 101/102),[366] Qrayya (AD 89/90)[367] Sahwit il-Khiḍr,[368] Ṣalkhad (AD 93),[369] Smeij/Deir Smeij[370] (cult centre dated to the beginning of the 1st century AD) and Umm is-surab (AD 76).[371] They are dated before the end of the Nabataean kingdom (AD 106), with one exception dated to AD 124 (i.e. Deir al-Meshqūq). The latest persistence of the Nabataean and local Aramaic inscriptions was in the Nabataean territory.

The Nabataean inscription, dated after the end of the Nabataean kingdom (Deir al-Meshqūq, AD 124), commemorates the erection of a temple or an altar dedicated to the god Mughnī – this name cannot be read with certainty.[372] Instead, there is an inscription dedicated to the Nabataean god Dushara at this site but it is in Greek and of a later date (AD 207).[373]

At Qrayya, a most likely temenos was dedicated instead to Dushara[374] – the distribution of dedications to Dushara will be discussed in more detail later.

From the group of the Nabataean inscriptions from the Nabataean territory in the Hauran listed above, the presence of a cult centre is not certain at Khārayib and Sahwit il-Khiḍr. In the first case the dedication mentions a consecrated place, possibly a temple.[375] In the second case, whereas according to the Princeton University team the inscription on the capital of a column-altar

[357] Macdonald 2003c: 44.
[358] *PPUAES* IV no.102, no.104, no.107.
[359] *PPUAES* IV no.103; *PPUAES* III no.767.
[360] *CIS* 164; *Wadd.* no.2366; *PAAES* III no.428a.
[361] *PPUAES* IV no.101.
[362] *PPUAES* III no.768.
[363] Steinsapair 2005: 19.
[364] Macdonald 2003c: 52, 54–5.
[365] This is the reading suggested in Milik 1972: 341. It is also recorded in *PPUAES* IV no.27.
[366] Nehmé 2010: 470.
[367] Nehmé 2010: 270.
[368] *CIS* II 188; *PPUAES* IV no.96–7; Lewis and Macdonald 2003: 75 no.34.
[369] Macdonald 2003c: 52, 54–5.
[370] *RES* no.2031; *PPUAES* IV no.11–2.
[371] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.2.
[372] This is the reading suggested in Milik 1972: 341. It is also recorded in *PPUAES* IV no.27.
[373] Dussaud and Macler 1903: 277 no.109; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 321; *IGRR* III 1335.
[374] Nehmé 2010: 270.
[375] Nehmé 2010: 470.

standing in front of the sanctuary mentions a cult stone and sanctuary,[376] according to Lewis and Macdonald it was a cubic altar, reused as the abacus of a column in the church dedicated to St George/al-Khiḍr..[377]

Despite being in the Nabataean territory, the inscription at Qrayya[378] and the latest non-Greek inscription from the sanctuary at Ṣalkhad (AD 93)[379] have been recently identified as local Aramaic – inscriptions dated earlier than AD 93 at Ṣalkhad seem to be written in Nabataean.[380] The results from this evidence indicate a minor Nabataean influence and presence in the Hauran, mostly circumscribed in the Nabataean territory, as already pointed out by the French team and Wenning.[381]

In addition to the arguments proposed by the French team and Wenning, the reassessment of the data undertaken in this analysis indicates a more detailed and complex situation than the one previously proposed. This minor Nabataean influence and presence in the Hauran, based on the script of inscriptions, ends with the conclusion of the Nabataean kingdom, in contrast to other parts of the Nabataea.[382] Furthermore, the location and times the inscriptions were commissioned seem to be determinant in relation to the use of Nabataean and local Aramaic scripts. The use of one or other script reflects the geographical division between the Herodian and Nabataean territories, where the site of Hebrān is between those two political territories, and no Nabataean inscriptions appear in Herodian territory.

Although at first impression the overall distribution pattern does make us question whether the language can be perceived as a political expression in this case, which is rejected by Macdonald[383] (§ Ch.1.2), it is more correct to say that this distribution pattern seems to indicate that the location where the inscription is situated, and its social-political background, may dictate the choice of the script of inscriptions. Consequently, they may provide an insight into what kind of people commissioned and visited the cult centres (§ Ch.1.2).

Furthermore, the use of one language instead of another is really down to place, or even more specifically, the socio-political context prevailing at the time the inscription was commissioned. In the case of Ṣalkhad, in fact, the commissioner, apparently coming from the same family or using a similar name (§ Ch.4.1) and working on and rebuilding the same monumental building (the sanctuary), used Nabataean writing before the mid 1st century AD, and the local Aramaic script at the end of the 1st century AD. Similarly, the inscription in the religious building dedicated to Dushara at Qrayya, which was in local Aramaic, was dated towards the end of the Nabataean kingdom.

Whether the deliberate choice of the commissioner, or dependent on the training and background of the scribe, as suggested by Macdonald,[384] the use of local Aramaic in the Nabataean territory of the Hauran towards the end of the Nabataean kingdom can be perceived as an increasing decline of the Nabataean presence or/and influence in the Nabataean territory. The complete disappearance of inscriptions bearing a local variation of Nabataean script in this part of the Hauran marks the end of the Nabataean presence and influence in the Hauran, which had already taken place in the Herodian sector by the mid 1st century AD. Whether all the Aramaic inscriptions in the Hauran were Nabataean or a local variation, it still indicates the end of an already weak influence and contacts between the Hauran and the Nabataean kingdom, first, in the Herodian territory, and, then, in the Nabataean part.

The next element used by some scholars up to the 1980s to support the Nabataean presence at Sī' was the identification of temple 2 as the temple of Dushara, on the basis of two factors.[385] One was the main decorative motif consisting of grapes and vine branches[386] which was used in the sanctuary and diffused in all rural temples in the Hauran (Appendix). This pattern was associated with Dushara as he was the god of wine.[387] The other factor was the different depictions representing Dushara recovered in the sanctuary. Yet after a more careful reading of the evidence associated with Dushara, these interpretations have been correctly rejected by more recent scholars. Looking at each piece of sculptural evidence from Dushara, the statue fragment recovered at the entrance of temple 2 was originally identified as representing this god[388] because vine branches and grapes are depicted below its feet.[389] For this reason, together with Aramaic inscriptions and the layout both erroneously identified as Nabataean, temple 2 was named the temple of Dushara. However, a bilingual inscription that matches the statue fragment[390] explicitly says that 'this' (implying the statue) is the image of Š'y'.[391] In Aramaic Š'y' means

[376] *PPUAES* IV no.96–7.
[377] Lewis and Macdonald 2003: 75 no.34.
[378] Nehmé 2010: 270.
[379] Macdonald 2003c, 52: 54–5.
[380] Macdonald 2003c, 52: 54–5.
[381] Starcky 1985; Dentzer 1986: 414; Wenning 2007: 37.
[382] Macdonald 2003c.
[383] Macdonald 2003c.
[384] Macdonald 2003c.
[385] *PPUAES* II: 385–90 ill.336; *Suw.* 1934: no.15 pl.9, no.39–40 pl.14; Glueck 1942: 7 ff.; 1966, 6 ff.; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64; Dussaud 1955: 57; Hammond 1973: 62–4, 79 ff.; Peters 1977: 263–75; Negev 1977: 613 ff.; Busink 1980: 1255–320.
[386] *PPUAES* II: 371 ff., 390–3, 428–31, 433–4 ill.339, ill.371 pl. 28; Glueck 1942: 7 ff.; 1966, 6 ff.; Hammond 1973: 62–64, 79 ff.; Peters 1977: 263–75; Negev 1977: 613 ff.; Busink 1980: 1255–320; Dentzer 1986: 392.
[387] Augé and Bellefonds 1986a: 529.
[388] *PPUAES* II, 385–90.
[389] *PPUAES* II ill. 337; Weber 2006: pl.74 b.
[390] Denzter-Feydy 1979: 327.
[391] *PPUAES* IV no.103.

the platform, signifying the levelled terrace of the hill where the sanctuary is situated.[392] The Greek part of the inscription additionally states that Seeia stands over the land of the Hauran,[393] meaning that she is the protector of the area and its fields.[394] This inscription, together with the statue, also implies that the floral decorations of vine branches represent the products of the local cultivable land.[395] Therefore, they are not symbols of Dushara, but of Seeia, the local Tyche, who protected and embodied the sacred place of Sī'[396] (§ Ch.4.4).

Turning our attention to other depictions that scholars have interpreted as representing Dushara, a relief of a bearded bust with a cornucopia, a symbol of abundance,[397] is more likely to represent Baalshamin than Dushara, because the former was depicted with a beard, unlike the Nabataean deity.[398] An altar with a non-bearded bust emerging from the vine branches initially argued to be Dushara[399] bears, however, an inscription dedicated to Zeus Kyrios: this is a frequent epithet used for Baalshamin.[400] Sourdel attempted to explain the representation of Dushara accompanied by the epithet of Baalshamin by arguing that this image of Dushara was offered to Baalshamin: he did so despite the lack of supporting evidence.[401] In this discussion, a relief currently in the Museum of Damascus, but possibly originally situated in the provincial structure in the north-western part of courtyard 3 at Sī', is of interest. It is a nude male figure, holding the long pinecone-topped thyrsus staff and accompanied by a maenad and a satyr holding a bunch of grapes; this is dated to the mid 2nd century AD according to the style of wide-egg motif, placed at the top of the depiction.[402] Although Dentzer-Feydy recently did not exclude the possibility that this figure stands for the god Poseidon, on the basis of his masculine silhouette,[403] it has been suggested to represent Dionysus because the type of staff is considered an attribute of this god; also the maenad and the satyr are typical figures associated with this deity, and grapes are a symbol of Dionysus.[404] This depiction could be associated with Dushara, as Dionysus, the god of wine, was believed to be the Greek assimilation of the Nabatean god.[405] Written accounts have, in fact, occasionally associated Dushara with Dionysus.[406] However, they were mostly dated to a later period than the Nabataean reign and, moreover, not always recovered in the Nabataean territory.[407] The type of representation of Dionysus from Sī' was not only widely developed in the Nabataean territory but also in the whole Near East in the provincial period.[408] The relief recovered at Sī' is, in fact, dated to the mid 2nd century AD, according to the style of wide-egg motif, placed at the top of the depiction.[409] These observations suggest this representation was not of Dushara. The presence of the cult of Dionysus at Sī' in the provincial period could have been influenced by the proximity of the provincial city of Dionysias founded in AD 185, named after the god,[410] some 5–6 km from the sanctuary of Sī'. Dionysus was the god of wine and, therefore, the protector of vines and of vegetation in general, but it should not be assumed that he always stands for the Greek assimilation of Dushara.[411] The introduction of this deity in this part of the Hauran, and its significance, can actually be explained by the fact that grapes represented the main crop grown in the territory surrounding this city and Sī' for centuries, including the provincial period[412] and until the present day.[413] Therefore, the reassessment of evidence used to support the cult of Dushara at Sī' discounts the cult of this god in the sanctuary.

While previous scholars have focused on the divine representations of the Nabataean deity Dushara at Sī', they have not considered written dedications to Dushara in the Hauran to be of much significance when discussing the Nabataean. An exception is Alpass, who has recently reassessed the worship of Dushara in the Hauran and concluded it was restricted to Bosra.[414] However the situation is rather more complex than he proposed: there are inscriptions dedicated to Dushara outside Bosra. Most of them appear in the Nabataean part of the Hauran (Map 4). There are generic dedications to this god: one was found at Deir al-Meshqūq, where a temple was recovered, and two others were found at Itman[415] and Melah Is-Sarrar,[416] where no remains of a cult centre survive. An exception is at Qrayya, where a religious monument, which could have been a temenos, was possibly dedicated to Dushara in AD 89/90.[417] The inscriptions from Deir al-Meshqūq and Melah Is-Sarrar are from the provincial period, and the Greek language and the calendar of Roman emperors were used. Only the dedication at Itman and

392 *PPUAES* III, 364–65; Cantineau 1932: 14–1.
393 *PPUAES* III no.767.
394 Denzter-Feydy 1979: 327.
395 Villeneuve 1985: 70.
396 Denzter-Feydy 1979; Kropp 2013a: 294.
397 *Suw.* 1934 no.39–40 pl.14.
398 Sourdel 1957: 30.
399 *Suw*. 1934 no.15 pl.9; Dussaud 1955: 57.
400 Dentzer-Fedy 1979: 332.
401 Sourdel 1957: 28, 64.
402 Weber 2006: 112–3 pl.72c; Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 322 fig.23.21.
403 Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 322 fig.23.21.
404 Weber 2006: 112–3 pl.72c.
405 Augé and de Bellefonds 1986a : 529.
406 Sourdel 1957: 63–64; Starcky 1966: col.990; Healey 2001: 100.
407 Healey 2001 : 100–5.
408 Augé and de Bellefonds 1986a.
409 Weber 2006: 112–3 no.92.
410 *Wadd.* no.2307.
411 Augé and Linant de Bellefonds 1986a.
412 Willcox 2003: 184.
413 Villeneuve 1985: 70.
414 Alpass 2013: 167–200.
415 *RES* 83; Dussaud and Macler 1901: 167 no.36.
416 *Wadd.* no.2023; *PPUAES* III no.706; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 316.
417 Nehmé 2010: 270.

the inscription at Qrayya are dated to the time of the Nabataean kingdom; the former appears to be written in Nabataean,[418] the script of the latter is closer to the local Aramaic than the Nabataean writing from Petra[419] – the choice of the script has been discussed earlier on. In the example at Qrayya, an individual commissioned a religious monument in honour of Dushara, who is explicitly identified as the god and the king in the inscription. The inscription can be read as a sign of respect of the benefactor towards the Nabataean authority and religious tradition, and evidence of the benefactor's reverence for a Nabataean god.

Only one written dedication dedicated to Dushara comes from the Herodian part of the Hauran (north of Debjel al'Arab): it is from the rural temple at Sleim and is in Greek. No further information can be inferred because of the fragmentary nature of the inscription.[420] The cult centre is dated from the second half of the 1st century AD into the provincial period, according to the architectural style.[421]

Therefore, by looking at these inscriptions dedicated to Dushara across the Hauran, the language and the calendar used appear to depend on the time of their creation and the political authority that was ruling the territory. Although the Nabataean script was used after the end of the Nabataean kingdom in other parts of the Nabataea,[422] at least the Nabataean or local Aramaic inscriptions dedicated to Dushara from rural cult centres in the Hauran, including the Nabataean territory, do not appear after the end of the kingdom (Appendix).

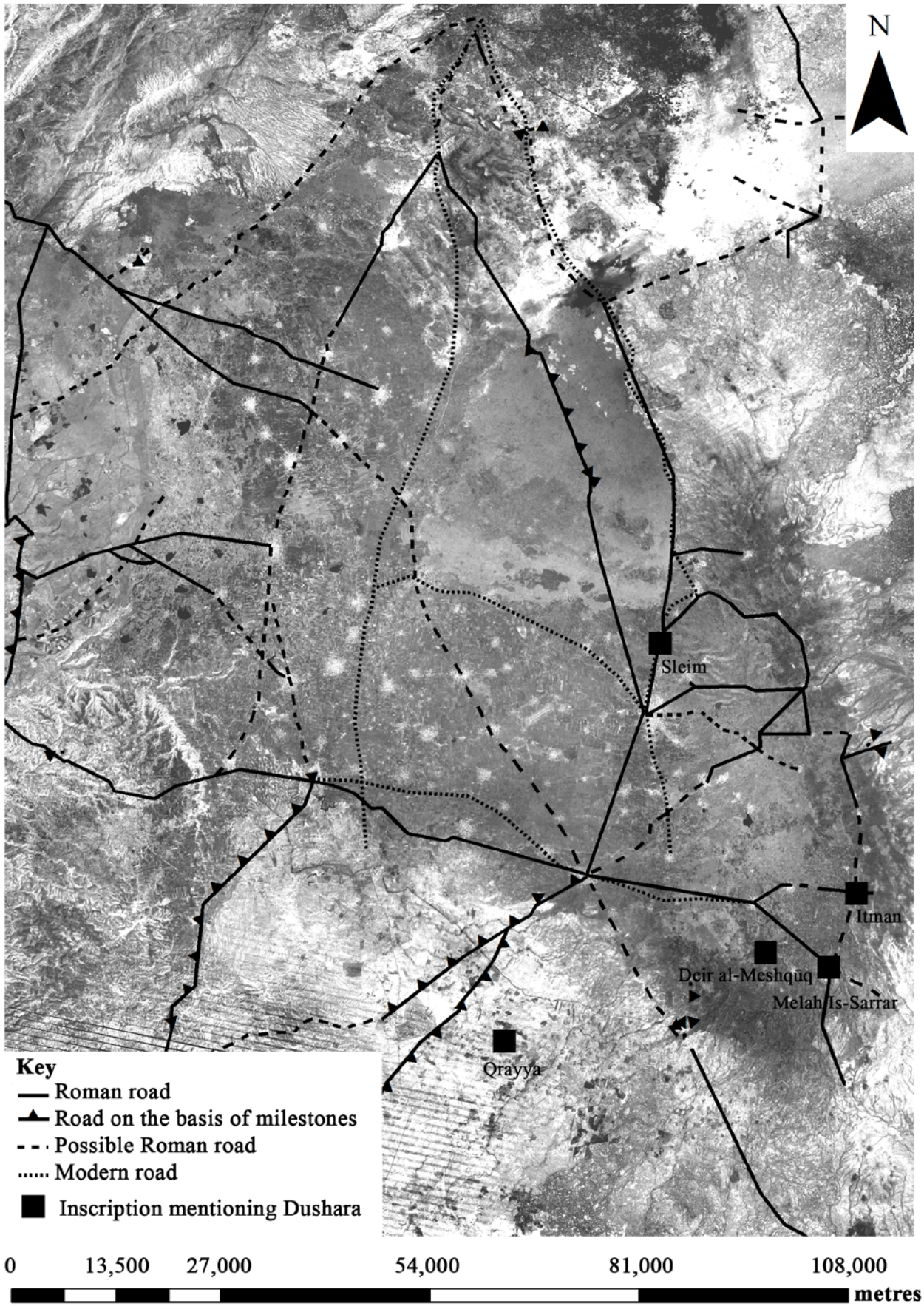
The dating of the dedications to Dushara concentrated in the southern Hauran (four out of five in the whole of Hauran) (Map 4) indicates however the persistence of Nabataean religious traditions after the annexation of this part of the Hauran to the Roman province, the latter being a common practice in territories previously belonging to the Nabataea.[423] This first systematic analysis of the worship of Dushara on the basis of written dedications, completely overlooked by scholars, rejects the near non-existence, even the complete absence, of the Nabataeans in the Hauran and in the Herodian part of the region, as claimed by Healey and Freyberger. The presence of one dedication to Dushara in the Herodian part of the Hauran reflects the ephemeral political domination of the Nabataeans in this part of the Hauran, as Sartre-Fauriat has suggested.[424] At the same time it also indicates the sporadic presence of the Nabataeans in the religious life of this part of the region, even if it is a one-off case, as dedications to this god from outside the Nabataean kingdom are usually made by the Nabataeans.[425]

The concentration of written dedications to Dushara in the Nabataean territory of the Hauran supports the assertions by the French team and Wenning that the Nabataean presence was greater in the rural part of the Hauran under Nabataean dominion than in the Herodian territory. Nevertheless, the analysis of dedications to Dushara has additionally indicated a minor role of the Nabataeans also in the Nabataean territory of the Hauran, as effectively, there were no rural temples dedicated to Dushara in the Hauran, with one exception, the probable temenos at Qrayya.

When discussing those gods in the Hauran who were widely worshipped in the Nabataean kingdom, we have to include Isis. Only a stele at Sī' mentions the cult of Isis with Baalshamin, Seeia and the Angel of the God, in 105–104 BC.[426] In his analysis of the inscription at Sī', Milik considered the cult of Isis as an official cult at Petra on the basis abundant evidence at Petra and in its surroundings[427] – even one of the major temples at Petra (the temple of the Winged Lions) was dedicated to Isis.[428] She originated in Egypt but was widely worshipped in the Greek and Hellenistic worlds.[429] In the Hauran, a figurine, most likely of Egyptian style, was found in recent excavations at Sī'. Apart from a small statue of Isis at Mismiyyeh, dedicated by a Roman centurion, implying that it was due to the presence of a Roman soldier (§ Ch.5.1), only two theophoric names appear in epitaphs of the Nabataean script at Bosra and Umm ar-Rummān.[430] The presence of this foreign god, only mentioned in a stele, in the pre-provincial period would have been, therefore, a minimal evidence of indirect Nabataean influence.

Although the French team similarly argued for the minor role of the Nabataeans in the Herodian part of the region,[431] they have, alternatively, ascribed much importance to the recovery of Nabataean capitals from temple 3 at Sī',[432] dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (roughly AD 70–106) (Figure 6).[433] This type of capital is also used in the archway complex at Bosra in the same period. The presence of Nabataean

[418] *RES* 83; Dussaud and Macler 1901: 167 no.36.
[419] Nehmé 2010: 270.
[420] *SEG* VII 1107.
[421] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 277–9.
[422] Macdonald 2003c.
[423] Drijvers 1986: 670–72; Healey 2001: 85 ff.
[424] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 297.
[425] This is the case at Pozzuoli (Italy), Miletus and Delos (Greece), for instance (Hackl *et al.* 2003: 119–22, 127–8).
[426] Milik 2003.
[427] Milik 2003: 271.
[428] Hammond 1990.
[429] Much research on the cult of Isis has been published. An example, for instance, is a recent edited volume about the cult in the Greek and the Roman world, resulting from a conference held at Boulogne-sur-Mer in 2011 (Bricault and Versluys 2014).
[430] Milik 2003.
[431] Dentzer-Feydy 1979: 332; Dentzer 1986: 282–3.
[432] They are also called Nabataean blocked capitals.
[433] Dentzer 1985: 69.



Map 4: Distribution of dedications to Dushara (the author)

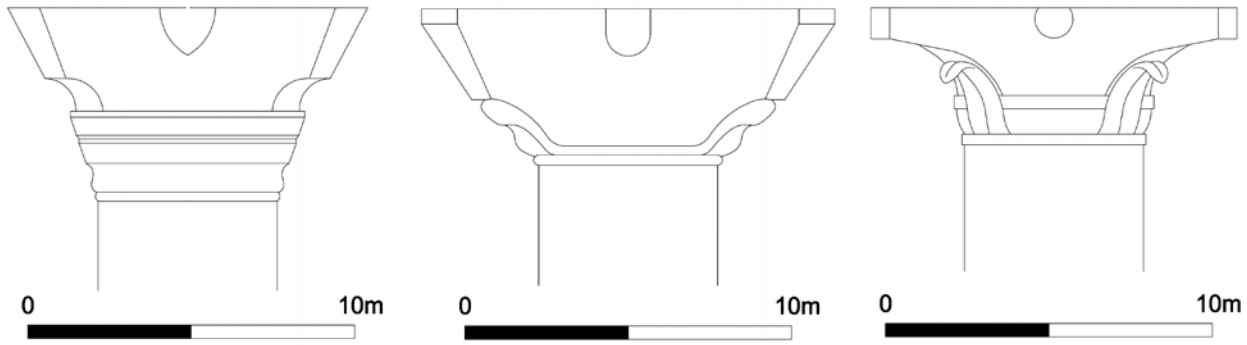


Figure 6: Drawing of Nabataean capitals Type McKenzie 1 (on the left) and Type 2 (in the centre), and a Nabataean capital at Sī' (on the right) (the author, after McKenzie 2001: fig. 1, together with McKenzie 1990: 190, Diagram 14 i and *PPUAES* II fig. 341).

capitals, together with the Doric capitals used in the Hauran, that are also part of the archway complex at Bosra, have been interpreted as clear evidence of Nabataean presence.[434] It was due, scholars say, to the movement of the Nabataean kingdom north into the southern Hauran,[435] when Bosra, the main city of the southern territory of the Hauran, became the Nabataean capital in the second half of 1st century AD and remained so until the end of the kingdom in AD 106.[436] Dentzer considered the presence of Nabataean capitals in temple 3 at Sī' to be a prestigious gift made by the last Nabatean king Rabbel II (AD 70–106).[437] The identification of the Nabataean monarch is due to the dating of temple 3 at Sī', from the second half of the 1st century AD (roughly AD 70–106), and the archway complex at Bosra associated with this type of capital, from the second half of the 1st century AD.[438] However, there is neither evidence of the Nabatean king Rabbel II at Sī' nor an inscription to tell us who actually commissioned temple 3. Additionally, the recovery of Nabataean and Doric capitals associated with rural cult centres in the Hauran is minimal, if we consider most of the capitals from these rural centres are Ionic or Corinthian.[439] This means that the Nabataean capitals, together with the Doric type, do not represent significant support for Dentzer's theory. Although Kropp still emphasises the uniqueness of this type of capital in a temple with Graeco-Roman layout in the Hauran, suggesting a dedication by foreign worshippers,[440] and he classifies them as variants of Nabataean capitals, which also appear in other regions outside the Nabataean kingdom. There are examples on Cyprus (Kourion and Amathous),[441] in Egypt (Philae)[442] and in the Herodian kingdom (Masada).[443] They are different from the types at Petra; they were Ionic and Corinthian capitals that were deliberately left in bosse.[444] Similarly Freyberger argued that the capitals from Sī' cannot be labelled 'Nabataean' as they are only the local version of Hellenistic capitals in bosse.[445] Freyberger and Kropp did consider that the capitals from temple 3 at Sī' possessed a horn-shaped profile that is the main feature and typical of Nabataean capitals.[446] Even Patrich, who points out that this type of capital is found elsewhere outside the Nabataeans, admits it was widely used by the Nabataeans,[447] more so than the more sporadic examples elsewhere.

Although the 'Nabataean' capitals from Sī' are not identical to the capitals at Petra, they still resemble the latter, even more than the 'Nabataean' capitals at Bosra: the capitals from Petra have a stylised version of the acanthus leaves at Sī'. In particular, the capitals at Sī' are a variant of Type C on the basis of Patrich's typology, and part of the classified Nabataean Type 2 identified by McKenzie, whereas the ones at Bosra belong to a different category, Type A, according to Patrich, and the Nabataean Type 1, according to McKenzie (Figure 6).[448] Although Patrich suggests that variant Type C is different from the common type found in the Nabataean centres of Petra and Hegra, it is still a type found in these two centres and can be dated from 1 BC to AD 76.[449]

This resemblance between the capital style from Sī' and the one from Petra – rather than Bosra – is reinforced by the 'floral heterodox' type of the Corinthian capitals

[434] Dentzer 1986: 280, 283; 2007: 13–5; Dentzer and Blanc 2007: 133, 136.
[435] Dentzer 1986: 282–3.
[436] Bowersock 1983: 73; Sartre 2007b: 9–12.
[437] Dentzer 1986: 282–3.
[438] Dentzer 1985: 69.
[439] Dentzer-Feydy 1990a; 1990b.
[440] Kropp 2010a: 10–1; 2013a: 296.
[441] Gros 1996: 171–2.
[442] Gros 1996: 163.
[443] Patrich 1996: 208–9; Peleg-Barkat 2006: 331.
[444] Kropp 2010a: 10–1; 2013a: 296.
[445] Freyberger 1998: 52, pl.32d; 2008: 131, 134 fig.6; 2013: 154; 2014: 132.
[446] McKenzie 2001: 97–9.
[447] Patrich 1996: 206.
[448] Patrich 1996; McKenzie 2001: 97–9.
[449] Patrich 1996: 199.

recovered at Sī' 8, from the same building phase of temple 3, that is also widely used at Petra. In particular, in both cases two crossing stems ending with a flower on the abacus appear between helices and volutes.[450] The example from Sī' seems to be similar to the Type A of the 'Nabataean' Corinthian capitals dated from the last quarter of the 1st century BC onwards, but this type is also found elsewhere outside the Nabataean kingdom.[451]

In the light of such reappraisal, therefore, the evidence used to support the Nabataean presence at Sī' by Dentzer's argument seems meagre. At the same time the Nabataean presence or influence does not seem non-existent, in disagreement with the results of the re-examination of 'Nabataean' capitals by Kropp and Freyberger.

There are additional types of evidence that have not received adequate attention by scholars so far, which, I believe, can suggest influence from the heart of the Nabataean kingdom in the Hauran: they are statues of eagles; male characters in rural cult centres in the Hauran; and statue heads from Sī'.

Although the representation of eagles is widespread across the Hauran (Appendix), the depiction of those specifically recovered in the Djebel al'Arab (Sī', Hebrān and Sleim) appears to be similar to those from early 1st-century tombs at Hegra,[452] one of the major Nabataean sites of this period (Map 5).[453] Both statues of eagles from the Djebel al'Arab and Hegra stand with wings spread and have small, flat feathers above the wing and larger feathers below (Appendix) – for the meaning/s of the representations of eagles, see Ch.4.2–3).

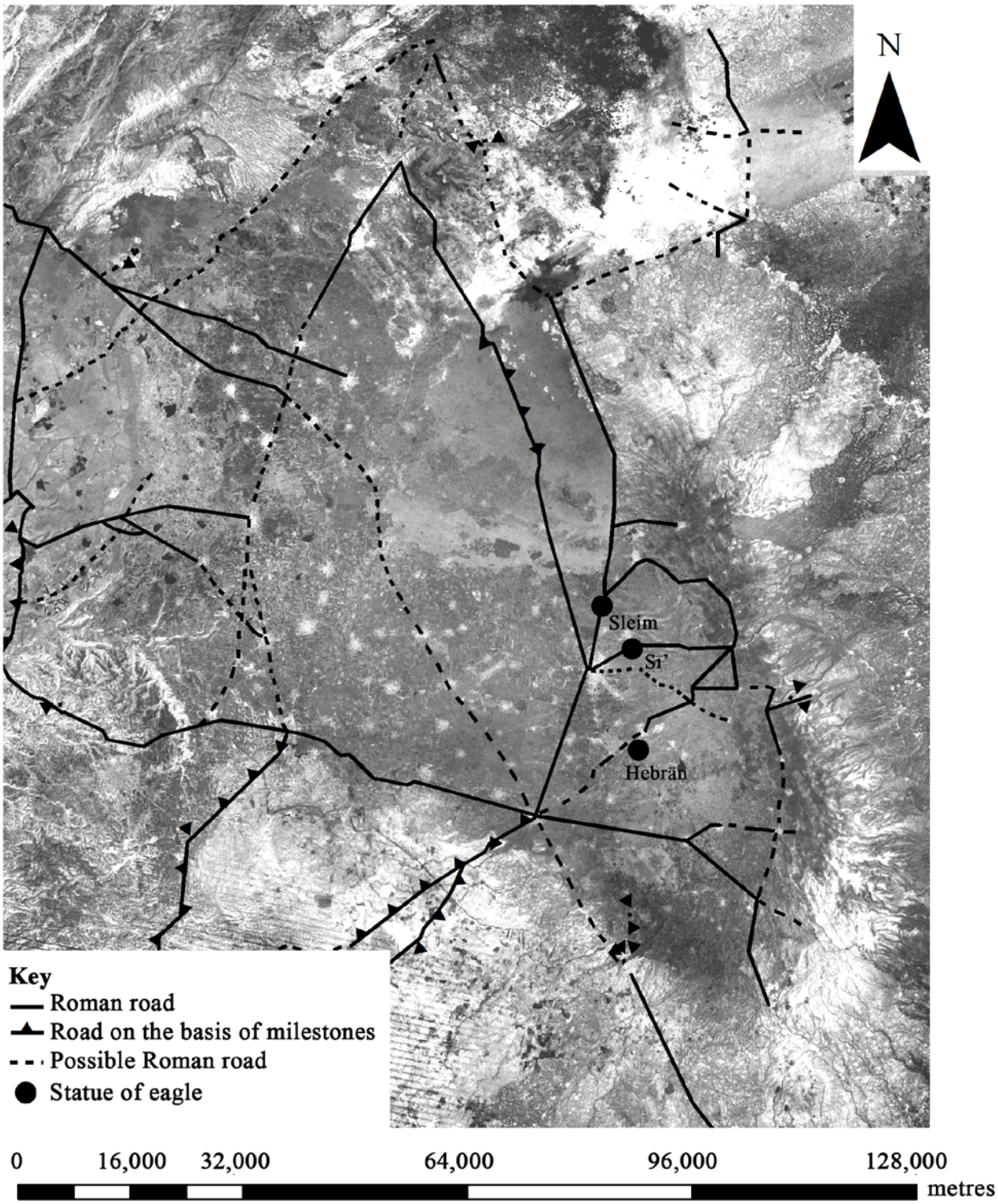
An additional element contributing towards a reassessment and full comprehension of the presence of the Nabataeans in the Hauran is the representation of male statues from al-Mushennef and Sleim and a high-relief on an altar from Sī' in the Hauran. These male statues wear a loincloth[454] used by the Nabataeans, according to ancient sources.[455] Furthermore some statues of royal figures recovered from 4th- to 3rd-century BC tombs at Hegra wear this garment,[456] and one of them has a sort of fabric belt around the hips with a knot.[457] This type of knot is used in the statues from Sleim and Sī' (Figure 7).[458] Therefore, on the basis of this resemblance, the loincloth can be considered a garment deriving from an ancient tradition in Arabia which could have then been continued into the Nabataean period and then transmitted to the neighbouring populations in the Djebel al'Arab.

Figure 7: Detail of the altar at Sī', depicting a male figure wearing a loincloth (the author 2010).

The statue with a loincloth from al-Mushennef was recovered from the reservoir at the back of the sanctuary.[459] This implies that it most likely featured as part of the religious centre. We could suggest the same thing with the other examples from the Hauran; although they were found out of context, they could also have come from the temple as it is the main monument known at those sites. If that is the case, such representations would have depicted wealthy dedicators, as no statue of a deity with a loincloth is known. The fact that the statues are wearing 'Arabic' clothing from Hegra may imply that the local elite could have been influenced by the customs of 'Nabataean' ancestors.

Furthermore, two statue heads from Sī' have a '*Schillerlocken*' hairstyle, which consists of corkscrew locks (with and without wreaths).[460] Both were found out of context; one of them comes from Sī' and the other possibly from the same site. Another four examples of this depiction come from the Hauran.[461] The statues from Sī', in particular, have been interpreted to

[450] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 84.
[451] Patrich 1996: 201–2.
[452] *JS* I pl.41, 44, 45.2; McKenzie 1990: 16–7 pl.3.
[453] Negev 1977: 571–84; Millar 1993: 406.
[454] Bolelli 1986: no. 6 –7; Dentzer 2003: 189 fig.13.
[455] Strab. *Geog.* 16. 4–21.
[456] Bossert and Naumann 1951: no.1239–40; Bolelli 1986: 332.
[457] Bossert and Naumann 1951: no.1239.
[458] Bolelli 1986: no.6; Dentzer 2003: 189 fig.13.
[459] Bolelli 1986: no.7.
[460] *Hauran* IV II: 86–7 fig.150–1, 156–7.
[461] The exact location of these statues is unknown.



Map 5: Distribution of representation of eagles similar to examples from Hegra (the author)

be different characters. Wenning and Bolelli have suggested that one with a laurel wreath was a female goddess because of that attribute on her head; the other without laurel wreath was generically identified as a female character.[462] Bolelli pointed out that one of the statues with circular earrings was a divine figure, as this attribute was certainly used to represent deities in the Near East.[463] However, he does not mention that earrings were common in female representations, such as the funerary portraits from Palmyra,[464] including the

[462] Bolelli 1991: 76; *Suw.* 1991, 142; Wenning 2001: 341 ff.

[463] Bolelli 1991: 76; *Suw.* 1991 142.

[464] Sadurska and Bounni 1994.

circular types in a few instances.[465] Earrings were also used to depict Parthian and late Persian kings.[466] Bolelli also points out that the *Schillerlocken* hairstyle appears in representations of the Palmyrene god Shadrafa.[467]

Weber, on the other hand, has argued that these statues could have represented Nabataean kings, as both were beardless with long, thick locks that often cover the ears and part of the neck.[468] Amongst the representations of Nabataean kings, Malikhos and Obodas III seem to have the same corkscrew locks appearing in the statues from the Hauran.[469] Only the Nabataean kings Obodas III, Syllaios and Aretas IV, were, at first, depicted wearing a wreath or a diadem, but, later, exclusively with a wreath.[470] Therefore, some of the statue heads from the Hauran would most likely stand for Obodas III.[471]

The identification of Obodas with statues having a *Schillerlocken* hairstyle has been supported by other examples. One statue with this hairstyle was found in Obodas's chapel at Petra[472] an ddated to AD 20 on the basis of a dedicatory inscription. In two other instances statue heads with corkscrew locks have recently been identified as Nabataean kings; this is the case for one statue in the Louvre[473] and another from the museum of Delos.[474] However, the former has also been associated with a masculinising portrait of Ptolemaic queens,[475] and the latter with Apollo or a late Ptolemy.[476]

Although Kropp points out that the hypothesis that statue heads with corkscrew locks from the Hauran represent Nabataean kings is attractive, he still maintains that this suggestion is uncertain[477] because of the variation of length and thickness of the hairstyle of the Nabataean kings mostly depicted on coins,[478] the rarity of portraits of Malikhos and Odobas III, and the plurality of other figures depicted with this type of hairstyle, including Ptolemaic queens and Isis and other deities.[479] Other gods seem to have this hairstyle with some variation. For instance, the god Shadrafa has shorter and thicker locks than those on the statues from the Hauran. In a relief from Djobb ed-Djerrah, a Palmyrene god is depicted beardless and also with short, corkscrew locks; he also wears circular earrings and rides on horseback, and it seems that he is about to be crowned with a laurel wreath.[480] Furthermore, this hairstyle is typically 'Arab'.[481] For example, the Qedarites (an ancient Arab tribal confederation) were depicted on coins from Gaza (4th century BC) with round-cut fringes and long braids falling on the neck.[482] Corkscrew locks are also known as 'Libyan locks'. They also appear in late Classical models as well as many neo-Classical reliefs of the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods,[483] especially widely diffused in the Neronian–Flavian period, although it continued for longer time in the East than the West.[484] Although earrings have been considered 'Arabic' typical personal ornaments by Kropp,[485] they do not appear in representations of Nabataean kings.

Therefore, we cannot be certain that statue heads with corkscrew locks were Nabataean kings, at the same time we cannot rule out this possibility, which seems rather plausible, especially considering the occasional 'Nabataean' elements in the Hauran already mentioned. It could also have been that local elites would have been influenced by Nabataean royal portraits, mostly visible on coins, as their coinage was used in the Hauran – see discussion at the end of this section (§ Ch.3.1). At the same time, the local elite in the Hauran could have also been influenced by more generic 'Arab' traits, not necessarily associated with royal representations, and those from Near Eastern gods, which both resemble or had some common traits with Nabataean royal portraits. Therefore, the statue heads from Sī', including others from the Hauran, whoever they stand for, are not portraits with distinctive local traits, but their traits seem to be influenced from Nabataean portraits, or at least they were used elsewhere, not just the Hauran.

My more detailed and comprehensive comparative study between elements of rural cult centres in the Hauran and Nabataean examples has provided a different picture from the one offered by earlier scholars who argued for a Nabataean presence in major rural cult centres, as well as the one offered by more recent scholars (Healey, Freyberger and Alpass). My reassessment of the data has confirmed the erroneous identification of Nabataean temples and of representations of Dushara at Sī', as previously stated by some scholars. It has also rejected the assertions of Freyberger, Alpass and Wenning, which claimed the absence of Nabataean influence in the

[465] Sadurska and Bounni 1994: 67–8, 100 fig.18, fig.140.
[466] Seyrig and Starcky 1949: 231–3; Kropp 2010c: 202.
[467] Bolelli 1991: 76. For the depiction of this deity, see Augé 1994.
[468] Weber 2006: 34; *Hauran* IV II: 84–8; Kropp 2013a: 61 ff.
[469] Kropp 2013a: 61 ff.
[470] Kropp 2013a: 63; 2013b: 22.
[471] *Hauran* IV II: 83 ff. For additional references to support the identification of Nabataean king Obodas II with male representations with laurel crown and *Schillerlocken* hairstyle, see Meshorer 1975; Schmitt-Korte and Cowell 1989; Schmitt-Korte 1990: 105–33; Schmitt-Korte and Price 1994; Schmid 1999; Schwentzel 2005; Kropp 2011: fig.10; 2015.
[472] Nehmé 2002: 247; *Hauran* IV II: 83 ff.
[473] Schmid 2001; Schwentzel 2006: 135.
[474] Marcadé 1969: pl. 74; Schmitt-Korte 1990; Schmid 1999; Weber 2006b, Schwentzel 2006: 134–5.
[475] Smith 1988: 94, 166–7no.56.
[476] Bothmer 1996: 225–6.
[477] Kropp 2013a: 70–1.
[478] Wenning 2003: 148 no.32; Schwentzel 2006: 133; Kropp 2013a: 71.
[479] Kropp 2013a: 71.
[480] Seyrig and Starcky 1949; *Hauran* IV II: 85 no.408; Kropp 2013a: 70–1 fig.24.
[481] Wenning 2003: 148; Kropp 2013a: 68.
[482] Kropp 2013a: 68.
[483] Böhm 2004: 31–48, especially 44.
[484] Parlasca 1967: 564.
[485] Kropp 2010c: 203.

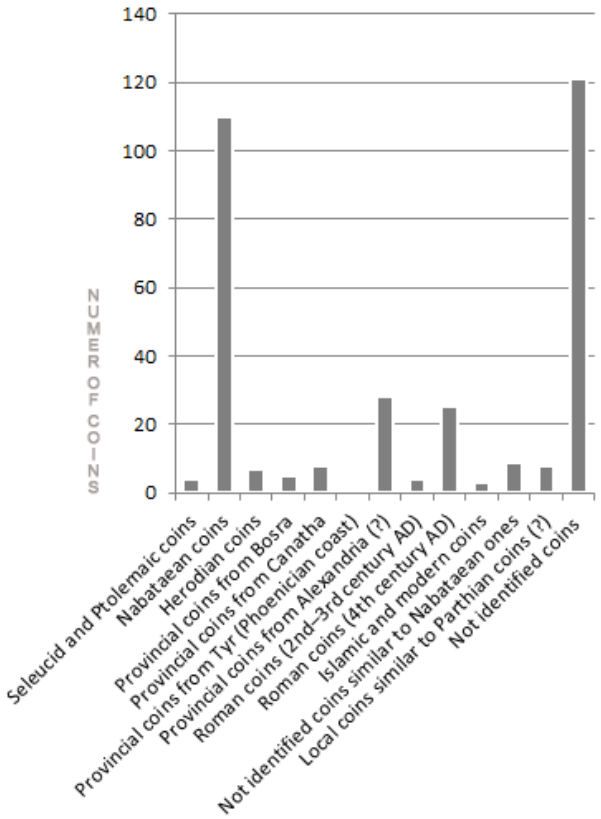


Figure 8: Graph showing coins recovered at Sī' (information from Table 3 in Appendix) (the author).

region, especially in the Herodian part, because of the following set of evidence.

The 'Nabataean' capitals, used as evidence of the Nabataean influence by the French team, together with the dedications to Dushara and Isis, and statues either representing Nabataeans or having a 'Nabataean' style, which have not been considered by scholars, convincingly suggest Nabataean influence in both Nabataean and Herodian parts of the Hauran, but the impact of this culture was overall minimal.

Furthermore, the 'Nabataean' capitals, together with other evidence mentioned above in relation to the discussion of the Nabataean presence, cannot be explained as a consequence of Bosra becoming the Nabataean capital in the second half of the 1st century AD. Instead, it is a possibility that they could have come from the heart of the Nabataea (i.e. Petra and Hegra) and were adopted in the Hauran at the end of the 1st century BC to the early 1st century AD. This conclusion is based on the following elements elaborated so far: 'Nabataean' capitals and floral decorations of Corinthian capitals at Sī' that more closely resemble those from Petra than those from Bosra; male statues with 'Arabic' clothing and depictions of eagles from the end of the 1st century BC to the early 1st century AD, both originated from Hegra. This hypothesis of an earlier dating for the Nabataean influence in the Hauran could be corroborated by the few statues at Sī' either representing the Nabataean king Obodas III (who ruled at the end of the 1st century BC), or possibly imitating the hairstyle of one of the Nabataean royal portraits. A small number of inscriptions at Sī' (five and three fragments), nevertheless, use a local Aramaic writing that resembles the Nabataean script.[486] The inscriptions themselves are dated to the earliest phase of monumentalisation of religious centres in the Hauran (from the end of the 2nd century BC to early 1st century AD). Although they only indicate an indirect and minimal Nabataean impact on the cultural identity in the Hauran, they reinforce the 'Nabataean influence' in the region as coming at an earlier period than the one suggested by Dentzer, that is to say, during the reign of Rabbel II. This earlier date of the Nabataean influence at Sī' is also supported by a coin assemblage recovered at Sī' 8.[487] There were roughly 161 coins,[488] which still form a significant number of this type of find in a religious rural sanctuary in the Hauran, considering that only two other sites in the Hauran are known to have coins (Saḥr and Khirbet Massakeb), with only a couple of coins found on the basis of published materials.[489] The coins at Sī' 8 vary from the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic period to the present day, but they were mainly from the pre-provincial to the late Roman period (100 BC–AD 400), approximately 94% of the whole assemblage (151 out of 161 coins). The Nabataean coins were from the end of the 1st century BC to the end of the kingdom (AD 106) and they predominated in the whole assemblage (roughly 60%, approximately 97 out of 161), whereas non-Nabataean coins from this same period represent only 4% of the assemblage (Figure 8).[490] The majority of Nabataean coins that could be dated and narrowed down chronologically were from the end of the 1st century BC to before the mid 1st century AD (c. 6 BC–AD 40) (29 out of 97 coins, or 30%) (Figure 8).[491]

As most of the coins were found in modern, Islamic and late-Roman layers,[492] it is problematic to accurately date

[486] A local Aramaic stele and a commemorative inscription complemented with a Greek transliteration; they are discussed earlier in this section.
[487] Sī' 8 is an extension of the sanctuary complex at the top of the hill, based in its surrounding valley; it is a small adyton facing a courtyard with a monumental façade and is dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (Dentzer 1985: 69).
[488] Augé 2003. See Table 3 in Appendix for the breakdown of the coins recovered at Sī'.
[489] Kalos 1999; 2003: 160.
[490] Herodian coins from mid 1st century BC to the end of the 1st century AD were only 2% of the assemblage, and coins minted from the nearby city Canatha from the 1st century AD were similarly 2% of the assemblage (Table 3 in Appendix).
[491] Augé 1986: 204; 2003: 236–7, 252–4, no.8–40. From the 97 Nabataean coins recovered, 45 coins could not be dated (46.4%); 19 coins could have been from the 1st century BC to the end of the Nabataean kingdom (19.6%), and 13 were from AD 39–40 to AD 106 (14.4%) (Augé 2003: 236–67, 254–7 no.41–114) (Table 3 in Appendix).
[492] Augé 2003: 242–3.

the use of the Nabataean coins at Sī' in the pre-provincial period. Additionally, the Nabataean coins recovered on site were often in halves or quarters, which implies their reuse in a later period. This was most likely caused by the growing value of the metal between the end of the 1st and beginning of the 2nd centuries AD.[493] This in turn implies their circulation after the date of their issue. They could still have been used for commerce, as they were often recovered in non-votive offering contexts in southern Syria and Jordan and were used for commerce in eastern regions.[494] Nevertheless, a small coinage group (eight coins) from the end of the 1st century BC to the beginning of the 1st century AD was found in a sealed layer below the building structure of Sī' 8,[495] which is dated to the second half of the 1st century AD.[496] We cannot date this sealed layer, nor can we be certain that it was earlier than, or almost contemporary to, Sī' 8. The possibility of an earlier date for the use of Nabataean coins could reinforce the idea of Nabataean connections with the Hauran at an earlier period than the one suggested by the French team, i.e. the second half of the 1st century AD.

The French team explained the predominance of Nabataean coins in this sanctuary as due to the Nabataeans' economic role at Sī'.[497] In addition to their work, attempts are made here to reconstruct the economic role of the Nabataeans in the Hauran and at Sī' by contextualising this set of evidence, first within their immediate setting and second in the wider landscape of the Near East. This assemblage may lead us to suggest that the local population of the Hauran adopted Nabataean coins as their main currency[498] for trade and exchange, as they had economic interactions with the Nabataeans who crossed this region. Therefore, I concur with the French team's argument on the economic role of the Nabataeans at Sī'. As Kropp correctly points out, the Nabataean coinage may have been a common currency beyond the borders of the Nabataea,[499] implying that there was no need to belong to the Nabataean kingdom to use their currency. In support of the significant economic role of the Nabataeans in the Hauran, specifically at Sī', it may be added that the use of Nabataean coins would have been convenient for the people in the Hauran, since Nabataeans were the major traders (particularly of incense and aromatics) in the Near East from the south of Arabia[500] to the Mediterranean,[501] and this region, at the edge of the Nabataean kingdom, was undergoing socio-economic development, beginning at the end of the 1st century BC, although mostly from the 1st century AD onwards. The building of the first monumental cult centres (§ Ch.2, Appendix) and the cultivation developed in this period indicate that this was on-going development.[502] The economic impact of the Nabataeans in the Hauran would explain the possibility of one or two statues that might have represented Nabataean kings in the sanctuary at Sī'. They could be seen as a sign of gratitude and acknowledgement from the local population to Nabataean kings, in particular, Obodas III, if we consider that the statue heads recovered from this site represented a Nabataean king. These statues would have been better evidence of the Nabataean royal family's direct or indirect presence in the rural cult centre than the Nabataean capitals which the French team considered as a prestigious gift made from the last Nabatean king Rabbel II (AD 70–106).[503] The sanctuary at Sī' could have been a popular, everyday place of commercial activities for the Nabataeans on a small scale because periodic markets were most likely to take place during religious festivals, as will be discussed later in this monograph (§ Ch.6.2), and the coins recovered at Sī' in large quantities were made of inexpensive metal bronze.[504] This type of interaction would have been usual at Sī' as it was not a major urban centre but a rural religious one.

Scholars have overlooked the Nabataean presence or influence outside the sanctuary of Sī' in the Hauran, although Bolelli mentioned the 'Arabic' garments from Hegra on statues from the other sites in the region (Sleim, Hebrān and al-Mushennef) apart from Sī'.[505]

Other than those from Sī', statues with an 'Arabic' garment from Hegra associated with cult centres at Sleim and al-Mushennef may indicate the possibility of temporary Nabataean visitors in the Hauran who influenced the local elite. The suggestion of only a temporary presence or passage of the Nabataeans is strengthened by the lack of evidence of a major Nabataean influence on different levels, including religious life (e.g. a temple built in honour of a Nabataean deity or a temple with Nabataean architectural elements). There is no definite answer for any of the following conjectures: whether the Nabataean visitors commissioned their own statues in these sites; whether the Nabataeans impressed the local elite so much that the latter dedicated honorary statues to the Nabataeans; or whether they influenced the clothing tradition of the local elite. We might be more inclined to suggest the first option in the case at Sleim on the basis of the recovery of an inscription dedicated to the main Nabataean deity,

493 Augé 1987: 233–4.
494 Augé 1987: 233–4.
495 Augé 2003: 243 no.13–7, no.65, no.103–4.
496 Dentzer 1985: 69.
497 Dentzer 1986: 412.
498 Kropp 2013b: 302.
499 Kropp 2013b: 302.
500 Young 2001: 91.
501 Diod. Sic. 19. 94, 4–5; Strab. *Geog.* 16. 4. 19; Plin. *NH* 6. 26; Groom 1981; Young 2001: 91; McLaughlin 2010: 62–4; Zayadine 2007.
502 Willcox 2003: 184.
503 Dentzer 1986: 282–3.
504 Augé 2003.
505 Bolelli 1986: 331–2.

Dushara.[506] As already mentioned above, dedications to this god from outside the Nabataean kingdom are usually made by the Nabataeans.[507] Due to the unknown dating and original location of the inscription and of the statue, we cannot confidently infer that both were commissioned at the same time or by the same worshipper.

The temporary presence of Nabataean devotees, or Nabataean influence on the clothing tradition at Sleim and al-Mushennef instead may be explained by the position of these religious centres on the road that Nabataean merchants coming from the southern part of the Hauran would have had to cross to get to Damascus. The Nabataeans would have needed to pass Sleim, en route to Damascus. Al-Mushennef was close to the main rural sanctuary of Sī' (roughly 14 km away), where the Nabataean impact, mostly on the economic sphere, appears most striking in the Hauran (Map 2). This route could have been used by Nabataean merchants to reach Damascus from Bosra, instead of or as well as by *Via Traiana Nova* (the Roman road built under the Emperor Trajan linking Bosra and Damascus), a view previously supported by scholars. The suggestion that the Nabataeans used the Damascus–Bosra route crossing the Hauran is supported by a number of factors: Nabataean coins, 'Nabataean' capitals, the possibility of statues of a Nabataean king, statues with 'Arabic' garments from Hegra, and statues of eagles originating from Hegra. In contrast, the scholars' argument on the use of *Via Traiana Nova* by the Nabataeans is solely based on pottery dated to the Nabataean period and recovered in the southern part of this route.[508] Yet the quantity of Nabataean pottery along the southern part of *Via Traiana Nova* is not stated, raising doubts as to what extent it evidences the Nabataean presence. Rather, the recovery of the Nabataean pottery can only be evidence of interactions, trade and exchange between the local population and that the Nabataeans, or other cultures that entered into contact with the Nabataeans, used Nabataean pottery, or simply received Nabataean pottery as gifts.

While this set of evidence in rural sanctuaries in the Herodian territory of the Hauran indicates a Nabataean presence, or influence, on the local elite at different levels, it does not indicate their long-term residence or strong influence in these religious centres, as these centres were mostly not dedicated to Nabataean deities and did not belong to the Nabataean kingdom. Therefore, the Nabataean impact on the Hauran was not on the religious cultural identity of the region but in shaping the economy of the Hauran and its everyday life (e.g. the clothing of statues). This is supported by the remarkably high quantity of Nabataean coins at Sī' (60% of the whole assemblage). Nabataean coins have hardly been found outside the territory under the control of the kings of Petra,[509] and when they have been found outside a Nabataean context they are scarce – for instance, fewer than nine coins have been unearthed at Dura Europos.[510] This economic role of the Nabataeans can be explained by the Hauran's location en route to Damascus and the location of this part of the Hauran in relation to the Nabataean kingdom. In turn, this implies the significance of the region itself for the Nabataeans. The northern part of the Hauran was also a transitory area for Nabataean trade and exchange between the main Nabataean centres of Petra and Damascus, crossing Bosra (Maps 2 and 6).[511]

Not only the Nabataean presence but that of their merchants in Damascus[512] in the 1st century BC has been proven on the basis of written sources. The Nabataeans controlled the city for 15 years, between 87 and 72 BC,[513] and attempted to resume control of the city during Pompey's arrival in 63 BC.[514] Nabataean merchants were present in Damascus and in its surrounding territory in the 1st century BC according to Strabo.[515] A factor that could have facilitated the expansion of Nabataean commerce to Damascus is that the Nabataeans had citizens of Damascus on their side when the former protected the latter from the Ituraeans in the early 1st century BC.[516] Written evidence is the main source for Nabataean trade and its presence at Damascus as a result of two main factors. First, the lack of archaeological evidence in Damascus in the 1st century BC and 1st century AD, especially of material culture, caused by the limited intensive fieldwork that has been possible to undertake at Damascus, and the limited material culture from the pre-provincial and the provincial periods that could be recovered because of it being a modern-day capital which has been inhabited continuously for centuries.[517] From the pre-provincial and provincial periods, only the remains of Roman monumental buildings have partially

[506] Healey 2001: 85–107; for debate on the association of the worship of Dushara with the Nabataeans, see Alpass 2013: 234 ff.
[507] This is the case at Pozzuoli (Italy), Miletus and Delos (Greece), for instance (Hackl *et al.* 2003: 119–22, 127–8).
[508] Graf 1979: 126; 1995: 264; Oleson *et al.* 1994: 141–79; Young 2001: 90.
[509] Schmitt-Korte and Price 1994: 111.
[510] Schmid 2007: 71.
[511] McLaughlin 2010: 64.
[512] Nabataean interests in Damascus could have been triggered by its location and its significance as a main urban centre in the Near East over centuries. Damascus was a transit and nodal point connecting different cities to the north, west and east (e.g. Antioch, cities in Lebanon, and Palmyra) and from which Nabataean trade could have expanded further north (Young 2001: 99). Damascus was the most important centre of the region in the Persian period (Strab. *Geog.* 16. 2, 20; Plin. *NH* 5. 18, 74). It was an important mint under the reign of Alexander the Great (Schürer 1979: 127) and of Antiochus VII (138–129 BC) (Augé 1985). It was also the capital of the southern part of the Seleucid Empire. The presence of merchants from this city in Delos (Schürer 1973: 130) and in Athens has been attested (Will 1951: 59–79).
[513] Burns 2005: 44.
[514] Burns 2005: 46.
[515] Strab. *Geog.*16, 2, 20.
[516] Burns 2005: 44.
[517] Burns 2005.

survived.[518] Second, Damascus was not the main focus for Nabataean commercial activities, so their trade in this city would have been on a small scale,[519] especially considering that Nabataean trade was mostly focused on the caravan route from southern Arabia to Egypt, the East (Mesopotamia), Palestine (Gaza, Cesaraea Maritima) and southern Phoenicia (Tyr) (Maps 6–7).[520] Nabataean pottery in Antioch in the north of Syria suggests the presence of the Nabataeans, or, at least, of trade and exchange of their goods. The Nabataeans could have reached northern Syria[521] either by using a land route, passing Bosra and Damascus, or by sea from Caesarea on the coast of the southern Levant. Such widespread circulation of Nabataean merchants and goods in the Near East can be explained because they mostly traded incense and aromatics that were commonly used, including in religious practices in the Near East and in the Mediterranean.[522]

The reassessment of the Nabataean influence in the Hauran has confirmed the general, but not unanimous, scholarly disagreement on the presence of the Nabataeans which shaped the religious cultural identity of the region. It has also disputed the arguments of Freyberger, Healey and Alpass, demonstrating that the rural area of the Hauran, including the Herodian territory, was not completely detached from the Nabataeans. Even Kropp, who dismissed the presence of any Nabataean elements in the rural territory of the Hauran, cannot deny in generic terms the close ties of the Hauran, in particular of Sī', with its southern neighbours.[523] The elite from the Hauran was in contact with the Nabataeans, and, moreover, the latter had an impact on the everyday life and economic level of the population of the Hauran through the use of Nabataean currency. This, therefore, could have partially affected other spheres, as demonstrated by the sporadic influence on the representation of eagles, capitals and garments of statues associated with rural cult centres, dedications to a Nabataean god, and a script similar to the Nabataean one used for inscriptions, for instance. However, it seems that Nabataean influence did not develop in the last phase of the Nabataean kingdom (the second half of the 1st century AD), as suggested by the French team, but started before that period (the end of the 1st century BC to the early 1st century AD). A systematic analysis of different datasets from rural cult centres in the Hauran (dedications to a Nabataean deity, architectural elements, sculptural style and a similar script for inscriptions) has shown a movement of beliefs, traditions, including clothing traditions and the script used for monumental public inscriptions, building customs and style of sculptures between the Hauran and its southern Nabataean neighbours. It can be interpreted as the result of constant renegotiation between the Nabataean dominion and local response, as argued by Bendlin and Kaizer in discussing Roman religion between the imperial dominion and the local response (§ Ch.1.2). It was triggered by contacts between people from the Hauran and the Nabataeans, which only partially influenced the former.

In sum, this demonstrates that the Hauran was not alien to the neighbouring Nabataean culture but rather was part of a broader network of the Near East that comprised contacts with neighbouring cultures, including the Nabataeans.

3.2. The Herodian influence in rural cult centres

We move now to reassess the minor scholarly investigation of the presence and influence of the Herodian kingdom, which has focused on only three types of evidence. First, Dentzer-Feydy has drawn some resemblances between decorative motifs at Sī and Herodian architecture,[524] although some of these elements also appear at other rural sanctuaries in the Hauran. Second, scholars working on the Herodian reign, such as Lichtenberger and Japp, have only mentioned a statue base of Herod at Sī' when talking about the Herodian kingdom.[525] Third, Weber has suggested that an equestrian statuary group from the sanctuary at Saḥr represents Herodian soldiers,[526] although Kropp disputes Weber's ideas.[527]

Decorative motifs recovered at Sī which also appear in the Herodian architecture are: Ionic four-sided moulding frame with triangular pediment, vine branches consisting of thick S-shaped stems (which create a wreath),[528] a stem with lanceolate leaves, geometric palmettes and six-petalled rosettes inscribed in slight engraved circles, rosettes with double corollas (Figures 9–11),[529] and pilasters decorated like palm-tree trunks.[530] Furthermore the six-petalled rosettes decorate the extremities of a lintel-like frieze above a doorway lintel at Muṭā'iyyeh, which could belong to a temple considering their resemblance to decorations from temples in the Hauran.[531] The decorative motif of

[518] Burns 2005.
[519] Millar 1998: 123–5, 135.
[520] Young 2001: 91 ff.
[521] Schmid 2004: 418.
[522] Young 2001: 90.
[523] Kropp 2013b: 293–302: especially 302.
[524] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 96–8, 101. For more detailed information on the Herodian building programme and Herodian architecture, see Lichtenberger 1999; Japp 2000; Kokkinos 2007; Netzer 2006; Peleg-Barkat 2012; Peleg-Barkat and Chachy 2015.
[525] Lichtenberger 1999: 170; Japp 2000: 150; Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014.
[526] Weber 2003a: 356; 2003b: 162; *Hauran* IV II: 71–88.
[527] Kropp 2013a: 261 ff.
[528] The alternating motifs in the middle might be lotus flowers, three rounded or long berries, and shield-shaped leaves.
[529] Goodenough 1958: fig.21, 30, 232, 235–6, 240; Mazar 1975: 28–9; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 98.
[530] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 267–9.
[531] *PPUAES* II: 88–91; Sartre 2011: 131.

Figure 9: Decorative motif of vine branches from Sī', reused in the basilica of Canatha (the author 2010).

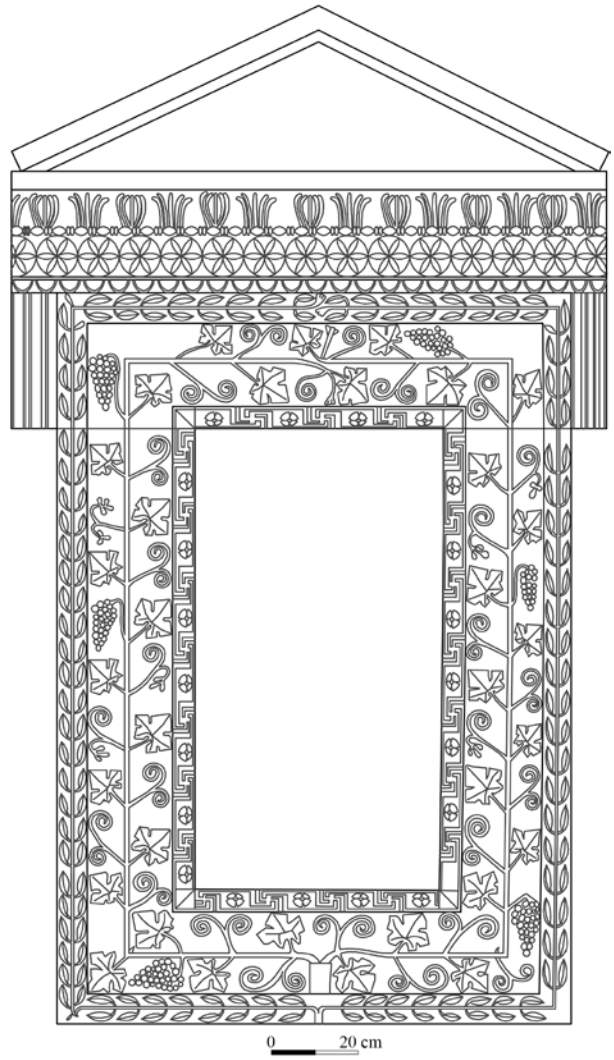


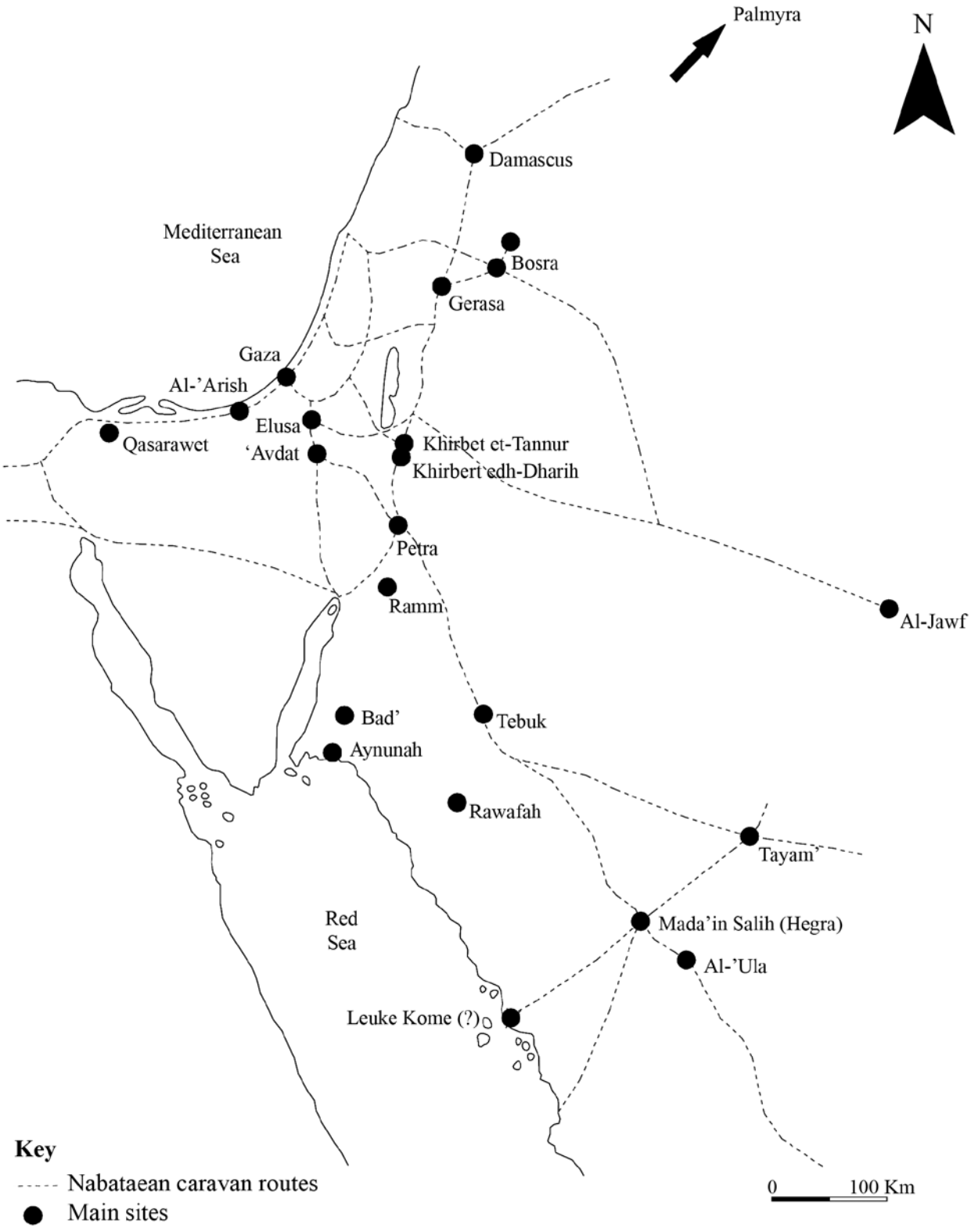
Figure 10: Drawing of niche frame of the façade of sanctuary Sī' 8 (the author, after Dentzer-Feydy 2003: pl. 84).

vine branches with S-shaped stems, which is widespread in rural cult centres of the Hauran (§ Ch.5.5), also appears in Herodian architecture.[532] This implies that decorative motifs used in the Herodian kingdom were also used in rural temples across the Hauran.

Dentzer-Feydy has explained the use of decorative elements that were widely used in the Herodian kingdom in the sanctuary at Sī' as this part of the Hauran was under Herodian dominion. She has also used the presence of the statue of Herod at Sī' to support her argument.[533]

Lichtenberger initially thought that the recovery of the Herod statue was not significant enough to suggest Herod's involvement in building the temple.[534] Later

[532] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 277–9; 1992: 77 fig. 16; 2003: 98 pl.85.6, pl.85.8.
[533] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 101. Reference for the inscription of the statue base: *Wadd.* no.2364; *PAAES* III no.427b.
[534] Lichtenberger 1999: 170.



Map 6: Nabataean caravan routes in the Hauran and its proximity (the author, after Healey 2001 map 1)

on, following Freyberger's argument, Lichtenberger, together with Krumeich, suggested that the location of the statue of Herod at the entrance to the temple of Baalshamin indicated some involvement of Herod in the erection of the temple. He offers the following reasons: first, Herod' statue was displayed together with the statues of the patron of temple 1. Second, his statue was placed in a main public area that was also

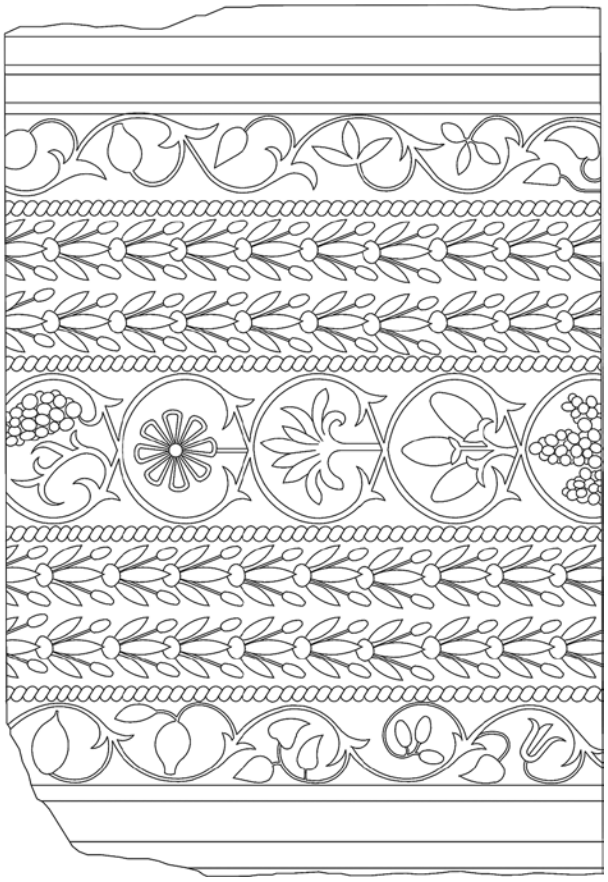


Figure 11: Drawing of the decoration of the lid of the Tomb of the Kings sarcophagus (the author, after Goodenough 1958: no. 232).

the major area of the cult centre.[535] As Steinsapair, who focuses on the religious activities in the sanctuary, stresses, the location of the statues of Herod and the statue of the patron, situated in front of the temple in the *theatron* next to each other, suggests the significance of these characters. Their statues were allowed, and consequentially, the characters of these statues would have been allowed, to be in the exclusive place of the sacred power,[536] and directly took part in rituals of the sanctuary, as the *theatron* was a place of religious practices for the few (§ Ch.6.1 for a better understanding of its religious purpose).

Freyberger, Lichtenberger and Krumeich have pointed out that the images of Herodian rulers appeared in several main public areas in the Mediterranean;[537] they have interpreted their presence in major public areas as being a sign of gratitude of the local population and/or elite in return for the generous euergetism of Herodian rulers,[538] since it is well known that Herod and Herodian rulers made generous donations to many cities in the Greek world and received civic honours in return, including honorific statues by the local population and elite,[539] apart from their loyalty.[540] Therefore, the statue of Herod at Sī' commissioned by an individual can also be seen as a sign by a member of the local elite in return for the generous euergetism of Herod (§ Ch.5.1 for information about the commissioner of the statue). However, Herodian royal involvement in the erection of the sanctuary cannot be determined. Furthermore, the fact that a member of the local elite commissioned the earliest phase of the sanctuary at the end of the 1st century BC excludes the possibility that Herod had this significant benefactor role here.[541] A similar argument can be applied to the 1st-century temple dedicated to Zeus and Athena at al-Mushennef which was built in honour of the Herodian king Agrippa (most likely Agrippa I), although, according to an inscription, he did not commission it.[542]

If we contextualise the statue of Herod commissioned by a member of the local elite into the historical framework, the statue was a sign of the local elite's gratitude to the Herodian ruler for having brought a period of stability to the Hauran after an insecure time marked by the presence of outlaw bands in the region (§ Ch.2). We should not forget that Sī' was part of the Herodian kingdom and that the Herodian ruler received the Hauran by Augustus in order that he would control the lawless elements in the region (§ Ch.2).[543] Alternately, or additionally, the local elite might have been grateful to the Herodians and their rulers, because the Herodians respected their own traditions by giving them freedom of architectural, cultural and religious expression, as well as allowing the villages to have their own autonomous administration (§ Ch.2).[544] This is plausible, as integration and respecting the traditions of populations under Herodian control were, in fact, features of Herodian policy. For instance, the Herodian kingdom, on one hand, practised Jewish religious traditions,[545] but, on the other, also provided

[535] Freyberger 1998: 49, 104; Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014: 182, 185, 200. Similarly Kropp (2013b: 302) generically claims that there may have been some royal involvement in the construction of the sanctuary because of the honorific statue for Herodian kings. It is unclear why Kropp refers to more than one Herodian king, and in the footnote from this passage he mentions the inscription of the erection of a shrine in honour of Agrippa from al-Mushennef.

[536] Steinsapair 2005: 16.

[537] Freyberger 1998: 49, 104; Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014: 182, 185, 200.

[538] Freyberger 1998: 49, 104; Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014: 182, 185, 200. For euertegism by Hellenistic kings, see also Kropp 2013a: 253–4.

[539] Richardson 1996: 198–202; Lichtenberger 1999: 168–75; Kropp 2013a: 253–4. Josephus provides a long catalogue of Herod's donations (Jos. *BJ* 1.422 –28; *AJ* 16.146–9).

[540] Kropp 2013a: 253.

[541] *CIS* II 163; *PAAES* IV no.1; *PPUAES* IV no.100; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1985: 175.

[542] *Wadd.* no.2211; *PAAES* II no.380; *IGRR* 3.1260; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308; Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6.

[543] Jos. *AJ* 15. 10, 1, 3; *BJ* 1. 20, 4.

[544] Sartre 1987; 1993; 1999; 2001a: 773–9; 2005: 215 ff., 231; Gatier 1997: 769; Aliquot 2008: 93.

[545] Japp 2000: 28 ff.; Butcher 2003: 372; Rocca 2008: 281–319.

financial support to build cult centres dedicated to the cult of Augustus[546] and to pagan deities.[547] The lack of an Herodian imposition on Sī' can be supported by the local adaptation of decorative motifs used in the Herodian architecture of the sanctuary. This can be seen, for instance, in the speared leaves from Sī': they have V-shaped lotuses attached between the stem and leaves, unlike the ones in Herodian architecture, and they are bigger and spikier than the ones from the comparative examples. Furthermore, the decorative elements at Sī' that resembled those from the Herodian kingdom cannot be evidence of imposition by the Herodian authorities in the Hauran, as they were not used only in the Herodian kingdom: they were also found and originated in other cultures in the Near East (§ Ch.4.5). The resemblance between the decorative elements at Sī' and Herodian architecture still implies that the sanctuary at Sī' did not necessarily and strictly have a local architectural style and that it was, on the contrary, part of a broader network of the Near East, following and taking inspiration from architectural trends used outside the Hauran in the pre-provincial period.

Considering the presence of Herodian rulers in sanctuaries in the Hauran, Weber has additionally argued for a monumental representation of Herodian soldiers and king Agrippa II on a podium in the main courtyard of the sanctuary at Saḥr.[548] It comprises two horsemen with a scale or lamellar cuirass[549] with pterygia and five male figures on horseback wearing long tunics with cloaks across one shoulder;[550] one statue from the last group is bigger than the others (life-size).[551] Weber's reading of this statuary group has been rejected by Kropp, who has instead suggested that they could be divine figures on the basis of the similar depiction of the horsemen at Saḥr with one of the other divinities in the Near East and the presence of divine figures on the other side of the podium in the sanctuary.[552] Their different interpretations of the statuary is based on a different interpretation of the socio-political landscape surrounding Leja: Weber supported the presence of the Herodian army in Leja, which has been attested from the time of Augustus onwards (§ Ch.2), whereas Kropp argued for the predominance of nomadic people.

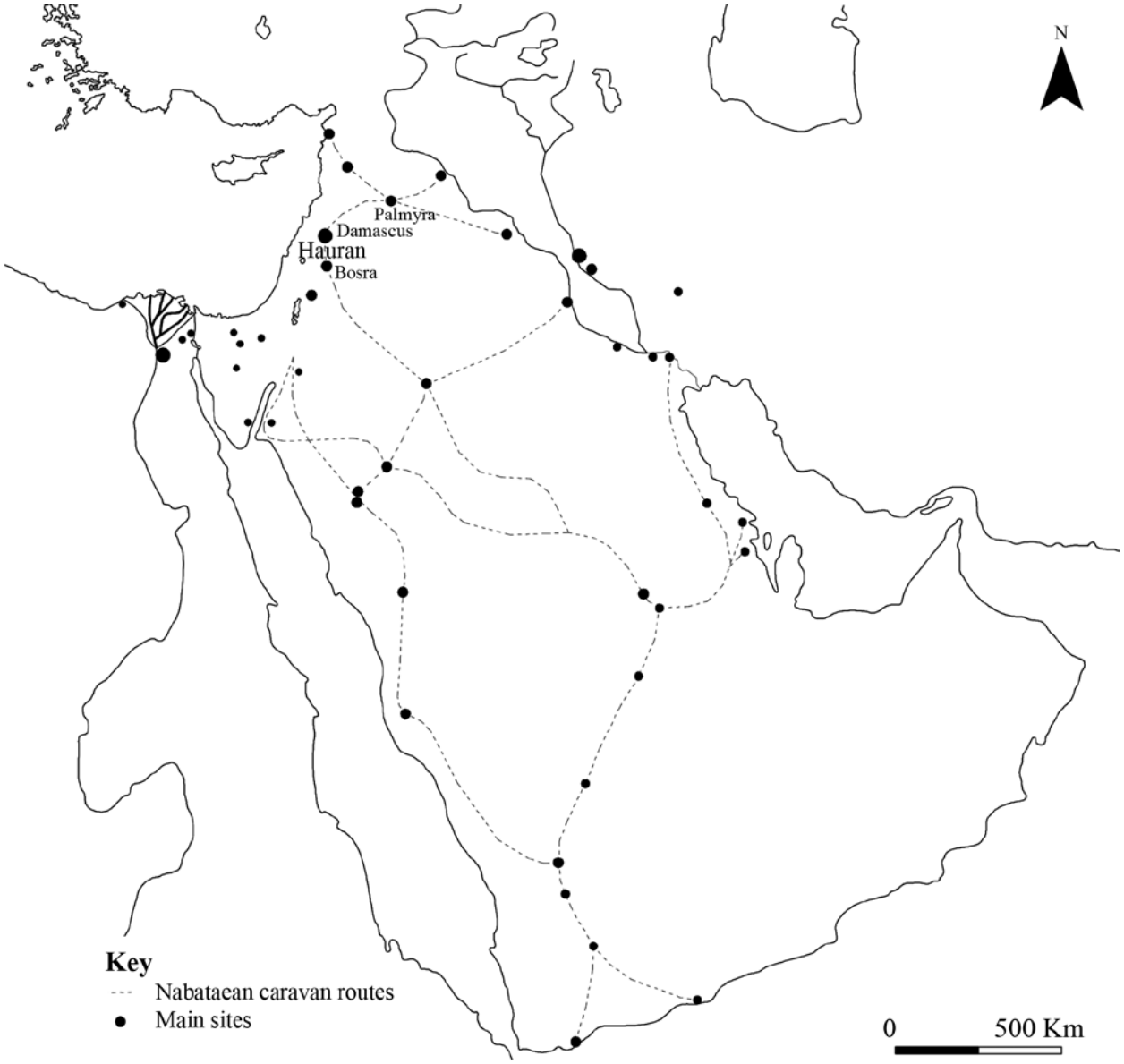
Both arguments, which will be fully elucidated below, have valid points; it is difficult to confirm either view or to be certain of any of the arguments for various reasons. There is no inscribed statue base that states the characters and the names of these statues, or even the patron of the sanctuary. The statuary complex is highly fragmentary. There is no a clear parallel example of this group of statues, thus we can only look for similar examples of horsemen wearing similar garments.

Weber argues that such figures belonged to a specific group of Herodian soldiers, Zamarids, who were of Babylonian origin, under the command of Agrippa II, who was represented as a life-size horseman.[553] This suggestion is based upon Josephus' narration that describes the troop of Zamarids of Babylonian origin settled by Herod in Bathyra (possibly either Shā'rah or Basir, in the north-west of Leja or its north-western fringe) (§ Ch.2.2), in 10 BC.[554] He justifies the long tunics, with zigzag draping on the fabric of the sleeves used on these statues, because of their origin and because this type of garment was used in the Mesopotamian area.[555] Downey describes this type of clothing as 'the costume of the desert people'.[556] A long tunic is also widely used by Arabs today: the *djelabiya*.[557] Long tunics[558] with zigzag draping on the fabric of the sleeves were used on statues from the Parthian kingdom.[559] Furthermore, Zamarids were also known as equestrian archers,[560] and the statues from Saḥr were horsemen.

However, according to Kropp a realistic possibility is that the statues at Saḥr stand for divine figures, as gods were also represented with this type of long tunic as well as with cuirasses,[561] and also because these statues were placed on the podium alongside other divine figures (e.g. Athena and Nike).[562]

The costume of the desert people, however, appears to be used to represent a god riding a horse, or a camel, in only a few instances and most of these representations come in pairs. Most examples come from the Palmyrene area (such as Khirbet Semrine and Djoub al-Diarrah) and Dura Europos. They usually represent the deities Asheru and Sa'ad, Arsu and Azizos, the Dioskouroi,

[546] Japp 2000; Rocca 2008: 315–7.
[547] Japp 2000: 26–7.
[548] Weber 2003a: 356; 2003b: 162; *Hauran* IV II: 71–88 Sr1–7.
[549] Although Weber identified the cuirass ('Schuppenpanzer') of the two horsemen in the statuary group as being scale (consisted of small rectangular scales), lamellar armour (a leather armour made of vertical rectangular plates stitched together by horizontal lacing) is often misnamed as scale cuirass (Kropp 2013c: 194). This could be the case at Saḥr, although there is no major difference between the two, or it is difficult to pinpoint this difference, especially when we deal with fragments of heavily damaged statues and only the bottom half of the cuirass and the horseman survive, as is the case at Saḥr.
[550] It consists of two metal shells for front and back, with rows of overlapping leather strips with fringes attached to protect the arms and the lower body (Kropp 2013c: 192).
[551] *Hauran* IV II: 79 ff.
[552] Kropp 2013a: 261 ff.
[553] Weber 2003a: 356; 2003b: 162; *Hauran* IV II: 71–88 Sr1–7.
[554] Jos. *AJ* 17. 2, 1–2.
[555] Weber 2003a: 356; 2003b: 162; *Hauran* IV II: 71–88.
[556] Downey 1969: 21 no.7, 57–61; 1977: 70–2 no. 52–3.
[557] Weber 2003a: 357.
[558] Although the long tunic with a cloak on the shoulder is the typical clothing used to represent members of the Syrian priesthood, priests are not usually depicted riding horses (Stucky 1973; 1976), and they do not present the same draping of the statues as found at Saḥr.
[559] Ingholt 1954; Homès-Fredericq 1963; Weber 2003a: 357.
[560] Kropp 2013a: 261.
[561] Kropp 2013a: 261–2.
[562] Weber 2003a; *Hauran* IV II.



Map 7: Nabataean caravan routes in the Near East (the author, after Zayadine 2007 fig.207)

or unspecified gods.[563] Examples of the last type are: a male character riding a camel and wearing a long tunic from Dura Europos, identified as the caravan god, and another similar depiction from the same city is described as a camel god.[564]

With regards to the two statues wearing a lamellar or scale-cuirass at Saḥr, there are more similar examples of gods wearing this type of armour. They often appear in the Palmyrene area. Amongst them there are the following, usually occurring in pairs: Arsu and Azizos; Abgal and Ashar; Ashlam and Ashar; Ashar and Saad; Ma'nu and Sha'ru; and the Dioskouroi.[565] There are fewer examples outside the Palmyrene area: a statue representing a cuirassed deity at Hatra,[566] one on an altar in the Hauran,[567] and two statues from the Beqa' Valley.[568] This depiction also appears on three series of coins minted by Ptolemy (85–40 BC) (examples are from 73/72 BC and 63/2 BC),[569] which are the earliest of this type of representation.[570]

[563] Seyrig 1970: 81 ff.; Linant de Bellefonds 1984; 1986; 1990; Augé and Linant de Bellefonds 1986b.
[564] Seyrig 1970: 81 fig.3.
[565] Seyrig 1970: 81 ff.; Seyrig *et al.* 1975: 87–8 pl.90a; Augé and Linant de Bellefonds 1986b: no.8, no.9a; Bellefonds 1984: no.11.
[566] Ingholt 1954, passim; Homès-Fredericq 1963: 21–6 pl.6: 1–2, 7: 1; Kropp 2013c.
[567] Seyrig 1970: 91; Augé 1994: 753 no.12–5; Weber 2006: no.56.
[568] Laube 2006: 70–1 no.5 pl.28.1–3; Kropp 2013c: 193.
[569] Augé and de Bellefonds 1986b; Kropp 2009: 369–71; 2013c: 194.
[570] Kropp 2013c: 194.

As the cuirassed horsemen from Saḥr number only two, and they have a crescent on their saddles (a symbol for a lunar deity and also a symbol that accompanies the solar deity (Ch.4.2–3)),[571] they could stand for two cuirassed deities.

However, there are also major differences between the statues from Saḥr and the cuirassed deities, and between the statues from Saḥr and the few examples of gods wearing long tunics and riding a horse or a camel in the hinterland of the Near East. None of the cuirassed deities in pairs, including those from the Palmyrene area, are depicted riding a horse, whereas those from Saḥr are all horsemen. The few examples of gods on horse- or camel-back are depicted singly or in a group of two or three at most, and wearing the long tunic, whereas the statues of Saḥr comprise a group of seven horsemen with two different types of clothing. As only their fragments were recovered at Saḥr, we cannot exclude the possibility that there could have been more riders in this statuary complex. Furthermore, the statues from Saḥr do not have a staff, a usual item associated with cuirassed deities, or a snake twisted around it, such as the example of the god Shadrafa depicted on an altar in the Hauran and another similar one that could also come from the Hauran.[572] Although there is no indication of a staff associated with these statues, their absence could also be due to the fragmentary nature of these statues. Despite these differences, we could still hypothesise that two cuirassed figures were deities riding horses because they were part of a procession. This does not explain why they were together with other four riders wearing long tunics, as well as their secondary role within this statuary complex; only one of the five horsemen with long tunics appears life-size. It would not be the first life-size statue of an Herodian ruler, as they do appear in public areas in the Mediterranean.[573] The combination of two cuirassed deities with potentially five deities riding a horse and wearing a long tunic, with only one of them larger in size, seems to be not only strongly atypical but also a doubtful interpretation.

There are additional elements that seem to discard the hypothesis of seven divine figures. The cuirass was also widely used to represent monarchs, to show their role and image as military commanders.[574] This symbolism started with Hellenistic kings[575] and was adopted by local royalty, like the Nabataean king Aretas IV,[576] or Roman emperors, in particular when they are shown in action, as seen in the equestrian bronze statue of Domitian/Nerva (AD 81–98) from Misenum (Italy).[577] The cuirass was also used for Roman armies and in particular Syrian auxiliaries.[578] There were soldiers from the Roman army in the Near East who specifically rode horses: they were the *Cohort I* (or *II*) *Augusta Thracum Equitata* in southern Syria.[579] This cohort could have served in the northern Transjordan during the reign of Herod Agrippa II.[580] One member of this cohort commissioned an altar at Sī',[581] some 50 km away.

Additionally, the four-horned saddle of the riders from Saḥr, which Kropp has not considered, was used for Roman horsemen from the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD, and for soldiers from the Parthian and Sassanid territories from the 1st century AD until the end of the 3rd century AD.[582] In either case, they seem to be evidence to support Weber's argument (the interpretation of these statues as part of the Herodian army). The use of a Roman saddle by Herodian soldiers at Saḥr can also be explained by the fact that their kingdom was an ally of Rome.[583] The depiction of a Parthian saddle being used by Herodian soldiers at Saḥr can be justified on the basis of the origin of the troop of Herodian soldiers who controlled Leja.

Scholars have identified the troop of Zamarids to be the ancestors of the ἱππεῖς κολωνεῖται ('mounted colonists') of Agrippa II,[584] only because there is a dedication of the commander of ἱππεῖς κολωνεῖται at Sūr al-Lejā in the south of Leja.[585] Kropp argues that ἱππεῖς κολωνεῖται might not be related to the Zamarids, but are more likely Roman colonists of Berytus (modern Beirut) for the following three reasons:[586] the choice of the Latin term *coloni* seems to refer to citizens of a Roman colony;[587] Agrippa was a civic benefactor and maintained good contact with the Roman colony at Berytus; and several Roman citizens are known to have been in Agrippa's military staff.[588] Even if Kropp's argument is correct, it does not exclude the possibility that more than one group of Herodian soldiers could have monitored Leja, and the Zamarids would have been among them – but they would have been based elsewhere. Josephus remarked that the troop of Zamarids originated in Babylonia and was

[571] Seyrig 1971: 67–70; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2629 ff.; 1990b.
[572] Augé 1994: 751–2 no. 12–13.
[573] Freyberger 1998: 49, 104; Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014: 182, 185, 200.
[574] Seyrig 1970: 78; Laube 2006: 72–7; Kropp 2013c: 192.
[575] Laube 2006: 72–7; Kropp 2013c: 192.
[576] Kropp 2013b; 2013c: 192.
[577] Kropp 2013c: 192. The most representative type of cuirass is a 'muscled' type, where the surface is anatomically shaped on the bottom edge, curving in to protect the groin (Kropp 2013c).
[578] Kropp 2013c: 194. According to Kropp, their cuirass was a form of lamellar armour, which is, nevertheless, rarely depicted in the Near East; there is only one example in Palmyra.
[579] Speidel 1994: 1 ff.; Weber 2003a: 359.
[580] Schürer 1973: 364; Speidel 1992: 224 –31; Kyrichenko 2014: 41–2.
[581] *PPUAES* II no.769.
[582] Connolly 1991: 61; Weber 2003a: 356.
[583] Butcher 2003: 94–5.
[584] Sartre 2001: 14 no.222; Weber 2003a: 359.
[585] *PAAES* III no.797 1; *IGLS* 15 no.103.
[586] Kropp 2013a: 261–2.
[587] Haensch 2006: 146–7.
[588] Kropp 2013a: 261–2.

settled by Herod in Bathyra from 10 BC.[589] Bathyra has been identified possibly either as Shā'rah or Basir, in the north-west of Leja or its north-western fringe (§ Ch.2.2). The presence of Herodian soldiers in the vicinity of the sanctuary can be supported by a written dedication commissioned by a commander of Herodian soldiers at Aqrabāt,[590] which is north-west of Leja, between Saḥr (*c.* 40–50 km distant) and Basir (*c.* 25 km distant) and not too far from Shā'rah (*c.* 30 km).

All in all, this set of evidence can lead us to support Weber's argument, i.e. that horsemen, at least regarding the riders wearing long tunics at Saḥr, could have been Herodian soldiers of Babylonian origin, considering the clothing and the presence of a leading figure. The life-size horseman seems to have a major and leading position in this statuary complex, not only on the basis of Weber's reconstruction and its size but also looking at his gesture. This larger statue has a raised right hand, which was a common representation of standing rulers and heroes from the 4th century BC onwards. For example, a late Hellenistic equestrian statue from Melos, and later, from Rome, the equestrian statue of the consul Marcius Tremulus (306 BC), and Sulla's equestrian statue in the Late Republic.[591]

The use of the same clothing for the life-size figure and the four smaller figures could indicate that they were key members of the Herodian army – with a leader, perhaps Agrippa II or an Herodian commander. The choice of not showing the authority or leader figure with different and more elaborate clothing could reflect the Herodian policy of not being an imposing controlling authority over the local population. Perhaps on the basis of this policy, the Herodian leader figure respected the traditions of the people under his control by adopting garments familiar to the local population because of their links with the hinterland of the Near East (§ Ch.4.5).

Furthermore, because of its highly fragmentary nature, it is not possible to discern the complete outfit of this statue and its head. In addition, only an inscribed base of the other statue of an Herodian king in the Hauran (the one at Sī') survived, so we cannot compare how the Herodian kings were portrayed in the Hauran. However, the presence of the statue of an Herodian king in one of the major sanctuaries in the Hauran, together with the inscription in honour of Agrippa, also in another rural cult centre in the region (al-Mushannef),[592] implies that statues of Herodian kings, or Herodian representatives in rural cult centres in this region, were not unusual. This practice could and should have also taken place at Saḥr especially, as the Herodian army brought stability, particularly in Leja (§ Ch.2.2). Therefore, the presence of statues of Herodian soldiers and kings definitely has a strong political connotation. It was a tribute to political authority in order to commemorate the victory of the authority over lawlessness in the region, as well as a symbol of Herodian control. The fact that potentially the Herodian king is on the same platform with the statue of Allat/Athena can also imply that the king (and his political power) was on the same level as the deity and religious power venerated in the region.[593] At the same time it can be seen as a mark of gratitude to their ruler and his soldiers for their help in Leja made by individual members of the local elite of the Hauran, considering that fragmentary inscribed pedestals of statues, most likely from this platform, bear names of individuals widely used across the Hauran and who would have been the commissioners of these statues (Appendix).[594]

We cannot exclude, as an alternative interpretation, that the statues with long tunics could have been members of the elite, with their chief, and these would have used, and been influenced by, garments from the hinterland of the Near East following Hauran contacts with this part of the Near East (§ Ch.4.5). They could represent a religious procession,[595] which may explain the presence of a group of horsemen together with the presence of the statue of Allat/Athena. This similar scene is also recovered at Sī, where fragments of male characters riding horses, and a trumpeter in high relief from the rubble of the entrance of the *theatron*, have been interpreted as representing a procession.[596]

This interpretation of the statuary complex at Saḥr does not preclude the possibility that these male characters could also have been Herodian soldiers, together with members of the local elite. In support of the presence of local elite, names of individuals mentioned in fragmentary inscriptions recovered on site, who were presumably dedicators of the cult centres, were indigenous names very common in the Hauran.[597] At the same time, because of the monumentality and large capacity of the cult centre (600 people, based on the theatre next to the sanctuary) (§ Appendix and Ch.6.1), the worshippers at the cult centre could have come from different groups, including Herodian soldiers, who were represented on the platform of the main courtyard of the sanctuary. This hypothesis can be put forward because Saḥr was in a territory controlled and monitored by Herodian soldiers, and Herodian garrisons were situated in Leja and its surroundings (§ Ch.2). Furthermore, representations of gods at Saḥr

[589] Jos. *AJ* 17. 2, 1–2; *Vit.* 46–61, 177–80, 407–9; *BJ* 2. 17, 4.
[590] Sourdel 1957: 45.
[591] Bergemann 1990: 24–5.
[592] *Wadd.* no.2211; *PAAES* II no.380; *IGRR* 3.1260; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308; Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6.
[593] *Hauran* IV I: 261.
[594] Sartre-Fauriat 2017.
[595] Bolelli 1986: 344.
[596] *PPUAES* II: 380–5; Wenning 2001.
[597] *Hauran* IV I: 348.

and the decorative architecture of the cult centres had Graeco-Roman elements (§ Ch.5.5), or were untypical of other examples in the cult centres of the Hauran, which might be familiar to Herodian soldiers, as they were indirectly under the authority of Rome (§ Ch.2). However, where the Herodian soldiers practised their worship and sacrifices in the Hauran, the origins of these Herodian troops and their cult remain unknown. The material culture, nevertheless, leads us to suggest that the presence of Herodian soldiers was very unlikely. During the lifespan of the sanctuary, some 75% of the assemblage from the sanctuary and the surrounding buildings was locally made, whereas imported fine wares (Eastern Terra Sigillata B) and regional basaltic and calcareous pottery were found in small quantities.[598] This local pottery production appears at other sites, including on the borders of Leja, such as Shaara, where imported and regional pottery were, nevertheless, more frequent than at Saḥr.[599] Furthermore, no fragments of Herodian-type lamps were recovered at Saḥr, which do appear at Sī' and Khirbet Massakeb instead.[600] Therefore, the Herodian political symbolic presence, with its triumphal statues, definitely did not impact materially on the everyday customs of life at Saḥr. At the same time, we have to be cautious when using ceramic materials as a primary means of obtaining insights into the lives of visitors to the sanctuary, as these assemblages overall are scarce and not many sites in Leja, and more generically in the Hauran, have provided significant volumes of ceramic material (if any pottery at all in some instances).[601] Inscriptions, too, do not offer a definitive picture of the benefactors and dedicators of the sanctuary, because of their extremely fragmentary nature.

Kalos and Dentzer considered the sanctuary a centre for bringing together a tribe, or more tribes. Whereas Dentzer mentioned that these tribes could be nomads and/or sedentary,[602] Kalos claimed that they were nomads, as Leja was used as a refuge for this fringe of the society, according to ancient sources.[603] Furthermore, Kalos adds that these tribes, or the tribe who visited the sanctuary, could have worshipped the tutelary god of the tribe/s, or their deified ancestors.[604] This is based on the interpretation of a statue of a figure in a tunic as their local god. It would have stood on the platform with Allat/Athena, and the group of horsemen.[605] The tunic referred to features wavy folds, tubular forms and a wide belt, which is a garment used by Bedouins. A similar statue was found at Ahiré in the Hauran, and this piece has been identified as the local god Aumos, according to its inscribed pedestal.[606] Our understanding of this type of clothing, attributed to the statue at Saḥr, is, nevertheless, based on a drawing and a photograph by Butler, a member of the Princeton University team, from the early 20th century, and the only fragment of this statue actually recovered consists only of legs with a folded tunic.[607] Additionally, there is no clear evidence of nomadic people in Leja, as discussed in the previous chapter, and more recently claimed by the French team; it is more appropriate to talk about of people of Leja as shepherds with a certain mobility, who could, and seemed to have settled on the borders of Leja, where there were small pockets of fertile land (§ Ch.2.3).

Different suppositions have been put forward in attempts to identify the character of these seven horsemen. Their reading depends on who visited the sanctuary and their interpretation of the garments of the horsemen: whether they recognised them as symbols of the political authority of the Herodian kingdom or members of a local elite. Statues can stand for different subjects depending on the preferences of the viewer, especially when the statues have interchangeable features (in this case the clothing and the saddles) that can be applied to different cultures or categories of people, and they are highly fragmented, as in this case, thus the information that we can gain is limited. Even Weber and Kropp's argument is based on, and biased by, their own different understanding of the people who lived and crossed Leja. Because of the presence of the theatre with 600 seats, a large number of people potentially from different backgrounds would visit this sanctuary during religious festivals. In either case, whether these statues were divine figures, Herodian soldiers, or members of the elite, their clothing was not a typical local garment, as it was elsewhere in the Near East, mainly in the hinterland of the Near East. Although the statuary complex at Saḥr is unique as a whole, and there is no other parallel example, the clothing and the horned saddles are evidence of the sharing of a common *koiné* with the Near Eastern hinterland, by integrating customs from this part of the Near East in the Hauran. This means that the people associated with this sanctuary were part of the broader network of the Near East. This influence and link between the rural cult centres in the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East is a recurrent pattern appearing when discussing these religious centres and will be fully explained in the following chapter (§ Ch.4, especially Ch.4.5).

The architectural resemblances between the Herodian kingdom and the sanctuary at Sī, the statue of Herod at Sī, and the possible statues of Herodian soldiers at Saḥr,

598 Renel 2017
599 Renel 2017: 369.
600 Renel 2017
601 Renel 2017: 355.
602 Dentzer 1999: 260.
603 Kalos 1997: 977.
604 Kalos 1997: 976.
605 Kalos 1997; 2003; Dentzer 1999: 257 ff; *Hauran* IV II: 42–3.
606 *Hauran* IV II: 42–3.
607 *Hauran* IV II fig.61–2.

do not indicate any major impact by Herodian elites on the rural cult centres of the Hauran. They suggest a type of sporadic and indirect Herodian presence that might be completely expected from a political authority that controlled its territory, especially when military control was needed, as appears to be the case in Leja particularly (§ Ch.2). The Herodian presence in the Hauran is barely noticeable, possibly because of the Herodian policy of showing respect to indigenous cultures and traditions of the population of the Hauran. Furthermore, the architectural resemblance indicates that the Hauran did not only have a local architectural style. Like the Nabataean influence in rural cult centres from the Hauran, the set of data discussed here demonstrates the integration of non-local customs at Sī' and Saḥr, although it was on a minimal level.

3.3. Concluding remarks

In this chapter several topics have been re-examined: the layout of temples; decorative floral motifs; inscriptions wrongly labelled 'Nabataean'; the cult of Dushara; 'Nabataean' capitals at Sī'; dedications to Dushara and Isis; statue heads of a Nabataean king, or possibly imitating the hairstyle of Nabataean royal portraits (decorative motifs also used in the Herodian kingdom); a statue of Herod, and statues of possibly Herodian soldiers and Agrippa. This re-examination has been integrated with a first analysis of statues of eagles and male characters wearing an 'Arabic' style of garment from Hegra. This multi-scalar study has revised previous pictures of the Nabataean and the Herodian influence and presence in the Hauran. This chapter has also demonstrated that the Nabataean and Herodian influence and presence in rural cult centres, albeit on a small scale, cannot be disputed, as might have been expected, considering that the Hauran was part of both kingdoms, although at their marginal borders. Therefore, this region and its rural cult centres were still minimally affected by their political authority.

This analysis has also supported the new perspective on rural cult centres and the Hauran, as proposed in this book: in other words, it suggests that the Hauran was familiar to, and partially integrated with, the immediate and broader surrounding network of the Near East in the pre-provincial period, in this specific case, of those neighbouring kingdoms of which the Hauran was nevertheless a marginal area. However, their culture and religious traditions did not shape the religious cultural identity of the Hauran; they were not benefactors of rural cult centres in the Hauran. Therefore, analysis of the following datasets will help offer an insight into the main benefactors in the pre-provincial and provincial periods. The identification of their benefactors and their origins will be attempted through the analysis of inscriptions, when they are not extremely fragmentary. Following this, the architecture, sculptures and deities of rural cult centres from the pre-provincial and provincial periods will be compared to similar examples from other areas of the Near East that do not come from the same political background. They will be the main focus of the next two chapters (§ Ch.4–5).

Chapter 4

‘A religious cultural identity’ of the Hauran in the pre-provincial period

Despite the minimal Nabataean and Herodian presence and influence in rural cult centres of the Hauran, as established in the previous chapter (§ Ch.3), their culture does not appear to have shaped the religious cultural identity of the Hauran in the pre-provincial period.

The French team, Kropp, Freyberger and recent scholars who investigated the Nabataean kingdom (i.e. Wenning and Alpass) concur on the unique character of the cultural identity of the Hauran. This chapter does not set out to dismantle their arguments, nor to deny the notion of its local character. Its aim, rather, is to re-evaluate the identity of the Hauran in the pre-provincial period as a more intercultural society connected to other cultures, with people who produced Safaitic graffiti and with cultures that did not border the Hauran, in the hinterland of the Near East, for example Palmyra and Parthia.

At the same time, this chapter attemps to reconstruct the life of these centres by suggesting who visited them, who financed them and who made dedications. This will be achieved by analysing benefactors of rural cult centres, their deities and their architectural and sculptural styles, and the reasons for the resemblance between the architecture, sculptural style and deities in the Hauran, and those areas beyond the political authority of the Nabataean and Herodian kingdoms.

The French team recognised that the cultural identity of the Hauran was uniquely different from other cultures of the Near East. The team found evidence of distinctive original traits that were visible in architecture, sculpture, pottery and epigraphy.[608]

Kropp and Freyberger also supported the notion of the local character of the Hauran. However, while disputing the uniqueness of this region within the Near East, which Kropp had claimed, Freyberger argued that this region was based on local tribes. Moreover, Freyberger claimed that such a character was common across the Near East, and that the local nature of the tribes could also have been reflected in the worship of their own local deities, who represented the main sun god.[609] He also maintained that the worship of local deities was a common practice in the Near East, including the Hauran, with the cult of Seeia at Sī’. [610] Seeia was the local personification of the Greek Tyche, who was usually the tutelary deity of a city, in this case, of the sacred place Sī’[611] (§ Ch.4.1 and Ch.5.4 for discussion of her cult). However, Seeia was neither the main deity worshipped in the Hauran, nor the only one: Baalshamin was widely worshipped there, but he cannot be identified as a local god representing the deity of the sky, as Freyberger maintained,[612] as he was also venerated in various parts of the Near East, as will be explained later in this chapter (§ Ch.4.2–3). Whereas Freyberger mentioned the presence of local tribes in the Hauran generically, [613] the French team defined the people of the Hauran as Aramaic, with a strong Arabic component, specifically the Safaitic tribes who became sedentary and constituted a large part of the population of the region. [614]

Freyberger further identified local tradition, as far as religious practices in the sanctuary at Sī’ were concerned, on the basis that the layout of the sanctuary featured adyton, the peripheral corridor (i.e. the circumambulatory cella), the stairwells in the towers, and the steps around the courtyard.[615] Nevertheless, he argued that, at the same time, the architecture of the sanctuary followed Hellenistic models, as demonstrated by the inclusion of the temenos[616] with a monumental gateway and the adoption of Hellenistic Near Eastern architectural decoration from Seleucia on the Tigris or Uruk Warka.[617] He also recognised Roman elements in the religious architecture in the Hauran in the provincial period.[618] The decoration of the sanctuary and the layout of the sanctuary at Sī’ were neither local nor strictly Hellenistic, as they are similar to examples from Near Eastern architecture in the pre-provincial period, and, occasionally, in the provincial period. This will be clarified in the current chapter, as

[608] Dentzer 1986: 407 ff. In particular for architecture, see Dentzer-Feydy 1986; 2003; 2010; for sculpture, see Bolelli 1986; for pottery, see Orssaud 1986; 2003; for inscriptions, see Milik 1985; Sartre 1985.
[609] Freyberger 1998: 110.
[610] Freyberger 1998: 110.
[611] Lichtenberger: 2003, 303. Some of main references discussing Tyche as tutelary deity: Meyer 1996; 2006; Kaizer 1997; 1998; Yost 2013.
[612] Freyberger 1998: 110.
[613] Freyberger 1998: 110.
[614] Dentzer 1986: 414–5.
[615] Freyberger 2014: 125, 128.
[616] As far as the temenos is concerned, it is the major and most common element appearing in sanctuaries in the Near East in the pre-provincial and provincial periods (Ball 2000: 318).
[617] Examples are figure capitals and lesbian kyma mouldings (Freyberger 2014: 125, 128).
[618] Freyberger 1989; 1991; 1998: 55–62.

far as the architecture from the pre-provincial period is concerned (§ Ch.4.5). Simply stating the presence of Roman elements in the religious architecture in the Hauran is not entirely correct – a more complex argument will be fully elaborated in Chapter 5.

Like Bolelli,[619] Wenning argued for the local character of the Hauran when looking at sculptures from Sī'.[620] Wenning defined the sculptures from Sī' as 'Hauranite',[621] and he supported the French team's argument, claiming that the traits the sculptures from the Hauran present reflect ancient Syrian origins from the 1st millennium BC, if not earlier.[622] He also identified a generic influence of Hellenistic Syrian culture in order to differentiate Hauranite statues from Nabataean examples.[623] Wenning argued that local Arab tribes, or clans, founded the sanctuary at Sī', but, contrary to the well-defined identification of the population of the Hauran by the French team, he only stated that these tribes/clans differed from the Nabataeans of Petra in terms of culture, art and script.[624] This conclusion was a modification of his previous argument, where he also claimed a Nabataean presence in the north of the Djebel al'Arab,[625] by restricting the area of the Hauran connected with the Nabataean kingdom solely to the south of the Djebel al'Arab (§ Ch.4.1).

Alpass similarly maintained the uniqueness of the cultural identity in the Hauran, arguing that indigenous traditions overcame political divisions between the Herodian and Nabataean territories of the Hauran.[626] He demonstrated this by looking at the worship of Allat and Baalshamin across the region. Just as Baalshamin was venerated in various parts of the Near East, so was Allat (§ Ch.4.2–3). The character and distribution of the cult of these deities in the Hauran and the Near East will be further discussed below (§ Ch.4.2).[627] On the one hand, looking at the gods mentioned in isolated inscriptions or inscriptions from cult centres, Sartre-Fauriat argued for the predominance of the local character in the Hauran, including gods that have a Graeco-Roman name (e.g. Athena or Zeus), and some foreign gods who were assimilated with the local deity (e.g. Olympian Zeus, uncommon in the Hauran).[628] On the other hand, she pointed out the presence of foreign deities in the pantheon of the Hauran, which represents only a small quantity and is associated with the presence of Roman soldiers in the provincial period.[629] This minority will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Following on from previous scholarly work, this chapter will discuss:

- The benefactors of rural cult centres in the pre-provincial period, which will enable us to reasses the identification of the elite of the Hauran – this will offer an understanding of the population of the Hauran. It has been so far identified as groups of Safaitic tribes, according to the French team, or, more generically, as local Arabic tribes, according to Freyberger and Wenning (§ Ch.4.1).
- The main deities worshipped in rural cult centres of the Hauran, which have been partially discussed by Alpass, Freyberger and Sartre-Fauriat. After starting with the interest of Alpass in Baalshamin and Allat, and the observation of Freyberger with regard to the cult of Baalshamin (§ Ch.4.2), the chapter will then discuss the cult of Zeus and Athena, as touched upon by Sartre-Fauriat, presenting recently discovered unpublished inscriptions (§ Ch.4.3). This will be followed by the cult of Tyche, recently discussed in detail by Sartre-Fauriat[630] (§ Ch.4.4). These appear to be the main deities of the Hauran, considering their frequency in inscriptions in the Hauran.
- The deities worshipped in the Hauran will be reviewed to try and seek insights into the religious cultural identity of the Hauran on a spectrum wider than just benefactors – this will help us to understand the character of visitors and devotees, and not just the elites in the region (§ Ch.4.2–4).
- The resemblances in the styles of statues and architecture from the Hauran in the pre-provincial period with the hinterland of the Near East, such as Palmyra and Parthia, which have already been identified by the French team, are also considered.[631] In this chapter, suggestions as to the reasons for this pattern are additionally raised by seeking the connection of the patrons of rural cult centres in the pre-provincial period and their dedicators with the hinterland of the Near East (§ Ch.4.5).

[619] Bolelli 1986.
[620] Wenning 2001.
[621] Wenning 2001.
[622] Bolelli 1986; Wenning 2001: 312.
[623] Wenning 2001: 312.
[624] Wenning 2001: 312; 2007: 38.
[625] Wenning 1987: 25–91.
[626] Alpass 2013: 199.
[627] For discussion of the cult of Allat at Ṣalkhad, see Alpass 2013: 194–5; for the cult of Baalshamin at Sī', see Alpass 2013: 181–5.
[628] Sartre-Fauriat 2007; 2015.
[629] Sartre-Fauriat 2015.
[630] Sartre-Fauriat 2007.
[631] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 83, 95, 96, 98; 2010: 236.

4.1. People associated with the Safaitic script

The identification of benefactors of rural cult centres has so far not been investigated in depth, an omission that this part of the monograph seeks to remedy.

Scholars have shown that personal names and names of ethnic units in Safaitic graffiti also appeared in local Aramaic and Greek epigraphic texts in the Hauran, including inscriptions from rural cult centres. On the one hand, scholars such as Villeneuve and Sartre have identified that the people of the Hauran came originally from Safaitic nomadic tribes, or at least, a group of them, who became sedentary in this region.[632] On the other hand, Macdonald doubted that all the Safaitic nomadic tribes, or even some of them, became sedentary, by suggesting that this onomastic resemblance could be due to fashion (§ Ch.2.3 for a more detailed discussion).

Starting from the analysis of the epigraphic data from rural cult centres, this section attempts to shed some light on this matter, but its predominant focus is the discussion of the role of these individuals, bearing names that also appear in Safaitic graffiti, in cult centres.

Through inscriptions in the Hauran it has been possible to identify individuals who were named either Malikat or Kasiu, names that also appear in Safaitic graffiti: they were patrons of the pre-provincial sanctuaries at Sī', Ṣalkhad and Hebrān.

Milik put forward a tentative hypothesis that Malikat might have been a descendant of Kasiu, according to inscriptions that refer to the erection over time of the temple at Ṣalkhad and an inscription at Hebrān.[633] Two inscriptions give Kasiu as the name of the head of a family of descendants who built the temple in the mid 1st century BC and rebuilt it in AD 56[634] and 93.[635] Both inscriptions mention the earliest part of the same family tree (starting with Kasiu, followed by his son Rawāḥ, and then his grandchild ʿAklab). In the inscription dated to AD 56, Malikat is also mentioned as a member of the family tree headed by Kasiu. In the inscription from AD 93, the name Kasiu appears more than once in different parts of the family tree. This connection between Malikat and Kasiu is repeated at Hebrān, where a certain Malikat, who was son of Kasiu, was a priest of the goddess Allat and most likely built the door for the temple in AD 47.[636]

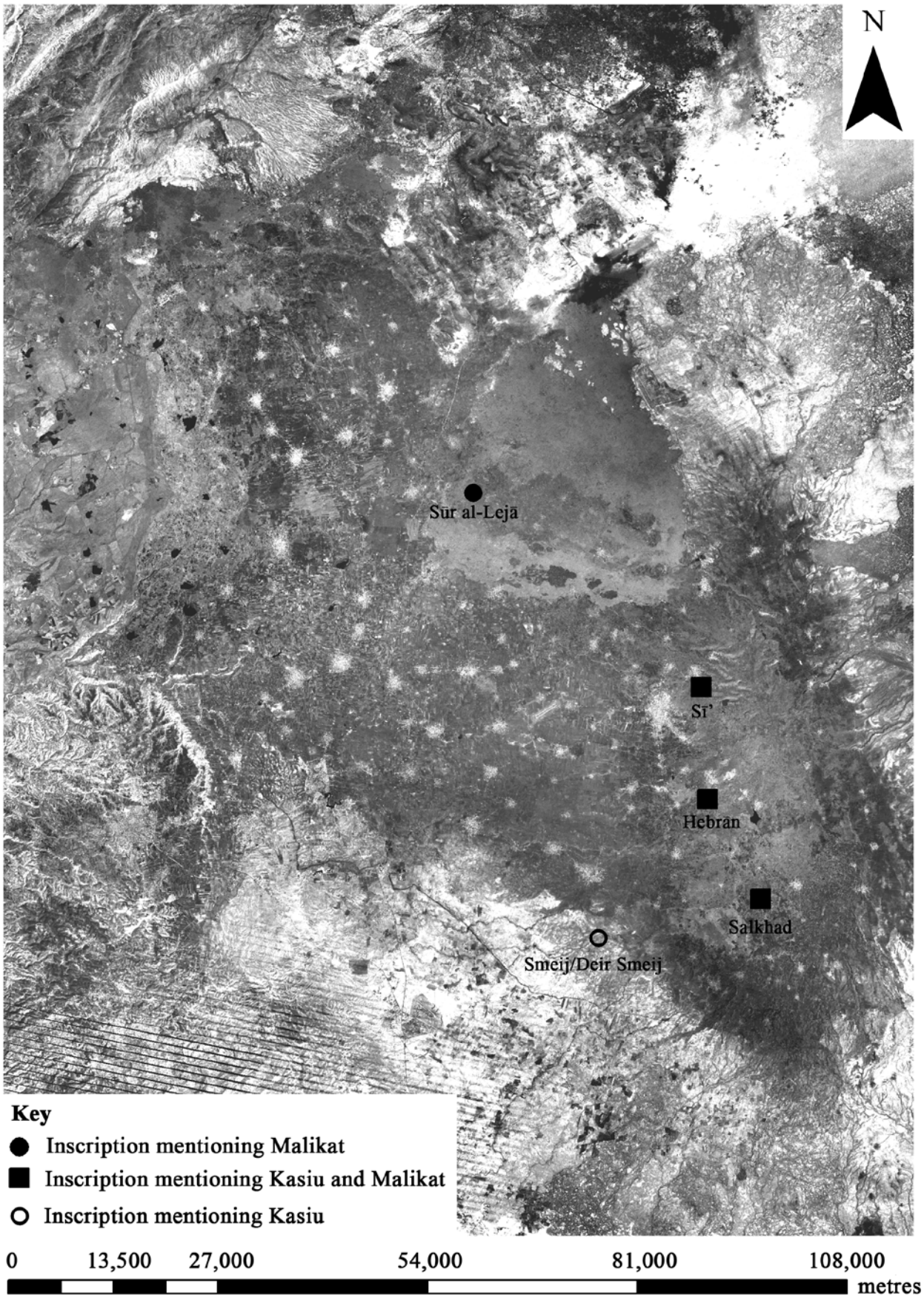
In addition to the inscriptions to which Milik referred, Kasiu was also the name of a commissioner of a stele dedicated to the deities Baalshamin, Seia, Isis, and the Angel of the God, that was recovered in the valley of the sanctuary at Sī', dated to the late 2nd century BC.[637] The stele dates from almost two centuries earlier than the inscriptions from Hebrān and Ṣalkhad. At the end of the 1st century BC, Malikat built the temple of Baalshamin at Sī'.[638] He was honoured with statues in the sanctuary, commissioned by the local community *Seenoi*[639] and by the *Obaisenoi* a few years later (early 1st century AD).[640]

Kasiu is said explicitly to belong to a tribe in only one instance, an inscription recovered at Smeij/Deir Smeij, south of Bosra. This inscription refers to a building, most likely a cult centre, dedicated to Baalshamin, on the evidence of the archaeological remains (Appendix).[641]

Tholbecq suggested that an epitaph at Sūr al-Lejā (in the southern part of Leja) of a woman called ʿṬrū, dated to AD 49,[642] might refer to the patron of the temple of Baalshamin at Sī', because it explicitly mentions that the father of the deceased was called 'the ancient Malikat' and this epitaph is dated roughly 50 years after the temple was built.[643] Furthermore, this inscription is written in the Nabataean (or local Aramaic) script, which is unusual in Leja where this script is not used, especially at this later date (the mid 1st century AD) (§ Ch.3.1). These factors may imply a familial link between the deceased of this epitaph and the patron of the temple, although this cannot be confirmed.[644]

As Milik and Tholbecq correctly pointed out, it is questionable to argue that whoever was named Kasiu and Malikat belonged to the same family tree or tribe. This is even more valid when we integrate earlier inscriptions and note that these two names appear in a timespan of over three centuries. The set of epigraphic evidence delineated above implies that Kasiu and Malikat were common names across the Herodian and Nabataean territories of the Hauran (Map 8). In the case of the epitaph at Sūr al-Lejā, both the father of the deceased and her husband were called Malikat. We cannot deny – at least on the basis of this evidence – that people who were identified as wealthy benefactors in rural cult centres in the region seemed to favour the names Kasiu or Malikat over quite a long period of time (from late 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD).

[632] Dentzer 1986: 415.
[633] Milik 1958: 227–8.
[634] *CIS* II 182; Cantineau 1932: 16–7; *Suw.* 1934 no.377.
[635] This is the reading suggested in Milik 1958: 227–8 no.1. It is also recorded in *CIS* II 183, 184; *Suw.* 1934 no.374–5.
[636] *CIS* II 170; Milik 1958: 228–9.
[637] Milik 2003.
[638] *CIS* II 163; *PPUAES* IV no.100; *PAAES* IV no.1; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1985: 175.
[639] *Wadd.* no.2367; *PAAES* III no.428b.
[640] *PAAES* III no.428a.
[641] *RES* 2042; *PPUAES* IV no.11.
[642] Starcky 1986: 177, 180 fig.2.
[643] Tholbecq 2007: 292.
[644] Tholbecq 2007: 292.



Map 8: Distribution of dedications by Kasiu and Malikat (the author)

These names frequently appear in Safaitic graffiti. Malikat appears 60 times as 'mlkt' and 132 times as 'mlk'.[645] Kasiu is only mentioned in a fragmentary inscription at Bosra – the original location of its recovery is not known (40 BC)[646] – whereas references to him were more frequent in Safaitic graffiti.[647]

In the religious life of rural cult centres in the Hauran, the active participation by individuals bearing names that also appear in Safaitic graffiti is reinforced by inscriptions in the Hauran commissioned by the *Obaisenoi*, meaning the people of Obaisatos, or the individual Obaisatos, son of Soaodos. In the sanctuary at Sī', he and his people commissioned a statue to Malikat according to a bilingual Greek and local Aramaic inscription,[648] as well as a statue of the king Herod according to a Greek inscription.[649] In the Aramaic part of the bilingual inscription, the *Obaisenoi* (in Aramaic, *'l'bs't*) have been referred to as belonging to a tribe because this name is preceded by *'l'*, meaning tribe in Aramaic.[650] However, in the Greek part the *Obaisenoi* (ὁ τῶν Ὀβαισηνῶν) are referred as ὁ δῆμος,[651] and δῆμος is also used for people from a village according to Grushevoi. For that reason, Grushevoi writes, *'l'* can mean people, a tribe, a clan, a family group or even village dwellers.[652]

A tomb near the road from Sī' to Canatha was dedicated to the son of the Obaisatos.[653] Furthermore, this name is mentioned in funerary inscriptions at Ṣalkhad[654] and Kharaba[655] (both in the Nabataean territory of the Hauran), and in an epitaph near Bosra – the dating and locations of these inscriptions *in situ* are not known.[656] This set of evidence suggests a wide distribution of the use of this name across the Hauran, in both Herodian and Nabataean territories. Although this name (*'byšt* in Safaitic writing) occurs in one Nabataean (undated) fragmentary inscription at Petra,[657] it appears more often in Safaitic graffiti recovered in the stony desert between Ruḥbeh and the Hauran.[658] In the epigraphic texts at Sī', Obaisatos was explicitly mentioned as the son of Soaodos: this name could have come from the Safaitic root ('SD') or its derivatives (such as 'SWD' and 'SDY'), which are very common in Safaitic graffiti and rare in Nabataean epigraphy.[659] The significance of this ethnic unit also extended into the surrounding territory, in the proximity of the sanctuary at Sī', as can be shown by a statue pedestal of Thaimos, the son of Obaisatos, recovered in the nearby village of el-Mushennef (15 km away).[660]

The fact that these names have been found in both Safaitic graffiti and Nabataean inscriptions is due to the similar origin and common Semitic root of their scripts.[661] There must have been also some interactions between the people associated with Safaitic graffiti and the Nabataeans, on the basis of references to the Nabataeans in Safaitic graffiti. Safaitic graffiti illustrated major Nabataean events, including conflicts,[662] and their everyday life.[663] Safaitic ethnic units named 'Awidh, Ḍf and 'Amrat supported Nabatatean kings at Petra and Bosra;[664] Safaitic ethnic units called Mḥrbt and Ḍf also participated in revolts against the last Nabataean king Rabbel II in AD 71.[665] The main Nabataean deity, Dushara, was occasionally mentioned in Safaitic graffiti.[666]

We can draw some conclusions by analysing this data set. The presence of benefactors and dedicators in rural cult centres across the Hauran bearing names that also appeared in Safaitic graffiti indicates that there was no differentiation of cultural identity, at least of the elite, between the two politically separated Nabataean and Herodian territories of the region.

Furthermore, a link between the people who commissioned inscriptions in the Hauran and those who made Safaitic graffiti is undeniable. This link between the benefactors and those who made Safaitic graffiti may have been a consequence of fashion, as suggested by Macdonald.[667] It may also have been because of family traditions, which is a reasonable explanation according to Sartre.[668] In either case, use of the same personal name or the same name of an ethnic unit in two different areas still shows a movement of this tradition or fashion that must have been carried by people or by word of mouth. Hence, it implies interactions between these two areas and indicates that the individuals who were benefactors of rural cult centres in the pre-provincial period, the elite of the Hauran, were not simply indigenous people with local traditions and customs, but they were connected with, or were part of, the world beyond the Hauran. This shows that the rural society of the Hauran was linked

[645] Harding 1971: 565.
[646] *CIS* II 174.
[647] *CIS* V 1588, 1599, 2799, 4840, 4957.
[648] *Wadd.* no.2366; *PAAES* III no.428b; *PPUAES* IV no.104.
[649] *Wadd.* no.2364; *PAAES* III no.427b.
[650] *CIS* II 164; *PPUAES* IV no.104.
[651] *PPUAES* III 428a.
[652] Grushevoi 1985: especially 54.
[653] *PPUAES* IV no.105.
[654] *PPUAES* IV no.26.
[655] *PPUAES* IV no.93.
[656] *CIS* II 181.
[657] *RES* 1442.
[658] *PAAES* IV no.71, no.124, no.349; CIS V 3262; Winnet and Harding 1978: no.1725a.
[659] Negev 1991: 222–3.
[660] *Suw.* 1934 no.55.
[661] Negev 1991: 225.
[662] Negev 1991: 216, 221.
[663] Milik 1986: 187–8.
[664] Milik 1986: 187–8.
[665] Winnett and Harding 1978: 7.
[666] Negev 1991: 73.
[667] Macdonald 1993: 383.
[668] Sartre 2007a.

to a wider network within the Near East in the pre-provincial period.

Identifying the type of connection between the benefactors of rural cult centres and the people who made 'Safaitic' graffiti (i.e. whether they were or were not the same people or ethnic group), or identifying the nature and the origin of the former (i.e. whether they were or were not the nomadic Safaitic ethnic groups and whether these groups became sedentary), is more problematic; we cannot provide a definitive answer. Whoever made Safaitic graffiti cannot with certainty be identified with the traditional definition of nomadic, as discussed in Chapter 2, when outlining the 'nature' of people associated with Safaitic graffiti (§ Ch.2.3).

Crucial in this discussion are the two following types of evidence that can be read differently and, therefore, provide different interpretations of the elite of the Hauran. Safaitic graffiti only mention one cult centre – that at Sī'.[669] Stone vessels with Safaitic graffiti are found in this sanctuary.[670]

One of the readings of this set of evidence is that Sī' was used as a place of worship by the people who made Safaitic graffiti themselves, and these stone vessels were offerings from the makers of Safaitic graffiti. On these premises, the French team argued that this sanctuary would have been a place of interaction between Safaitic tribes and the sedentary people, between shepherds and farmers, where they could have exchanged goods. This would have been facilitated by the location of the sanctuary in an agricultural territory (areas of sedentary people) bordering the desert on the east (nomadic people).[671]

On the basis of these elements, we cannot exclude the possibility of the co-presence of people making Safaitic graffiti and the elite of the Hauran, which was formed by one of the ethnic groups who made Safaitic graffiti. It is questionable whether they were two distinctive entities representing distinctive sedentary and nomadic groups. The possibility that both had the same ethnic root cannot be excluded, because individuals bearing the names Malikat or Kasiu, commonly used in Safaitic graffiti, commissioned the major monumental buildings in the region in the pre-provincial period. Further evidence to support this hypothesis is the similar timeframe of the appearance of the inscriptions in the Hauran, and in Safaitic graffiti. Despite evidence of occupation in the Hauran from the Bronze Age onwards (§ Ch.2.3), the earliest form of commemorative inscription in the Hauran (a stele from Sī'), commissioned by an individual called Kasiu, a name also seen in Safaitic graffiti, is dated to the late 2nd century BC. Safaitic graffiti does not appear to be dated earlier than this. The timespan of Safaitic graffiti stretched roughly from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD, despite the difficulty in dating them (§ Ch.2.3).[672]

In that respect, the differentiation of the script between Safaitic graffiti and the inscriptions in the Hauran does not necessarily mean that they were two distinct ethnic groups. It is proposed here that the different script was due to their different purpose and recipients.

Safaitic graffiti were short, personal grave-marks or prayers rapidly inscribed during journeys – it was not necessary for them to be understood by a wider audience. The inscriptions in the Hauran were, instead, everlasting monumental and public dedications. They were written in local Aramaic, Nabataean and Greek scripts. The choice of the script would have been partially affected by the socio-political background of the place where the inscription was situated, as discussed in previous chapters (§ Ch.1.2, Ch.3.1) – see Ch.4.3 for the use of Greek writing in inscriptions.

As the individuals bearing the names Malikat and Kasiu commissioned the major monumental buildings in the region in the pre-provincial period, they must have used the cult centres regularly and they must have been involved in the social life of these communities. How and to what extent they were involved in the social structure and administration of the village communities cannot be discerned. There is no further accurate evidence that can offer a better insight into the nature of benefactors of the rural cult centres at Sī', Ṣalkhad and Hebrān which could enable us to be certain that they belonged to Safaitic ethnic units. The absence of this type of evidence is presumably due to the fact there was no need to mention their origin or their belonging to the elite of the Hauran.

A different reading of the stone vessels with Safaitic graffiti suggests that they can be considered as gifts offered by those who made Safaitic graffiti to the people in the Hauran; this would imply that the former did not perform any vows or give offerings in the sanctuary. The Safaitic graffiti may mention the sanctuary of Sī' simply because it was a well-known religious centre. On the basis of this second reading of the evidence, the physical presence of the people who made Safaitic graffiti and their participation to the religious life at Sī' become more questionable. However, it still suggests strong contacts between the people that commissioned the sanctuary and those who made the graffiti, leading to exchanges of gifts and influencing each other in the choice of personal names.

[669] Macdonald 2003b.
[670] Macdonald 2003a.
[671] Denzter 1986: 404–5.
[672] Macdonald 2000: 45.

This strong link between the elite of pre-provincial rural cult centres in the Hauran and the people who made Safaitic graffiti is undeniable, and it is supported further by the deities worshipped in these sanctuaries, which will be discussed next.

4.2. The cult of Baalshamin and Allat

Alpass provides a concise résumé of the main gods worshipped in the key rural cult centres of the Hauran in the pre-provincial period (1st century BC–1st century AD), namely, Baalshamin and Allat. He maintains that they were popular deities in Safaitic graffiti.[673]

Starting with his analysis, this section will, first, reassess the inscriptions that refer to the cult of Baalshamin and Allat in the Hauran, and, then, assess to what extent these deities were strictly Safaitic deities, by considering Sartre's identification of the main Safaitic gods, and the diffusion of the cult of Baalshamin and Allat. Allpass does not discuss these points. He also does not analyse representations of Baalshamin coming from the end of the 1st century BC, which will be investigated in this section when considering the cult of Baalshamin in the Near East. The representations of Allat/Athena seem to come from a later context than the depiction of Baalshamin discussed here, i.e. the second half of the 1st century AD onwards. Because of that later context, it will be discussed in the next section, concerning the inscriptions dedicated to Zeus and Athena and the depiction of Baalshamin/Zeus from that period (§ Ch.5.3).

Baalshamin was the dominant deity in the rural cult centre at Sī', with the earliest and main temple being dedicated to him.[674] Only an altar was dedicated to Balshammin at Ṣalkhad.[675] Alpass does not mention that at Smeij/Deir Smeij, in the Nabataean territory of the Hauran, a Nabataean inscription refers to a building, most likely the cult centre, dedicated to Baalshamin.[676]

A rural sanctuary was dedicated to Allat at Ṣalkhad in the southern part of the Hauran (Nabataean territory) when it was originally built in the 1st century BC,[677] and, later, when it was restored at the end of the 1st century AD.[678] Additionally, the significance of this goddess at Ṣalkhad is reinforced by a stele from this site that mentions Allat as the lady of the place (*'lt d't 'ltr*).[679] The cult of Allat also appeared at Hebrān at the edge of the Herodian territory of the Hauran, bordering with the Nabataeans (§ Ch.2.3). There, the father of the man who commissioned a door, presumably of a temple, was a priest in charge of the cult of the goddess Allat, as deduced from an inscription.[680] Alpass also points out that the cult of these two deities was found across the Djebel al'Arab, in spite of the political authority that governed the territory where the temple was situated. The worship of Allat took place, in fact, in the Nabataean (Ṣalkhad) and the Herodian areas (Sī' and Hebrān). Alpass does not include in his discussion the additional examples that would strengthen this argument, including a most likely cult centre dedicated to Baalshamin at Smeij/Deir Smeij, and an altar dedicated to him at Ṣalkhad, both in the Nabataean territory.

Alpass additionally maintains that Sī' was a place of worship for the nomadic people who wrote Safaitic graffiti.[681] He refers to the work by Macdonald, which was based upon some Safaitic graffiti that widely mentioned the sanctuary at Sī' dedicated to Baalshamin, as well as Safatic graffiti at Sī'.[682] Alpass only says that it is tempting to argue that the sanctuary at Ṣalkhad was visited by the nomadic population who made Safaitic graffiti, because Allat was also popular in Safaitic graffiti. However, he does not provide any reference to specific evidence or to any scholarly work.[683]

Yet, according to Sartre the main Safaitic gods were Rouda, Ethaos and Shai al-Qawn. This is not exclusively the case for Shai al-Qawn, as he is widely worshipped by other cultures. Furthermore, only few inscriptions mentioning these gods have been recorded in the Near East, including in the Hauran, which makes it difficult to propose any argument relating to the origin of these gods and the diffusion of their, cult especially in the Hauran.[684]

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673 Alpass 2013: 194–5.

674 *CIS* II 163; *PPUAES* IV no.100; *PAAES* IV no.1; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1986: 175.

675 *PPUAES* IV no.23.

676 *PPUAES* IV no.11.

677 *CIS* II 182; Cantineau 1932, 17–8; *Suw.* 1934 no.377.

678 *Suw.* 1934 no.374–5; Milik 1958, 227–8 no.1.

679 *PPUAES* IV no.24. The translation provided here seems the most likely (Alpass 2013: 194). For different interpretations of the stele, see Healey 2001: 109; Nehmé 2005–6: 208; Alpass 2013: 194.

680 *CIS* II 170; Milik 195: 228–9; Alpass 2013: 195.

681 Alpass 2013: 184, 195.

682 Macdonald 2003a; 2003b.

683 Alpass 2013: 195–9. For 'Safaitic' graffiti where Allat is mentioned, see *PPUAES* IV no.160, 91–2, no.35; Winnet and Reed 1970.

684 Sartre 1992: 46. Rouda does not appear in the Hauran. He has been considered to be assimilated with Zeus, but in the inscription he is followed by an epithet referring to the territory of Safaitic, Zeus of Safā (Sartre 1992: 46). He is mentioned in an inscribed altar from Bosra. The formula of invocation in this inscription is like the one used on the altar of Manaf in the Nabataean kingdom and the transposition of the exclamation mark that appears on the altar is used in the Safaitic graffiti, as well as in classical Arabic (Sourdel 1957: 86). Sourdel also describes Ethaos as an authentic Safaitic deity; he is the god Itha often invoked in Safaitic graffiti. He is the god of the inhabitants of Egla, which is most likely 'Adjeialat, a village situated on the eastern side of the Djebel al'Arab (Sourdel 1957: 85). Shai al-Qawm is not an exclusive Safaitic deity as the god is 'borrowed' by the Nabataeans and widely worshipped in their kingdom (Healey 2001: 143–7). For instance, he is worshipped one of the main Nabataean sites, Hegra. He also appears in a Palmyrene inscription commissioned by a Nabataean individual at Palmyra. He is mentioned only in one instance in the Hauran, at Tell Ghariye – the inscription is dated according to the Nabataean calendar (Sourdel 1957: 81–4). None of these deities are mentioned in inscriptions coming from, or associated with, rural cult

Even if Baalshamin and Allat were not 'the major Safaitic deities', the fact that these deities appeared often in inscriptions in the Hauran as well as in Safaitic graffiti is an additional *tessera* that reinforces the strong connection between the people who commissioned temples or dedications in rural cult centres in the Hauran and those who made Safaitic graffiti.

As this finding is based on the worship of gods in public religious centres, it indicates a common religious identity over a wider spectrum, which included not only the elite of the Hauran but also every individual who visited the cult centres and worshipped these deities (§ Ch.1.2).

That said, we cannot ignore that Baalshamin and Allat were also venerated elsewhere in the Near East; which Alpass does not touch upon.

Considering Baalshamin, Niehr traced his cult back to the 2nd millennium BC, but he did not differentiate between the god Baalshamin and the ancient god Baal.[685] According to Niehr, Baalshamin became the name of a specific deity in the 1st millennium BC onwards.[686] Although Baalshamin and Baal were two of the supreme gods, the former was specifically referred to as the Lord of the Heaven,[687] whereas the latter was more generically the supreme Lord and was not always mentioned as the God of Heaven. The distinction between these two deities, especially after the 1st millennium BC onwards, can be seen in their individual association with animals, for instance. Baal was usually depicted with, or as, a lion,[688] whereas Baalshamin was represented as an eagle.[689]

We can suggest a Phoenician origin for Baalshamin on the basis of the following written evidence. Although he was first mentioned in the first part of the 14th century BC in the treaties between Shuppiluliuma, king of the Hittites, and Niqmadu, king of Ugarit,[690] most of the written evidence mentioning his cult comes from Phoenicia. He was mentioned in a Phoenician inscription from the 10th century BC that commemorated the erection of a temple by Yeḥimilk, the king of Biblos, in ancient Phoenicia (Lebanon).[691] The *Phoenician History* by the writer Philo de Byblos (*c.* AD 64–141) defined the celestial Baalshamin as a Phoenician god.[692] He was worshipped at Tyre (in ancient Phoenicia) in the 10th century BC, as we know from the treaty by the Assyrian king Esarhddon with Baal, the king of Tyre, in 677 BC,[693] and from Josephus, who quoted sources from the archives of Tyre.[694] When talking about Baalshamin in the Nabataean kingdom, Zangenberg argues that he was a Palmyrene import into Nabataea,[695] but he seems to have been widely worshipped in ancient Phoenicia and he was popular over a wider area in the Near East,[696] as will be pointed out below. It is true that one of the earliest temples dedicated to Baalshamin to have survived was built in the early 1st century AD (*c.* AD 30s or 40s) at Palmyra.[697] Baalshamin was also mentioned

centres in the Hauran. One exception can be considered: a dedication to Lycurgus by a veteran at Hebrān in the 2nd century AD (*PPUAES* III no.663), as this god has been considered the Greek assimilation of Shai al-Qawm (Sourdel 1957: 81–4). However, he does not seem to be only a god worshipped by the people who wrote Safaitic graffiti, as he was also worshipped in the Near East, especially in the Nabataea and by the Nabataeans (Healey 2001, 142–7). Lycurgus was also widely worshipped by soldiers (Healey 2001, 144), so his cult may have been associated more with the Roman army than Safaitic people, at least in the case of Hebrān, where the inscription mentions that a veteran commissioned it.

685 Niehr 2003.

686 Healey 2001: 124; Niehr 2003.

687 Baalshamin, meaning 'Lord (ba'al) of Heaven (shamîn)' signifies 'the god to whom the heaven belongs' (Texidor 1977: 27).

688 Examples of Baal's depiction with, or as, a lion are on the stele from Amrit (the ancient city of Marathos) (northern Phoenicia) (Dunand and Saliby 1985) and the stele from Qadmous (northern Phoenicia) (Bounni 1991; 1992; Abou Assaf 1992).

689 Collart 1986. Despite eagles being used by the Roman Empire to emphasise their power (Toynbee 1973: 241), they appeared to have mostly a religious meaning: they were symbols of divine protection and associated with deities. The identification of eagles as symbols of protection reflects to their common representation of having widely spread wings. This kind of depiction appeared in the Hauran and in other areas of the Near East, such as northern Syria and Egypt. Eagles with spread wings in the north of Syria and in the Hauran are associated with inscriptions dedicated respectively to Zeus/Bel and Azizos. As in the *Old Testament*, the protection of God is offered by an eagle with spread wings carried by a young man to Moses. Similarly, eagles were signs of divine protection or deities when they were associated with rulers, such as those from the Egyptian kingdom and Roman emperors. Eagles appeared on coins of the emperors Trajan and Caracalla, as they were connected with Jupiter (Lichtenberger 2006: especially 194–5). For a comprehensive discussion on representation of eagles with spread wings as symbols of divine protection and deities, see Lichtenberger 2006.

690 Texidor 1977: 26.

691 Pritchard 1955: 499.

692 Phil. *Bybl.* 2.

693 Teixidor 1977: 29 ff.

694 Jos. *AJ* 8. 5, 3.

695 Zangenber 1970: 28; Healey 2001: 124.

696 Teixidor 1977: 30–40 passim.

697 Dirven 1999: 79; Kaizer 2002: 79. The diffusion of the cult of Baalshamin, first, in ancient Phoenicia and then at Palmyra can be explained by the contact or origin of people who worshipped this god at Palmyra with people from ancient Phoenicia. Who exactly the population of Palmyra were in the early 1st century AD is still unclear. Some members of a major tribe in Palmyra, Bene Ma'zin, who contributed financially to the building development of the city (Dirven 1999: 79; Kaizer 2002: 79) could have come from Mount Hermon (part of the ancient Phoenicia) (Gawlikoswski 1990a: 2630). This notion is supported by the origin of the god Durahlun, who was the main deity worshipped in the temple of Baalshamin at Palmyra after Baalshamin himself. The name Durahlun suggests that this deity originated in Lebanon. The name, in fact, means 'the one of Rahle', a village located at the foot of Mount Hermon (a cluster of Anti-Lebanon mountains) where ruins of a cult centre are found (Milik 1972: 96–8). Durahlun was most likely worshipped in Mount Hermon because he was considered a local form of Baalshamin (Gawlikoswski 1990a: 2630). Despite the lack of an explicit inscription mentioning the deity of the sanctuary at Rahle, a relief of an eagle found at the site suggests this cult centre was indeed consecrated to Baalshamin, as this animal was his symbol (Krencker and Zschietzmann 1938: 223–9 fig.345–7 pl.94–7; Gawlikoswski 1990a, 2630). Furthermore, the word Ma'zin means 'goatherd' (a nomadic occupation), which implies the nomadic origin of this ethnic group (Gawlikoswski 1973: 38; Dirven 1999: 79). Therefore, some of members of this ethnic group could have originated from different parts of the Near East. The presence at Palmyra of people originating from ancient Phoenicia has been

in an inscription together with Dushara-Aʿra of Bosra at Iram in the last phase of the Nabataean kingdom (Rabbel II, AD 70–106),[698] and an inscription from Hegra (a major Nabataean site in the 1st century BC and AD), but the last example is dated to the mid 3rd century AD, over a century after the end of the Nabataean kingdom.[699] Only two generic dedications to Baalshamin in the Nabataea are dated earlier: one from the Wadi Musa (Aretas IV, 9 BC–AD 40),[700] and one from Bosra probably from the 1st century AD.[701] Nevertheless, no temples were dedicated to Baalshamin in the Nabataean kingdom, apart from the probable cult centre dedicated to him at Smeij/ Deir Smeij, which is, however, in the southern part of the Hauran where this deity was widely worshipped. Therefore, although Sourdel argued that Baalshamin became a Nabataean god who was taken from the traditional religious culture of the Hauran, and similarly Healey suggested the formal adoption of Baashamin as an official Nabataean deity,[702] he was still a foreign god in this Nabataean kingdom and he cannot be considered a Nabataean deity as Teixidor, Gawlikowski and Alpass maintained.[703] The cult of Baalshamin, moreover, diffused into other parts of the hinterland of the Near East (ancient Mesopotamia), including Dura Europos in AD 31, Hatra, and Hierapolis-Menbidj.[704]

A further flaw in Alpass's argument is that he omitted to mention divine representations associated with Baalshamin at Sī'. This evidence can be accurately dated – which is rare with sculptural evidence, especially in the Hauran – to when the first temple was built (end of the 1st century BC). A radiate head of a young, clean-shaven male figure was recovered in the debris of the *theatron* (Figure 12)[705] and a relief with the same depiction was found out of context.[706] The radiate male head was originally part of the structure of the *theatron*, dedicated to Baalshamin and dated to the end of the 1st century BC.[707] Therefore, this depiction has been generically identified by scholars as Baalshamin.[708] However, Kropp points out that this reading is unjustified,[709] whereas, more cautiously, Dentzer-Feydy admits it is not easy to interpret.[710] Both scholars, and Freyberger, concur that a radiate head of a young beardless male figure usually represents a solar deity.[711] Freyberger additionally argues that this type of representation and the solar god, in general, stand for local deities of the tribes in the Near East.[712] Furthermore, according to Freyberger, supreme deities, such as Baalshamin at Sī', Samas at Hatra and Helipolitanus and Jupiter at Baalbek, were identified as solar gods as the solar god in the Near East had a dominant role in the pantheon since the late Hellenistic period, according to ancient belief verified by archaeological evidence.[713] Therefore, a radiate head could have represented a local ancient supreme deity, also identified with Baalshamin. At Sī' we associate the depiction of the solar deity specifically with Baalshamin because of the inscription. As Baalshamin was the Lord of the Sky, he was associated with gods that witness the cosmos, including a solar deity.[714] Representations of a solar deity in a sanctuary dedicated to Baalshamin were already found in ancient Phoenicia.[715] Philos of Biblos referred to Baalshamim as the solar god.[716] Even in the iconography in the Near East in pre-provincial and provincial periods the solar deity, together with the lunar deity (Selene), is usually associated with the great god of the sky, Baalshamin. These two astral deities stood at either side of the supreme cosmic god Zeus depicted with beard,[717] to whom Baalshamin was assimilated, as discussed below (§ Ch.5.3). This representation has been found at Chalcis (Lebanon), Palmyra, as well as rural cult centres at Mashāra[718] and possibly at Mayāmas, both in the Hauran (§ Ch.5.3).

Further evidence to associate the radiate head of the god at Sī' with Baalshamin, assimilated to Zeus, is the recovery of reliefs of eagles in the sanctuary, as this bird is associated with the radiate head[719] and with the supreme celestial god Zeus and Baalshamin.[720] Zeus and Baalshamin were known as 'the King of the Sky', who oversaw everything on Earth, and 'Baalshamin' itself means 'the lord of the Heaven'.[721] Undoubtedly, we need to bear in mind that eagles were symbols of other Semitic deities: Jupiter Heliopolitanus, venerated

suggested on the basis of linguistic similarities between Phoenician and Palmyrene scripts and the possible Phoenician origin of some gods worshipped at Palmyra. Another deity venerated at Palmyra (Bel Hamon) could have come from the Phoenician god Baal-Hammon (Garbini 1998).

698 Savignac 1934: 576–7 no.19.
699 *JS* I no.17.
700 Khairy 1981.
701 *CIS* II 176.
702 Healey 2001: 125.
703 Teixidor 1977: 84; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2670; Alpass 2013: 194–5.
704 Collart 1986: 75.
705 *PPUAES* II: 384 ill.330 P; *Suw*. 1934 no.46 pl.15; 1991 INV46 [127] (8, 02); Mascle 1944: no.46; Gawlikowski 1990b: 1035 no.23.
706 *Suw*. 1934 N45 pl.15; Gawlikowski 1990b: 1035 no.22.
707 *CIS* II 163; *PPUAES* IV no.100; *PAAES* IV no.1; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1986: 175. This precluded the possibility that the relief referred to Mithras. Although Mithras was identified and also depicted as a solar deity, being associated with the god Helios (meaning sun), his cult was principally developed in the provincial period (Gawlikowski 1990b) (§ Ch.6.2 for further information about Mithras).
708 Weber 2006: 109, 111–2.
709 Kropp 2013a: 300.
710 Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 314–5.
711 Freyberger 2013: 158.
712 Freyberger 1998: 110.
713 Freyberger 1998: 50.
714 Aliquot 2009: 142.
715 Gawlikowski 1990b: 1038; Aliquot 2009: 142.
716 Phil. *Bybl.* 2.
717 Seyrig 1971: 67–70; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2629 ff.; 1990b.
718 Seyrig 1949: 31; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80 fig.20.
719 Gawlikowski 1990b.
720 Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: pl.40; Seyrig 1949: pl.2; 1971: 95; Glueck 1966: 65 pl.31–2; Collart and Vicari 1969: 218 ff. pl.55. 2; Teixidor 1977: 141, 144; Collart 1986; Invernizzi 1997; McKenzie *et al.* 2002: 63–4.
721 Augé and de Bellefonds 1997: 384.

in Lebanon,[722] and Elagabolos in the city of Emesa in the northern Syria, for instance.[723] Additionally, the radiate head can also stand for specific deities worshipped only in specific places: the Arabic deities Shams or Malakbel, both mostly venerated at Palmyra, and the Lord Marān at Hatra.[724] The representation of the solar deity together with the lunar deity (Selene) can also accompany the god Bel.[725] Busts of the solar deities were often placed in pediments of temples across the Near East, regardless of the cults inside.[726]

Therefore, the radiate head and eagles could have been associated with other deities apart from Baalshamin, especially bearing in mind that a sculpture could have represented more than one specific character[727] and could have been interpreted differently by different onlookers coming from different backgrounds. On the basis of these arguments, we cannot exclude the possibility of people from different cultural backgrounds who crossed the Hauran and who visited rural sanctuaries in this region, identifying and worshipping their own Semitic gods in these representations.

With regards to Allat, the earliest source that refers to her is Herodotus. He recorded Alitat being venerated by people from the desert of the Sinai in the 5th century BC;[728] who they were and their origin cannot be answered. One of the earliest temples dedicated to her was built in Palmyra in the mid 1st century BC.[729] Allat has also been considered part of the Nabataean pantheon,[730] although only sporadic inscriptions dedicated to her have been found in the Nabataean territory and are dated towards the end of this kingdom, or later, when these gods were already widely worshipped across the Near East.[731] This is the case in the rural sanctuary at Iram, possibly dated to the end of the 1st century AD, the end of the Nabataean kingdom.[732] Hammond suggested that the goddess of the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra identified with Aphrodite was Allat.[733] However, Allat is never mentioned in any inscriptions from Petra or any main Nabataean centres during the reign. For this reason, she cannot be considered as being part of the Nabataean pantheon.

Allat was mentioned in Lihyanite, Thamudic and Safaitic graffiti recovered in northern Saudi Arabia and

Figure 12: A statue of a radiate head of a young male figure recovered in the debris of the theatron (*PPUAES* II: 384, ill. 330; Dunand 1934: no. 46, pl. 15).

the Near East.[734] These graffiti are difficult to date: their time range is between the 7th–4th centuries BC and the Islamic period.[735] Then, from the end of the 1st century AD onwards, Allat was also worshipped in other places in the Near East, such as Hatra.[736]

The fact that Baalshamin and Allat were worshipped elsewhere in the Near East from the pre-provincial period onwards may imply that not only the population from the Hauran and its elite, but also non-local visitors in the Near East, could have worshipped these deities at Sī', Ṣalkhad and Hebrān. A similar argument can be applied to the representation of Baalshamin, as it could have embodied other deities. This implies that the religious cultural identity of the Hauran did not have its own local gods and was open to beliefs that were not embedded in the Hauran, but had originated outside the region and spread in the Near East. Therefore, on one hand, the worship of Baalshamin and Allat in main rural cult centres in the pre-provincial period, together with the use of the same personal names, may indicate a strong tie between the people of the Hauran and the people who made Safaitic graffiti. On the other hand, it also shows that the religious identity of the Hauran was not distinctive and local but embraced common beliefs with other cultures of the Near East, implying also its

[722] Aliquot 2009: 144.
[723] Augé and de Bellefonds 1986b.
[724] Gawlikowski 1990b.
[725] de Bellefonds 1984; 1986; Will 1986; Gawlikowski 1990b.
[726] Kropp 2010b: 239–40.
[727] Ma 2007: 204.
[728] Hdt. *Hist*. 3, 8.
[729] Drijvers 1976: 28–38; Gawlikowski 1983a: 179–98; 1983b: 59–67; 1990c: 101–8; 1997a: 837–49.
[730] Starcky 1966: col.1003; 1981: 120; Niehr 1998: 221; Healey 2001: 114.
[731] Healey 2001: 112.
[732] Rickmans 1934; Savignac and Horsfield 1935; Kirkbride 1960.
[733] Hammond 1990.
[734] Krone 1992: 88 ff.
[735] Krone 1992: 88 ff.; Healey 1990: 26.
[736] Starcky 1981.

similarity and its belonging to a broader network in the Near East.

4.3. The cult of Zeus and Athena

When discussing the deities in the Hauran, Alpass did not refer to dedications to Zeus or Athena, or to their statues across the Hauran; these will be fully analysed in this section, integrating them with scholars' discussions on the reasons and the meanings of using Greek names of deities in the Near East. As carried out for Baalshamin and Allat, the analysis of the cult of Zeus and Athena will also include the spread of their cult and representations in the Near East.

Zeus and Athena appeared in inscriptions from rural cult centres in the Hauran from the pre-provincial period (early 1st century AD) to the provincial period (end of the 1st century AD–3rd century AD) (Appendix). The predominance of the cult of Zeus and Athena and their diffusion across the Hauran indicate the persistence of a common religious cultural identity in this region in the 1st century AD onwards. It transcended the political boundaries between the Nabataean and Herodian territories and between, respectively, the Roman provinces of Arabia and Syria, before their unification under Septimius Severus at the end of the 2nd to the beginning of the 3rd century (Maps 9–10) (§ Ch.2).

Temples and inscriptions dedicated to Zeus were widely recovered in rural cult centres in the northern part of Djebel al'Arab and Leja (Sī', al-Mushennef, Bteineh, Deir as-Smeij, Khabab, Sleim, Hebrān, Mseikeh, Mismiyyeh and Ṣanamein) from the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD. His cult also extended into what was the Nabataean territory of the Hauran, on the basis of a 2nd–4th-century dedication to Zeus at Ṣalkhad and a 3rd-century dedication at Kharaba (Appendix) (Map 9).

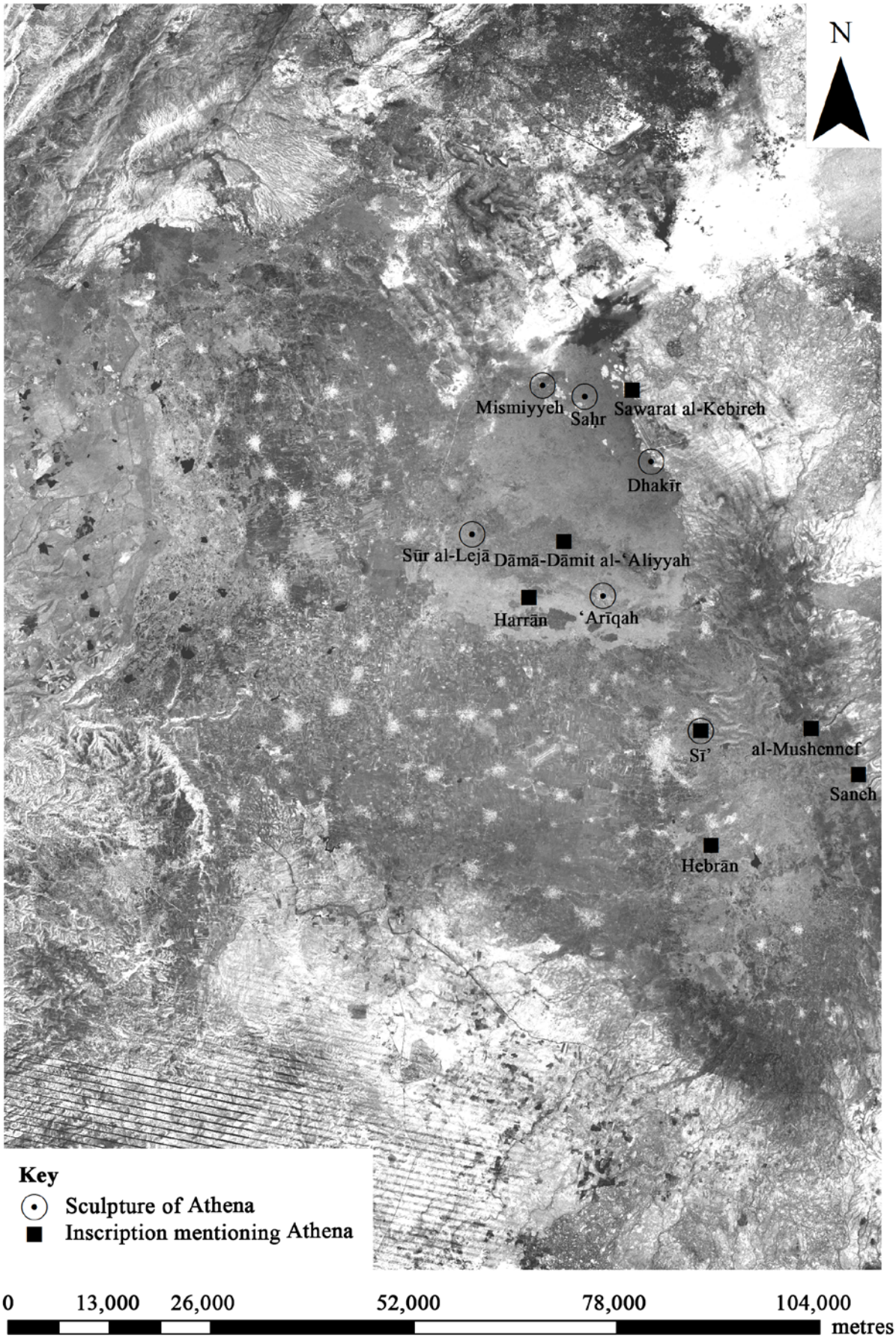
Athena was mentioned in inscriptions from rural sanctuaries in Leja (Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah,[737] Harrān[738] and Sawarat al-Kebireh,[739] all of unknown date), and in the Herodian part of the Djebel al'Arab (al-Mushennef, one inscription from the 1st century AD,[740] and an undated one,[741] Hebrān,[742] Saneh[743] and Sī',[744] the last three of unknown date) (Map 10). It is difficult to propose an accurate chronology of the shift from the cult of Allat to that of Athena, as most inscriptions dedicated to the latter are not dated. From the few dated examples, we could surmise that it started in the 1st century AD and carried on into the provincial period, as was the case for Zeus.

According to Sartre and Sartre-Fauriat, the appearance of Greek deities in inscriptions in the Hauran does not show a change of the deities worshipped from Semitic gods (Baalshamin and Allat) to Greek ones (Zeus and Athena), rather they only acquired Greek names.[745] This is an example of Hellenisation, where Semitic gods were named after Greek deities while they still maintained their Semitic character. They were still identified as Semitic deities by indigenous populations. Sartre explained and encapsulated this practice with the term 'superficial veneer'.[746] Additionally, according to him we should not risk attributing an importance that the Greek elements and this process of Hellenisation did not have.[747]

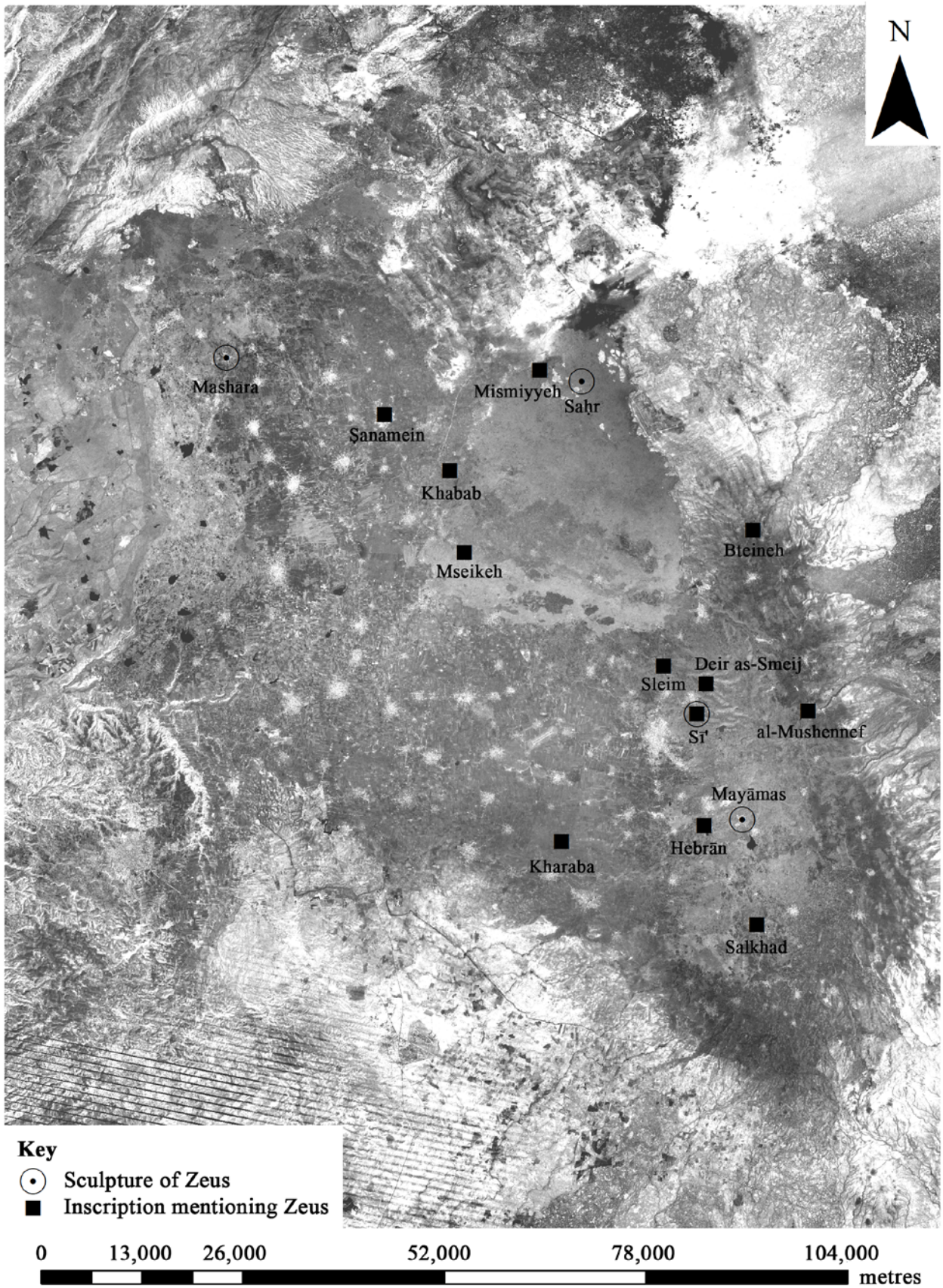
The assimilation of Baalshamin to Zeus in rural cult centres can be seen in the appearance of dedications to Zeus Kyrios,[748] Megistos or Keraunios,[749] in rural cult centres in the Hauran, which are common epithets associated with Baalshamin. For instance, at Tayibé (the north-east of Palmyra) Baalshamin, mentioned in the Palmyrene inscription, is named Zeus Megistos Keraunios in the Greek inscription.[750] These inscriptions with these epithets are mostly recovered in the Djebel al'Arab; there are only two examples in Leja. A 1st-century temple was first dedicated to Zeus Kyrios at Ṣanamein (AD 45);[751] after a couple of decades the temple's door, including a statue of Nike, small figures of Nike and lions and other carved work on the door of the temple (AD 85–6), and another inscription were dedicated to the same god.[752] One of inscriptions on the architrave from the Roman Gate at Sī' (AD 138–235) is dedicated to Zeus Megistos only according to the reconstruction by the Princeton University team.[753]

The rest of the dedications with these epithets are not dated. A small fragment of an ornament only bearing Zeus Kyrios is found in ruins at the entrance

[737] *Wadd.* no.2453; Ewing 1895: 76; Dussaud and Macler 1903: 242 no.10; Sourdel 1957: 72 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 359–60 no.297.
[738] *Wadd.* no.2461; Sourdel 1957: 72 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 321–2 no.258.
[739] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 48.
[740] *Wadd.* no.2211; *PAAES* II no.380; *IGRR* III 1260; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308; Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6.
[741] *Wadd. no.*2116.
[742] *Suw.* 1934 no.172.
[743] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 45.
[744] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 46.
[745] Sartre 1991: 491–6; 2001a: 288–9; Sartre-Fauriat 2015. Sartre-Fauriat prefers to use Graeco-Roman names for the deities rather than just Greek names.
[746] Sartre 1991: 491–6; 2001a: 288–9.
[747] Sartre 2001: 289.
[748] Sourdel 1957: 25–7; Dentzer-Fedy 1979: 332.
[749] Augé and Bellefonds 1997: 386.
[750] *CIS* II 3912; *CIG* 4501; Augé and Bellefonds 1997: 386.
[751] *PPUAES* III no.655 2; Sourdel 1957: 26 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 545–6 no.558.
[752] *RAO* V, 27; *Wadd.* no.2413 j; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 310; *PPUAES* III no.655 3; Sourdel 1957: 26 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 546–8 no.559–60.
[753] *PAAES* III no.432.



Map 9: Distribution of dedications to Zeus and of his statues (the author)



Map 10: Distribution of dedications to Athena and of her statues (the author)

of the *theatron*.[754] At Sī' an altar[755] and an ex-voto[756] are dedicated to Zeus Kyrios. Altars and inscriptions are dedicated to Zeus Megistos,[757] Zeus Kyrios[758] and Zeus Keranious[759] at Hebrān. The epithet Megistos is associated with an unnamed god on an altar at Deir as-Smeij.[760] A column is dedicated to Zeus Megistos at Sleim.[761] At Ṣalkhad, Zeus Megistos could refer to Hadad because a bull's head, which is an attribute of Hadad, is depicted on a side of the altar where the inscription mentioning Zeus is carved.[762] There is evidence of the cult of this god in the Hauran. There is an altar explicitly dedicated to Hadad at Khabab.[763] Moreover, an inscription in the Museum of Damascus indicates the presence of a sanctuary dedicated to Hadad and Atargatis in the Hauran, but the place of recovery is not known.[764] In only a couple of instances, these inscriptions demonstrate the worship of a deity that was not part of the pantheon of the Hauran, for example as Atargatis originated in Hierapolis in northern Syria.[765]

The dedications in Leia include a fragmentary inscription dedicated to Zeus Kyrios at Bteineh,[766] and a bust dedicated to Zeus Megistos on the basis of an inscribed statue base at Mismiyyeh.[767]

In an inscription at 'Atīl, Zeus is most likely followed by the epithet Olympian on the basis of the reconstruction of the inscription, where the first letter 'O' follows the name Zeus.[768] This epithet very rarely appears in the Hauran: the only other example is at Anz in the Djebel al'Arab. In contrast, Olympian Zeus is common at Gerasa in Jordan.[769] Additionally in the inscription at 'Atīl the man who commissioned the inscription explicitly states that he is from Gerasa. In the case of Anz, the dedicator is Augoustalis, a foreign name in the Hauran. Sartre-Fauriat maintains that this set of evidence suggests that the commissioners of these two inscriptions came from Gerasa and assimilated their foreign god with the local one.[770]

Zeus sometimes becomes the personification of the place where he is worshipped: he turns indigenous only in two instances in the Hauran, by acquiring the name of a village as epithet. Three inscriptions mention Zeus Airesios, named after the village Aire (Ṣanamein)[771] and one inscription refers to Zeus Phainesios, after the village Phaina (Mismiyyeh).[772]

Inscriptions only dedicated to Zeus without an epithet have been recovered at Sī',[773] al-Mushennef,[774] Khabab,[775] Kharaba,[776] Mseikeh[777] and Ṣanamein.[778] On a fragmentary altar from Mseikeh, Zeus is also referred to the ancestral god but is not named after the place.[779]

This set of inscriptions shows the variety of gods under the umbrella of Zeus (25 inscriptions). Zeus with a foreign epithet appears only in one inscription (4%). The 'local' Zeus, named after the village, is rare (4 inscriptions, 15% of the total number of inscriptions that mention Zeus). This implies that every time we see an inscription dedicated to Zeus we should not consider automatically Zeus as an assimilation of a local deity, or a deity that personified the site, making it divine. In the inscriptions in the Hauran, Zeus, instead, seems to refer to Baalshamin in most cases on the basis of the epithets (13, 14 or 15 inscriptions, 50%, 54% or 57%, depending on whether or not we include the reconstruction by the Princeton University team of one inscription and the inscription that could refer to Hadad). Dedications only to Zeus comprise only a small percentage of the group of inscriptions mentioning Zeus (6 or 7 inscriptions, 23% or 27% depending on whether or not we include the inscription which the Princeton University team added Megistos to in their reconstruction).

Similarly to Baalshamin/Zeus, Allat, who was first worshipped in the Hauran, was assimilated with Athena. This is reinforced by the fact that Allat is

[754] *PPUAES* III no.774.
[755] *PPUAES* III no.769.
[756] Dunand 1926: 328 pl.69; *Suw.* 1934 no.15 pl.9; Mascle 1944: no.15; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64; *Suw.* 1991 INV 15 [190] (5, 23).
[757] *Wadd.* no.2289; *Suw.* 1934 no.179 pl.3.
[758] *PPUAES* II no.665; *Suw.* 1934 no.178.
[759] *Suw.* 1934 no.176 pl.35.
[760] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 299 footnote 20.
[761] *PPUAES* III no.765 3.
[762] *Suw.* 1934 no.200; Mascle 1944: no.311; Sourdel 1957: 24; *Suw.* 1991 INV311 [218] (5, 32).
[763] Sourdel 1957: 41; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 129–30 no.74.
[764] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 297; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 607–8 no.612.
[765] Rostovtzeff 1933; Gawlikowski 1988; Shalom et al. 2001: 285.
[766] Dussaud and Macler 1901: no.1.
[767] *RAO* V, 367–8; *RAO* VI, 372–3; Sourdel 1957: 24 no.1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 44 no.7.
[768] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 302.
[769] Wells 1938: no.2–7, no.10, no.14.
[770] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 302.
[771] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 302–3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 544 no.557.
[772] *PPUAES* II no.800 1; Sourdel 1957: 24 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 361–2 no.300; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 303.
[773] *Suw.* 1934 no.27 pl.8; Mascle 1944: no.27; *Suw.* 1991 INV27 [191] (5, 33).
[774] *Wadd.* no.2211; *PAAES* II no.380; *IGRR* III 1260; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308; Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6.
[775] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 130 no.75; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 300 footnote 25.
[776] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 300 footnote 24.
[777] *PPUAES* III no.795; Sourdel 1957: 2 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 204–5 no.137.
[778] Sourdel 1957: 22 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 74; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 548–9 no.561.
[779] PPUAES II no.795 8: Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 206-7 no.139.

the only Semitic goddess worshipped in rural cult centres in the Hauran (i.e. Salhkad and Hebrān) who can be associated with the Greek goddess Athena.[780] Furthermore, at the site of Hebrān an altar dedicated to Athena was recovered,[781] where Allat had first been worshipped.[782]

This change of names of gods shows the process of a reciprocal adaptation between pre-existing, in this case Baalshamin and Allat, and Greek deities, in this case Zeus and Athena, where pre-existing deities were assimilated to and merged with the Greek deities through syncretism.[783] The term syncretism means that elements and influences from one culture are used and reinterpreted by another, as explained by Aijmers and Stewart.[784] This process has been subjected to severe criticism by scholars, such as Drijvers, Pye, Dirven, Healey and Kaizer,[785] because it indicates a mixture of different elements in a strange cocktail and it also implies that pure religions and religious elements were randomly amalgamated in 'syncretic' cults.[786] Hence other scholars, such as Drijvers and Dirven, have preferred the term 'assimilation' rather than syncretism as it indicates that a culture absorbs elements from other cultures and subsumes them within its own tradition.[787] Although assimilation may be a more accurate term than syncretism to describe this phenomenon, both terms indicate the same process, whereby the cult of Greek deities in the Near East did not signify the same as those from the Greek Pantheon but indicated the assimilation of Semitic deities with Greek ones.

Whereas in the Western Empire, local deities were assimilated with Roman ones (called *interpretatio Romana*), in the Near East it was a reciprocal adaptation between the native and Greek culture (*interpretatio Graeca*).[788] This was the result of the pre-existing Seleucid Hellenistic Empire dominion over this territory for two centuries (312–63 BC). The long-term control by the Seleucid Empire had encouraged the adoption of Hellenistic architectural and sculptural traditions amongst other cultural practices, according to Sartre.[789] Scholars, such as Bowersock and Millar, claimed that the Greek 'veneer' was both associated with, and a consequence of the Roman arrival,[790] whereas others, such as Dentzer and Dentzer-Feydy, argued it was rooted in the Hellenistic Seleucid origins of the Near East and occurred prior to the Roman arrival.[791] The first claim is supported by the fact that most of the evidence of the Hellenistic tradition comes from no earlier than the Roman arrival, or contacts of the pre-existing population in the Near East with the Romans in the mid 1st century BC, as well as by the lack of any substantial monumental buildings before that period, as in the case of the Hauran. The second claim, made by Dentzer and Dentzer-Feydy, among others, is supported by some elements derived from the Seleucid Hellenistic tradition.[792] The first argument seems the most plausible because Hellenistic elements did not play a major part in the architecture of Sī', as Kropp has argued[793] (§ Ch.4.5 for further information about 'Seleucid Hellenistic' architecture in the Hauran, including Sī'). Furthermore, the use of Greek inscriptions and Greek names of deities does not start with the earliest phase of building of rural cult centres in the Hauran, but gradually from the 1st century AD. This is aligned with Bowersock's argument of dating the process of Hellenisation between the first century and the second century AD.[794]

The 1st century AD is a transition period, as Baalshamin and Allat, together with local Aramaic or Nabataean inscriptions, still appear before vanishing completely after the end of the Nabataean kingdom (AD 106), on the basis of the inscriptions that we can date (§ Ch.4.2). Whereas the latest inscription mentioning Baalshamin at Sī' is the one that commemorates the erection of the temple dedicated to him at the end of the 1st century BC,[795] he is mentioned in a Nabataean dedicatory inscription at Ṣalkhad from AD 72–3.[796] Similarly, whereas the last local Aramaic inscription that mentions Allat at Hebrān is from AD 47,[797] Allat is still mentioned in a local Aramaic inscription at Ṣalkhad in AD 93.[798] Greek inscriptions dedicated to Zeus or Athena at Hebrān,[799] and only to Zeus, at Ṣalkhad,[800] appear presumably in the provincial period, although their dating cannot be narrowed down.

By the mid 1st century, only Greek inscriptions and dedications to Zeus and/or Athena appear in other rural cult centres in the Herodian part of the Hauran, including the temple of Zeus at Sananmein from AD

[780] Starcky 1981.
[781] *Suw.* 1934 no.172.
[782] *CIS* II 170.
[783] Bendlin 1997: 53; Linn 2003: 274–5.
[784] Aijmers 1995; Stewart 1995.
[785] Drijvers 1980: 17–8; Pye 1993; Dirven 1999: xxi; Healey 2001: 14–6; Kaizer 2000: 224–5.
[786] Drijvers 1980: 17–8.
[787] Drijvers 1980: 17–8; Dirven 1999: xxi.
[788] Bendlin 1997: 53; Linn 2003: 274–5.
[789] Sartre 2001: 866.
[790] Bowersock 1990; Millar 1993: 524–5.
[791] Dentzer 1991; Dentzer-Feydy 1991; 1993.
[792] Dentzer 1991; Dentzer-Feydy 1991; 1993.
[793] Kropp 2010a.
[794] Bowersock 1990
[795] *CIS* II 163; *PPUAES* IV no.100; *PAAES* IV no.1; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1986: 175.
[796] *PPUAES* IV no.23.
[797] *CIS* II 170.
[798] *Suw.* 1934 no.374–5; Milik 1958: 227–8 no.1.
[799] *Wadd.* no.2289; *PPUAES* II no.665; *Suw.* 1934 no.172, no.176, no.178, no.179 pl.3.
[800] *Suw.* 1934 no.200; Mascle 1944: no.311; Sourdel 1957: 24; *Suw.* 1991 INV311 [218] (5, 32).

45,[801] and the shrine of Zeus and Athena in the 1st century AD at al-Mushennef.[802]

This gradual assimilation of Semitic deities into Greek ones, and the change of script of inscriptions, seem to depend on the location of cult centres in the Hauran: the use of the same script endured longer in the Nabataean territory, with the example of Ṣalkhad, dated to the second half of the 1st century AD. This could have been because this territory was added later to the Roman Empire, i.e. AD 106 (§ Ch.2.2). The earlier use of Greek names of deities and Greek inscriptions in the Herodian part of the Hauran (before it became part of the Roman Empire at the end of the 1st century AD) may have been caused by the temporary Roman control of the Herodian territory in AD 34–7 (§ Ch.2.2).

According to Kaizer, we have to be cautious in following Sartre's argument of Hellenisation as 'superficial veneer', as this process would have also brought new religious experiences and elements.[803] Even the same Sartre, in a later publication, states that we cannot assume that every time a Greek god is mentioned in an inscription he stood for an indigenous deity.[804] Even if the appearance of Greek names of deities is only caused by the use of a different language, so a different format or means, it is an indicator of a change from the pre-existing custom of mentioning only the Semitic names and using local Aramaic inscriptions, or occasional bilingual inscriptions, to the use only of Greek inscriptions referring to Greek names of deities.

The Hellenisation has been interpreted as a social and political phenomenon dictated by elite systems of values.[805] Inscriptions were also ever-lasting monuments of glory and power,[806] implying and showing the high status of the commissioner and his prestige, and his membership of the elite. As Sartre argues,[807] the use of Greek in inscriptions was an official language used in an external manifestation of prestige, such as written commemorations of the erection of religious monumental buildings. Similarly, Steinsapir refers to the use of Greek in the Near East and at Sī' as a marker of status.[808] As Sartre argues, the use of Greek inscriptions was a way to be integrated with the Roman Empire before becoming annexed to the Empire.[809] This implies the need and intention of the elite of the Hauran (meaning benefactors or anyone who could afford to commission dedicatory inscriptions and altars) to be open to the world outside the local communities, and be recognised by a wider audience than local communities, that is by other cultures in the Near East. This suggests the will of the elite in the Hauran to become part of a more globalised and interconnected world, a thesis first proposed in Chapter 1. This would explain the use of Greek script and Greek names for the deities of rural sanctuaries of the region rather than Aramaic names. Greek was the official language in the Near East, but not all the cultures in the Near East adopted Greek deities and Greek script for inscriptions, for example, Palmyra.[810]

I believe that whoever commissioned the inscription (the elite) chose to use a Greek name for the deity and the Greek script, not only because he was influenced and affected by the socio-economic and socio-political context, but also because he believed and desired that the elite and people from different parts of the Near East would understand his benefaction and could have viewed it. Inscriptions and languages are still vehicles of communication.

This phenomenon, whether we refer to it as Hellenisation, the change to the use of Greek language, syncretism or assimilation of Semitic deities to Greek ones, was not only a social and political phenomenon but it was probably also related to the socio-economic sphere. It was in all probability the consequence of an initial phase of progress of the society of the Djebel al'Arab and Leja, as it coincided with a period of greater development in the rural landscape of the Hauran. The latter is demonstrated by an increased number of remains, including inscriptions dated to the 1st century AD onwards (§ Ch.2–5) (Appendix). It was probably caused by two major factors that started in the 1st century BC and produced the initial effects at later stages. The first factor was political: the presence of the Herodian army at the end of the 1st century BC in Djebel al'Arab and Leja helped to make this territory peaceful and stable by controlling the raids of bandits (§ Ch.2.1). The second factor was economic: the economy developed in the northern Djebel al'Arab, based on viticulture undertaken from the 1st century BC onwards, as shown by environmental samples from vineyards at Sī'.[811]

When considering this change of names of deities into Greek ones, and the use of Greek inscriptions instead of local Aramaic or Nabataean, we have to bear in mind that the onomastics from these Greek inscriptions, for instance, differs from those of cities of the Decapolis, such as Gerasa; the Greek inscriptions from this city did

[801] *PPUAES* III no.655 2; Sourdel 1957: 26 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 545–6 no.558.
[802] *Wadd.* no.2211; *PAAES* II no.380; *IGRR* 3.1260; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308; Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6.
[803] Kaizer 2003: 288.
[804] Sartre 2007a: 230.
[805] Butcher 2003: 274; Boweversock 1990: 71–5.
[806] Petrucci 1986; Corbier 2006: 12–13.
[807] Sartre 1986: 201–2.
[808] Steinsapir 2005: 19.
[809] Sartre 1986: 201–2.
[810] For instance, see Millar 1993: 232–3; Kaizer 2002.
[811] Willcox 2003: 184.

not mention Semitic names, or at least not as often as the inscriptions in the Hauran did.[812] Although deities with Greek names predominated in rural cult centres in the Hauran, this is not unanimous across the region. There are various examples of rural cult centres or inscriptions in these centres dedicated to deities with a non-Greek name, and their names seemed to appear only in the Hauran. This suggests also the differentiation and uniqueness of the Hauran compared with other cultures in the Near East. For instance, apart from the goddess of Seeia at Sī' (§ Ch.4.1, Ch.5.4), gods named after individuals were common in the Hauran. They do not just appear in the 1st century AD but also in the provincial period (2nd and 3rd centuries AD). This is the case for three examples in Leja ('Arīqah,[813] Lubbên[814] and Harrān),[815] where the rural cult centres are dedicated to the god of Aumos in the 2nd century AD – we do not have a date for the last example. A building, most likely a cult centre, was consecrated to this god at another site in Leja (Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah), but again its date is not known.[816] Similarly, an altar at Mseikeh, also in Leja, was dedicated to an ancestral deity (AD 132–5), in this case the god was named after the name of an individual called Loaithemos.[817] Furthermore, rural cult centres were dedicated generically to ancestral gods at Dā'il, in the south of Banatea – in this case, he was also named Akeiras (AD 274–5);[818] at Amra on the western border of Djebel al'Arab (AD 165)[819] and at Qirita in Leja.[820] All these examples were dated to the provincial period, when it is possible to identify their dating. Monumental buildings were also consecrated to unnamed gods at Hit in the Djebel al-Arab,[821] at Tsil in the south of Banatea[822] and Qirata in Leja.[823] There is also a fragmentary dedication to an unnamed god at Dhakīr in Leja[824] but it is followed by the epithet 'saint'. This epithet is rare in the Hauran: it appears at Umm al-Jimal, with Zeus in southern Nuqra, and on an altar at Tell Ahmar (near Mesad) in Djebel al'Arab.[825] Due to the fragmentary nature of the inscription at Dhakīr not much can be inferred. The epithet 'saint' is used for more gods in Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia.[826] At the same time, at Gerasa the epithet saint is associated with indigenous gods, i.e. the saint Arabic god.[827] The cult of an unnamed god followed by the epithet saint also appears at Dhakīr.[828] At Tell Ahmar the god called Askaras is also followed by the epithet saint.[829] At this site there is a unique type of sanctuary consisting of a cave with a central room with lateral secondary rooms, five each side, which indicates the uniqueness of the cult centre and implying the local nature of the deity associated with the place; as well as the epithet saint, the deity is named Askaras, meaning the god of a tell, referring to the place where the sanctuary is situated – a cave in the volcanic tuffa of a tell. The name of this god is unique in the Hauran. The name of the commissioner of the altar is Soaidos, a Semitic name exclusively attested in the Hauran.[830] The name of the father of the dedicator, Segnas, is, however, foreign in the Hauran and it is only known in northern[831] and central Syria[832] and the Mediterranean coast.[833] The epithet saint, together with nature of the deity at Dhakīr and Tell Ahmar and the cult centre of the latter, is evidence of foreign aspects (the epithet itself) embedded and integrated with the culture of the Hauran (common name of the dedicator in the Hauran, Soaidos, and an unnamed god at Dhakīr) that did not originate in the Hauran (the father of the dedicator is a foreigner). The case study at Tell Ahmar shows the movement of non-local people (the father of the dedicator) that brought with them their cultural traditions (the epithet of the god) and committed to the local worship of the place (name of the deity), implying the integration and centrality of the Hauran into the broader network of the Near East.

These few examples, together with the majority of inscriptions dedicated to Greek deities, indicate the result of the co-presence of 'indigenous', or, more correctly, unknown gods, sometimes named after an individual or a place, introduced in the provincial period, with deities with Greek names appearing from the 1st century AD onwards. The mention of the latter in Greek inscriptions was the result of the elite's aspiration to be integrated within the broader network of different cultures in the Near East.

A final point to make when looking at inscriptions dedicated to Zeus is that we need to remember that he was not only the assimilation of Baalshamin. He was the most common deity venerated in Greece and the western part of Roman Empire – in that case under his Latin name Jupiter[834] – and right across the Near East

[812] Sartre 1986: 202.
[813] *Wadd.* no.2439, no.2442; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sourdel 1957: 55 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 395–6 no.330–1.
[814] *Wadd.* no.2055, no.2456; Ewing 1895: 69–70; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324; *PPUAES* III no.793; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 338–40 no.275–6.
[815] *PPUAES* III no.794; Sourdel 1957: 56 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 322–3 no.259.
[816] *PPUAES* III no.800 2, no.800 7; Sourdel 1957: 55 no.2; Sartre 1993: 121; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 360–1 no.298–9.
[817] *PPUAES* II no.795 7; Sourdel 1957: 22, 96; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 205–6 no.138.
[818] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 338–9 no.349.
[819] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298–9 footnote 18.
[820] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 16.
[821] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 15.
[822] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 12.
[823] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 13.
[824] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306 footnote 89.
[825] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[826] Sourdel 1957: 97–8 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[827] Wells 1938: no.18, no.20; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[828] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306 footnote 89.
[829] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[830] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[831] *IGLS* IV, no.1506; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[832] *IGLS* V, no.2221, no.2315, no.2616; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[833] *IGLS* VI no.2729 no.4004; IV no.1295; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[834] Ferguson 1982: 33 ff.

in the pre-provincial and the provincial periods, since Zeus was the supreme god, the Sky Father. Examples are found in Anatolia,[835] Syria,[836] Mesopotamia[837] and Egypt.[838] Apart from Baalshamin, other Semitic deities were assimilated with Zeus. For instance, this is the case with Bel at Dura Europos and Palmyra,[839] and Hadad at Dura Europos, Palmyra, Mesopotamia and Hierapolis (the modern-day city Menbidj).[840]

Undoubtedly, the Zeus mentioned in inscriptions in rural cult centres in the Hauran would never be the Zeus worshipped in Greece or in the western part of Roman Empire. However, the use of Greek names for deities implies the possibility that indigenous people, as well as non-local visitors, could have potentially identified their own god in the Greek-named deity and worshipped him, because of his syncretic nature.[841] Zeus is a clear example because of his polyvalent nature (he could stand for various Semitic deities). Non-local individuals identified Semitic gods as their own gods because of the former acquiring a Greek name: this can be confirmed by written dedications by soldiers to Zeus at Sī',[842] Mseikeh[843] and Hebrān[844] (§ Ch.5.1). In this instance, they were most likely non-local dedicators who did not necessarily venerate Baalshamin. At Sī', soldiers identified in the Greek deity their own god, and, at the same time, they still entered a religious centre of a Semitic deity at Sī', and, therefore, indirectly worshipped Baalshamin.

The assimilation of various Semitic gods, including Baalshamin, from the Near East with Zeus can be reflected in his representation in the Hauran, as will be elucidated below. He is represented as a bearded male figure accompanied by a solar and a lunar deity in rural sanctuaries of the north (Saḥr and Mashāra) and centre of the Hauran (Mayāmas) (Map 9) (§ Ch.4.3).

According to Weber a bearded head, an arm, a knee and a hand holding an unidentified long object came from the adyton of the sanctuary at Saḥr; as they are larger than size-life, therefore, they would have belonged to the main statue of the sanctuary, which would have been placed in a significant part of the sanctuary, like the adyton. According to him these fragments stand for a bearded and seated god holding a sceptre.[845] If that was the case, he could represent Zeus, because Zeus was sometimes depicted on the throne with a sceptre and a globe with folded drapes,[846] as some examples in Lebanon show.[847] This particular reconstruction of a male god with a sceptre seems rather forced because of the paucity of the fragments of statue recovered at Saḥr. According to the French team it is not possible to identify with certainty who this male statue could represent. It could be the Lord of Sky, like Baalshamin, identified with Zeus.[848] The bearded male head from Saḥr can still suggest the worship of Zeus in the sanctuary, as Zeus is typically represented as a bearded male figure.[849] This generic trait of his depiction is used in ancient Greece,[850] ancient Rome, the Western Roman Empire,[851] in Syria,[852] and in Mesopotamia during the Roman period.[853] The identification of the statue's head as Zeus at Saḥr is reinforced by the presence of eagles recovered in the southern part of the small courtyard.[854] As well as being a symbol of Baalshamin (§ Ch.4.2), eagles are also widely associated with Zeus. This is reinforced by the co-presence of the depiction of eagles with dedications to Zeus at Hebrān and Sī'.[855] Apart from Sī' and Hebrān, statues and reliefs featuring eagles have been found in rural sanctuaries across the Hauran, including at Kafr Shams, those in Leja (Saḥr, Mismiyyeh, Dhakīr and Shā'rah) and in Djebel al'Arab ('Atīl, al-Mushannef, Khirbet Massakeb, Sleim, Hebrān, Maiyāmas and Rimet Hazim).[856] As previously mentioned when discussing the representation of Baalshamin, eagles were symbols of various Semitic gods, including Baalshamin,[857] Hadad[858] and Baal-Hammon;[859] therefore, people who worshipped these deities could have identified eagles in rural cult centres across the Hauran with their own Semitic god when visiting these sanctuaries.

[835] Vollkommer 1997.
[836] Augé and de Bellefonds 1997.
[837] Invernizzi 1997.
[838] Pfrommer 1997.
[839] Will 1986.
[840] Gawlikoswski 1988.
[841] Bowersock 1990: 9; Sartre 1991: 491–96; 2001a: 288–9.
[842] *PPUAES* III no.769; Dunand 1926: 328 pl.69; *Suw.* 1934 no.15 pl.9; Mascle 1944: no.15; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64; *Suw.* 1991 INV 15 [190] (5, 23).
[843] *PPUAES* III no.795; Sourdel 1957: 2 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 204–5 no.137.
[844] *PPUAES* III no.665.
[845] *Hauran* IV II: 40–2, 90–1. The dimensions of the bearded head would fit the only lifesized figure in the sanctuary, the main horseman on the podium according to Kropp (2013a: 262).
[846] Gawlikoswski 1990a: 2627.
[847] *Hauran* IV II: 91 fig. 168–9.
[848] *Hauran* IV I: 173.
[849] Kropp suggested that this statue head belonged to the life-size horsemen on the podium in the large courtyard at Saḥr (§ Ch.4.2).
[850] Leventi 1997.
[851] Canciani 1997.
[852] Augé and de Bellefonds 1997.
[853] Invernizzi 1997.
[854] Hauran IV II: 95–96, 216 fig. 707–11.
[855] *Wadd* no.2289–90; *IGR* III 1297; *RAO* I 11; *PPUAES* II: 378 416 ill.320 fragment 12 and ill.328; *PPUAES* III no.431–2, no.665, no.769; Dunand 1926: 328 pl.69; *Suw.* 1934 no.15, no.27, N95, no.176–79, no.196 pl.8, 19, 35, 38; Macle 1944 no.15, no.27, no.196; Sourdel 1957: 2, 64; Dentzer 1986: 319–20; Bolelli 1986: 351, no.44–47, N51 pl.11–12; *Suw.* 1991 INV 15 [190] (5, 23), INV27 [191] (5, 33); Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 76 fig.14.
[856] *PPAES* II: 416–7 fig.2 ill.328; *PPUAES* II: 378, 397 ill.320 fragment 12, *Suw.* 1934 no.52, no.119 pl.15, 18, Mascle 1944: no.52, no.119; Bolelli 1986: 351, no.44–7 pl.11, *Suw.* 1991 INV119 [78] (8,17); Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 76 fig.14; Wenning 2001: 328–31 no.140. *Suw.* 1934 no.55, no.95, no.196, pl.28 Macle 1944: no.196, Dentzer 1986: 319–20, 351 no.51, 365 pl.12; Kalos 1999; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 76, 83–6 fig.16 fig.27; 1998, 211 fig.21; Weber 2003a: 353 fig.6a–c; Weber 2006: 117; *Hauran* IV II: 112, 117, 139, 162, 214–5 fig.250–1, fig.228–31, fig.696–706.
[857] Collart 1986.
[858] Gawlikoswski 1988.
[859] Le Glay 1986.

A bearded male figure is represented between the solar and lunar deities on a relief from Mashāra[860] and a relief possibly recovered at Mayāmas.[861] All three characters wear military garments. This type of representation is used to depict Baalshamin or Bel with the lunar god Aglibol and the solar god Makabel at Palmyra from the 1st century BC to the beginning of the 1st century AD.[862] Not much information can be collected with regards to the cult of this triad at Mashāra and Mayāmas because their reliefs were found out of context and there is no written evidence to put forward any further hypotheses on the subject. Apart from the divine representations under examination here, architectural fragments suggest the presence of a religious structure at both sites. At Mashāra, there are decorative blocks, upper corners of the frame of niches, similar to the ones employed in the temples at Sī', Sūr al-Lejā and Hebrān in the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD.[863] However, the cult of this triad at Mashāra can be dated to the provincial period on the basis of the style of a wide-egg motif at the top of the relief that was used in Near Eastern architecture in the mid 2nd century AD (§ Ch.5.4).[864] At Mayāmas, there are decorative blocks similar to the ones used in other rural temples in the mid 2nd century AD ('Atīl and Ṣanamein)[865] and fragments of a wall base from an earlier phase than the present-day building.[866]

The notion of the assimilation of the Greek deity Athena with Allat in the Hauran is reinforced by Athena's representations, consisting of the armoured torso in rural sanctuaries in the Djebel al'Arab (Sī') and Leja (Saḥr, Sūr al-Lejā, Mismiyyeh, 'Arīqah and Dhakīr)[867] (Map 10), and lions in Djebel al'Arab (Sleim) and Leja (Saḥr and Manāra Henū).[868] Because of their military character,[869] Allat and Athena were, in fact, commonly represented with an armoured torso[870] and associated with a lion.[871] Therefore, a worn divine figure seated near a possible lion depicted on a lintel in the structure from the provincial period in the north-western courtyard at Sī' could represent Athena/Allat.[872]

In the Hauran, Athena is represented as a goddess of war, having an *apoptygma* (a Greek female folded tunic), a *gorgoneion* (head of the female Greek mythical Gorgon — Medusa, in Latin — with snakes instead of hair) on her breast, and the *aegis* (an animal skin) on her chest. These elements are typical of Graeco-Roman iconography of Athena: this means that they were used in representing Athena in Greece,[873] and also adopted in Roman culture.[874] Other statues of Allat/Athena in Syria, as at Palmyra, do not have all three Graeco-Roman motifs at the same time, although they were armoured, also suggesting her warrior nature. The Graeco-Roman motifs from Allat/Athena statues in the Hauran could indicate a strong Graeco-Roman influence. This can be interpreted as a result of the presence of Roman soldiers as well as Herodian and Roman influence and impact on the sanctuaries where statues of Athena are found. These cult centres were, in fact, concentrated in the territory of Leja, which was occupied and controlled by Herodian soldiers and, later, by the Roman army, in order to monitor the Roman roads that crossed or bordered Leja (§ Ch.5.1). The statue of Allat/Athena was on the same platform in the main courtyard of the sanctuary at Saḥr, potentially with statues of Herodian soldiers and the king (§ Ch.4.2), who was ally of Rome (§ Ch.2.2). At Dhakīr, the presence of the Roman army is suggested by a statue of a Roman soldier (§ Ch.5.4). The participation of Roman soldiers in the religious life at Sī' is attested by their written dedications and the cult of Mithras, a god mostly venerated by the Roman army (§ Ch.6.1–2). Therefore, on the basis of this new reading of the data contextualised in their historical scenarios, Allat/Athena statues, in the case of the Hauran, may not have stood only for Allat, but also more generically for the warrior goddess Athena, with whom Herodian and Roman soldiers may have been more familiar. The association of Athena with the Roman soldiers is reinforced by the only inscribed relief of Athena at Sha'ar Ramon, a site along the Petra–Gaza road where the individual who commissioned the depictions was a Roman soldier.[875] Despite this interpretation of Allat/Athena statues in the Hauran, we cannot, however, dismiss the notion that for local people and visitors crossing Roman roads, the statues in the Hauran also stood for their own goddess, Allat. Allat assimilated with Athena was, in fact, depicted as a warrior in a few examples in rural cult centres north-west of Palmyra, at Hatra and at Palmyra. In these examples, her attributes were mostly a shield, a spear and either *gorgoneion* or *aegis*, whereas in the Hauran, the last two symbols were always depicted in the representations of Athena.[876] Furthermore, lions could also have represented various Semitic deities, such as Atagartis/Dea Syria, venerated in Lebanon,

[860] Seyrig 1949: 31; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80 fig.20.
[861] Seyrig 1949: 28–32 pl.2, 1971: 94–7; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2629 ff. pl.8 fig.20.
[862] Seyrig 1949: 31; for Aglibol, see Le Glay 1981: 298–302; for Makabel, see Gawlikowski 1997b: 804–5.
[863] Dentzer-Feydy 2008: 87 footnote 113, 96 footnote 219.
[864] Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80 fig.20.
[865] Denzter-Feydy 1986: 297.
[866] *PPUAES* II: 326–28.
[867] *Suw*. 1934 N49 pl. 29; 1991 INV566 [343] (8, 36) pl.15; *Hauran* IV II: 40, 122, 124–25.
[868] *Hauran* IV II: 40, 103 fig. 19, 161–62 Sl 1 fig. 429–34.
[869] Dirven 1999: 80.
[870] Sourdel 1957: 69–74; Starcky 1981; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2639; Friendland 2008.
[871] Starcky 1981: 569.
[872] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 322.
[873] Demargne 1984.
[874] Friendland 2008: 335, 341.
[875] Friendland 2008: 337, 339.
[876] Starcky 1981.

northern Syria, Palmyra, Damascus, Hatra (Iraq) and Khirbet et-Tannur (Jordan).[877] Therefore, people crossing the Hauran could have identified Atargatis in the depiction of lions. This may be the case because there is evidence of Atargatis worshipped in the Hauran in three instances. Her cult has been suggested at Buʿaḍān on the basis of a dedication by a priest of Atagartis.[878] An inscription from Sī' was dedicated to Atargatis by a centurion from the Herodian army of Agrippa II, Lucius Obulius.[879] There is a sanctuary of Atargatis and Hadad in the Hauran, according to the inscription from the museum of Damascus mentioned earlier.[880] As in the case of Hadad, these inscriptions dedicated to Atargatis still indicate the worship of a goddess unfamiliar to the people of the Hauran, as Atargatis originated in Hierapolis in northern Syria.[881]

Inscriptions and divine representations indicate that the cult of Zeus and Athena predominated across the Hauran from the mid 1st century AD onwards. These deities were widely worshipped across the Near East and various Semitic deities in the Near East were also assimilated with them. This shows that the religious identity of the Hauran was not distinctive and local but embraced common beliefs with other cultures of the Near East, implying its belonging to a broader network in the Near East.

The use of Greek names for deities and potentially the representation of Athena with typical elements of Graeco-Roman iconography, together with the monopoly of the use of Greek inscriptions in the Hauran, cannot be considered simply a superficial veneer but it is a deliberate change decided by the elite with an associated socio-political and economic meaning. As Sartre argues for the Near East,[882] the use of Greek inscriptions in the Hauran was a way of being integrated with the Empire.

Even if we do read the spread and near monopoly of Greek deities only as a superficial veneer, as suggested by Sartre for the Near East, it still shows the desire and inclination of the elites of the Hauran, to be recognised by other cultures in the Near East, and to be included into a more globalised and interconnected world. Therefore, this analysis of deities adds another mosaic *tessera* to support the argument of this monograph, the belonging of the rural cult centres and the society that they represented, especially its elite, to a broader network within the Near East from the pre-provincial to the provincial periods.

Additionally, the predominance of the worship of Zeus and Athena in rural cult centres across the Hauran (Maps 9–10) opens up the possibility that worshippers coming from different parts of the Near East worshipped in rural cult centres in the Hauran. It also suggests the possibility of the connections of the people of the Hauran with other cultures in the Near East. This can be reinforced by the polyvalent nature of Zeus, depictions of deities who can stand for various Semitic deities and were occasionally represented with typical elements of Graeco-Roman iconography (i.e. Athena). This hypothesis points, for instance, to contacts of the elites of the Hauran with cultures that were not close to the study area, such as Palmyra, which will be further investigated in this chapter, in the analysis of architectural and sculptural resemblance between rural sanctuaries in the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East (e.g. Palmyra and Parthia) (§ Ch.4.5) after discussion of the spread of another deity, Tyche, in inscriptions in the Hauran, which is the next focus of this chapter (§ Ch.4.4).

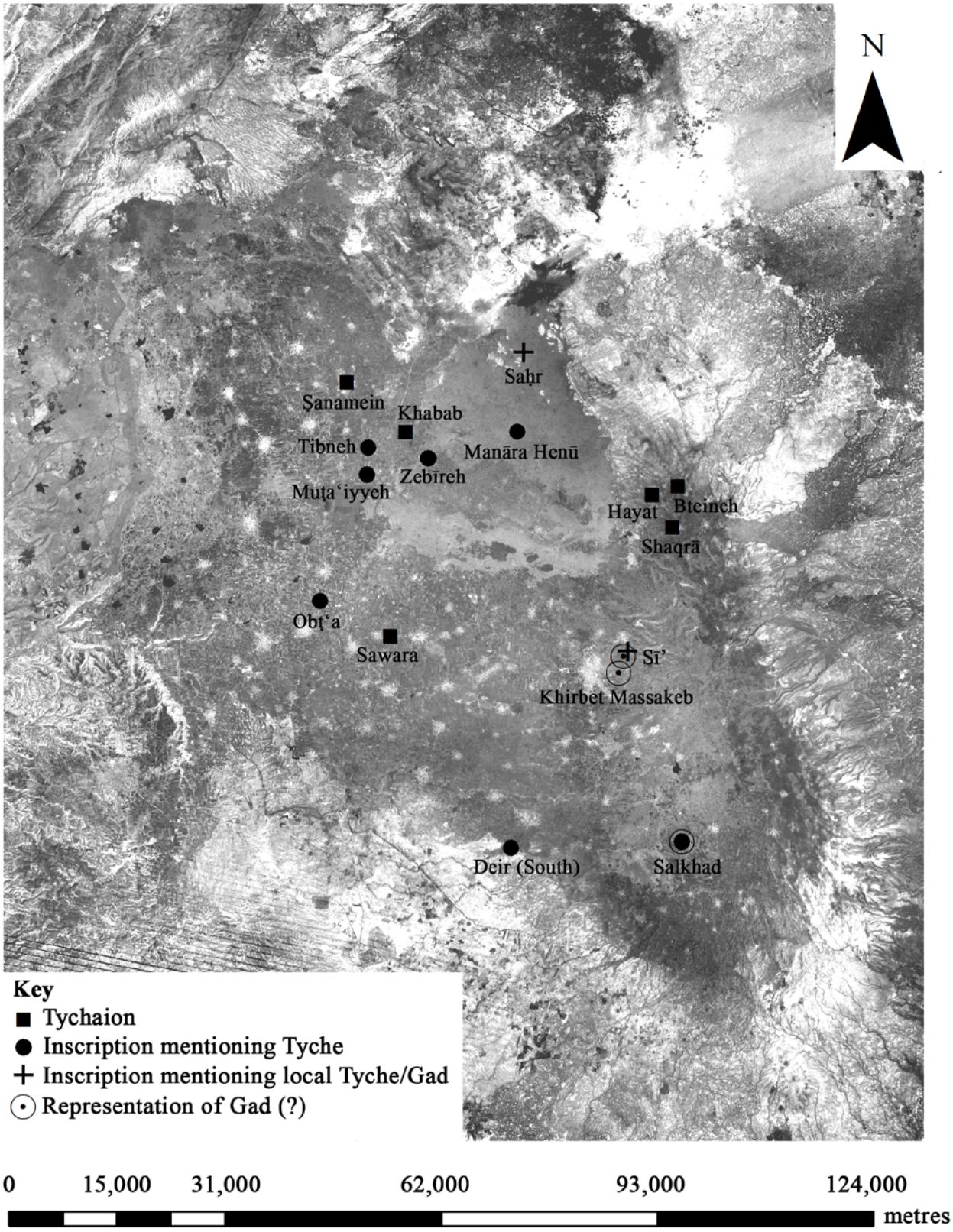
4.4. Tyche

Alongside Zeus and Athena, another deity widely worshipped in the Hauran is the Semitic deity Gad, assimilated with the Greek deity Tyche. Despite the frequency of inscriptions and temples dedicated to Tyche in the Hauran, only Sartre-Fauriat gave the attention the subject deserves by writing an article specifically on her cult in the Hauran.[883]

In this section of the chapter, the inscriptions that mention the cult of Tyche in rural cult centres in the Hauran will be first reassessed, and then integrated with the thoughts and ideas of various scholars on the meaning of her cult in the Hauran and Near East.

Gad/Tyche was mentioned in inscriptions from 15 cult centres across the Hauran (Map 11). Only at Saḥr was there a fragmentary Greek inscribed statue base explicitly dedicated to Gad.[884] Although it was recovered in the eastern part of the cella, it could be the pedestal of a statue of Nike, as the inscribed pedestal has the same dimensions of statue base. It was found with other statue fragments in the wide courtyard, therefore, it could have been placed on the platform of the courtyard. However, Weber is inclined to suggest that it could belong to a pillar against a wall, therefore it could have been placed on the right of the entrance to the chapel. Weber and the French team have suggested that Gad could have been a secondary deity at Saḥr, the statue of whom was found in a small room (a chapel

[877] Starcky 1981: 564 ff.; Drijvers 1986: 355–8.
[878] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 605–6 no.611.
[879] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 297 footnote 8.
[880] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 297; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 607–8 no.612.
[881] Rostovtzeff 1933; Drijvers 1986.
[882] Sartre 1986: 201–2.
[883] Sartre-Fauriat: 2007.
[884] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 81–2 no.47; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: no.13.



Map 11: Distribution of dedications to Tyche, local Tyche/Gad and of her/his statues (the author)

or *naïskos*) with a decorated facade opening onto the wide courtyard. It could have been a sort of secondary, minor shrine within the sanctuary, similar to the small rectangular structure (temple 2) opening onto a courtyard at Sī'.[885] Temple 2 most likely hosted Seeia, who has been interpreted as the local personification

[885] *Hauran* IV I: 157; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 347.

of Tyche/Gad.[886] In the Greek part of the bilingual local Aramaic–Greek inscription she is not referred to as Tyche, but as 'Seeia standing over against the land of Auranitis'.[887] This implies that she is the protector of the area and its fields[888] (§ Ch.3.1). There are also various figurative representations that can stand for Seeia/Gad. A head of a genius or 'Gad' personifying the Hauran was found in the vineyards around Sī'. The smiling beardless male faces, decorating the heterodox Corinthian capitals from temple 2 at Sī', which are also recovered in the rural cult centres at Khirbet Massakeb and at Ṣalkhad (§ Ch.5.5), probably represent Gad or local genies. Two reliefs depicting a bearded god and a goddess with a cornucopia, possibly coming from Sī',[889] may be considered symbols of the abundance associated with a god and a goddess.[890] A series of fragmentary figurative blocks from the provincial structure in the north-western part of forecourt 3 may symbolise the lands of Sī', and, therefore, Seeia/Tyche. These depict a reclining figure with floral decorations, and a reclining male figure with a bunch of grapes. In wider terms, we can also argue the same for the two frieze fragments in the Damascus museum and as-Suweidā', which Dentzer-Feydy suggested belong to this series of decorated blocks from the provincial structure. One is a fragment of a frieze with wreath-like branches and a winged nude female bust holding a vine branch (Nike). The other is a relief of a nude male figure, holding the long pinecone-topped thyrsus stick, accompanied by a maenad and a satyr holding a bunch of grapes. Although he is a male figure and this depiction has been attributed to Dionysus, he is still a deity of vines that were cultivated at Sī' (§ Ch.3.1, Appendix).

This series of figurative blocks, dated to the provincial period, indicates an unbroken continuity of the cult of the lands of Sī' (Seeia/Tyche), starting from the early 1st century AD with temple 2 dedicated to Seeia.

In this regard, Freyberger maintains that Seeia was the main deity of this sanctuary for the following reasons. Temple 2 dedicated to this goddess was at the centre of the sanctuary; it opens onto the courtyards in the middle of the religious complex. Temple 3 was also dedicated to Seeia, because from this temple her cult image would have still been visible from a distance.[891] According to Dentzer-Feydy, in contrast, Baalshamin/Zeus is the main god around which representations of the solar and lunar deities and allegorical scenes of the prosperity from the fields revolved.[892] The majority of inscriptions dedicated to Baalshamin/Zeus from the pre-provincial to the provincial periods support Dentzer-Feydy's argument (§ Ch.4.2–3). However, from this set of evidence both Baalshamin and Seeia seem to be significant deities for the sanctuary; they were jointly worshipped with Isis and the Angel of the God at Sī' from the end of the 2nd century BC.[893]

Returning to the epigraphic evidence of Gad/Tyche in the Hauran, most refer to Tyche; they are mostly dated to the provincial period, when there are elements to date them (Appendix). To be specific, there are six cult centres that seem to be dedicated to Tyche: Ṣanamein (AD 191),[894] Bteineh,[895] Hayat,[896] Khabab (AD 303),[897] Shaqrā (AD 244–7)[898] and Sawara.[899] Only the first example displays substantial standing remains of the temple. We know of the existence of the other cult centres only through inscriptions (Appendix).

In addition, at Manāra Henū a fragmentary inscription is dedicated to Tyche and which could be read either as an invocation to the deity, which is quite common, or it could refer to the dedication of the cult centre to Tyche.[900] A first reading of the inscriptions at Obṭ'a, Zebīreh and Tibneh, by Dunand and then by Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre, seems to indicate the construction of a *Tychaion* at these three sites.[901] However, only recently, Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre reinterpreted the inscriptions in these three instances, as simple dedications to Tyche or as small altars or *ediculae* dedicated to Tyche.[902] Finally, there are three dedications to Tyche including an altar at Deir (South),[903] Ṣalkhad (AD 252–3)[904] and Muṭa'iyyeh.[905]

Tyche has been considered the Greek assimilation of the Semitic god Gad, widely worshipped in the Near East.[906] Although Gad is the protector of cities, of water sources and trees, the frequent presence of the cult of Tyche in the Hauran can be explained because this deity is also seen as a help to tribes.[907] Sartre-Fauriat

[886] Denzter-Feydy 1979; 2015: 315; Kropp 2013a: 294.
[887] *PPUAES* IV no.103; *PPUAES* III no.767.
[888] Denzter-Feydy 1979: 327.
[889] *Suw.* 1934, 34–6 no.39–40 pl.XIV; 1991, 131 no. 6, 27.
[890] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 315–6.
[891] Freyberger 1998: 51.
[892] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 316.
[893] Milik 2003.
[894] *PPUAES* III no.652; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–4 no.548.
[895] *Wadd.* no.2127.
[896] Sartre-Fauriat 2006: 5–7 no.3.
[897] *Wadd.* no.2514; Sourdel 1957: 51; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 131 no.76.
[898] *Wadd.* no.2506; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 217–8 no.152.
[899] Sartre-Fauriat 2006: 4–5 no.2; 2015, 301 footnote 39; Sartre 2011: 293–4 no.9882.
[900] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 98–9 no.53b.
[901] *Wadd.* no.2512; Dunand 1950: 152 no.336, no.355; Sartre-Fauriat 2006: 8, 11; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 143–7 no.90.
[902] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 348–9, 564–5 no.363, no.578.
[903] *PPAES* III, 58; Sartre 2011: 94 no.9571.
[904] *Wadd.* no.1990.
[905] *PPUAES* II no.42; Sartre 2011: 132 no.9642.
[906] Kaizer 1997; 1998; Sartre-Fauriat 2006.
[907] Sourdel 1957: 49–52; Fahd 1968: 78–84.

also explained the apparent unusual frequency of this deity in rural cult centres in the Hauran because villages in this region did not need civic institutions as they were autonomous with their own magistrates.[908] The *Tychaion* at Sawara was, in fact, built by the *pistoi*, magistrates of the village;[909] the one at Bteineh was built with the funds of the village.[910] One *Tychaion* at Shaqrā was actually commissioned by the *boulete*, the councillor of the city.[911]

Additionally, Roman soldiers were associated with the cult of Tyche in one instance in the Hauran; this was the completion of a *Tychaion* by a legion of the *Legio III Gallica* at Ṣanamein.[912] An additional link between the cult of Tyche and the involvement of soldiers in the cult centres can be drawn from the example at Manāra Henū on the basis of the recovery of the fragmentary inscription to Tyche[913] and a fragmentary inscription commissioned by a member of the legion.[914]

Furthermore, Sartre-Fauriat points out that inscriptions where Tyche is mentioned are also invocations not directly to the cult of Tyche, but they became popular expressions in the provincial period to show gratitude to Tyche for the successful completion of various undertakings.[915]

The finding of cult centres dedicated to Tyche and dedications to this deity, even if the latter can be considered popular expressions, offers a similar pattern to the cult of Zeus and Athena on a smaller scale. The cult of this deity was distributed across the Hauran without major geographical differentiation (Map 11); therefore, we can talk about a common religious cultural identity across the region. The fact that Tyche was worshipped in other parts of the Near East and dedications and invocations to her are common in the Near East may imply that the religious identity of the Hauran was not distinctive or local. It embraced common beliefs with other cultures of the Near East, indicating its similarity with, and its belonging to, a broader network in the Near East.

4.5. The rural cult centres in the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East

Dentzer-Feydy has occasionally pointed out resemblances of the layout of pre-provincial rural sanctuaries in the Hauran,[916] their architectural decorations[917] and the style of their sculptures,[918] to the earliest examples of architecture and statues from the Parthian kingdom (particularly the city of Dura Europos), ancient Mesopotamia and Palmyra.[919] However, she has not sought to establish the reasons behind these similarities, which is the intention of this section. Here, I firstly reassess their stylistic similarities, then attempt to detect links between the people who visited and built the rural sanctuaries in the Hauran and the populations from the hinterland of the Near East, including those from the Parthian kingdom and Palmyra. The identification of interactions and contact of the society that these rural cult centres represented with these distant cultures, allows us to evaluate how these rural centres and the elite of the Hauran belonged to a broader network of the Near East in the pre-provincial period.

The architecture, decoration and statues in rural cult centres from the Hauran resemble the earliest style of religious architecture and sculptures from the Parthian kingdom (especially from the city of Dura Europos and occasionally other cities, i.e. Assur in the Mesopotamian valley),[920] roughly from the mid 2nd century BC onwards. Similarities can be drawn also with Palmyra, from the end of the 1st century BC to early 1st century AD.[921]

[908] Sartre-Fauriat 2006: 17–8.
[909] Sartre-Fauriat 2006: 4–5 no.2; Sartre 2011: 293–4 no.9882.
[910] *Wadd.* no.2127.
[911] *Wadd.* no.2506; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 217–8 no.152.
[912] *PPUAES* III no.652; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–4 no.548.
[913] Dunand 1930: 538 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 98–9 no.53b.
[914] Speidel 1998: no.32–3; Stoll 2001: 468–70 no.87–8; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 100 no.53c–d.
[915] Sartre-Fauriat 2006: 18.
[916] Dentzer-Feydy 2010a: 236.
[917] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 83, 95, 96, 98.
[918] Bolelli 1986: 334–5.
[919] In this analysis I do not consider Hatra, a main Parthian city, because, although it presents similar architectural and iconographic features to the rural cult centres in the Hauran, its remains (sanctuaries, architectural and decorative elements and sculptures) are dated to a later period (mostly 2nd century AD) than the examples in the Hauran. See Drijvers 1977; Sommer 2003. For architecture, see Downey 1988; Dirven 2013; for statues, see Ingholt 1954; Homès-Fredericq 1963; Dirven 2013.
[920] Very little is known about Dura Europos in the Hellenistic period (3rd and 2nd centuries BC) (Jones 1971: 217–9) and in the first century of Parthian rule (113 BC–AD 164/165) (Welles 1956: 469), whereas copious and significant archaeological and written evidence survives from the end of the 1st century BC onwards (Dirven 1999: 4 ff.). For Parthian cities, such as Dura Europos and cities from the Mesopotamian valley (Assur and Babylonia), see Downey 1988.
[921] Very little is known about Palmyra before the 1st century AD due to the lack of substantial evidence in that period (Millar 1993: 319–36; Edwell 2008: 31 ff.). This could also be a consequence of the major focus of archaeological research on the monumental centre of the town, rather than other areas that, like south of the wadi, are still unexplored (Frézouls 1976, 165–73; Van Berchem 1976). However, a 2nd-century historian, Appian (App. 5, 9.37–8), recorded Palmyra as a flourishing settlement in the 1st century BC and this is supported by the following scant pieces of evidence (Dirven 1999: 19). Inscriptions started to appear from 44–43 BC onwards that mentioned Arab groups of different origin settled at Palmyra and assimilated into the indigenous population (Dirven 1999: 19). The fact that Roman troops attempted to plunder Palmyra in 41 BC implies that it was prosperous enough at that time (App. 9. 37–8), and, as a consequence, long-distance trade had already begun in that period, possibly with Babylonia as there are a few similar architectural remains, a similar dress code and style of statues that indicate close cultural interactions with Mesopotamia (Schlumberger 1970: 75). Millar 1993: 319–36; Dirven 1999: 17 ff.; Kaizer 2002: especially 43 ff. and for sanctuaries 67 ff. For further and more detailed references to sanctuaries, their

In particular, in the pre-provincial cult centres at Saḥr and at Sī' 8, and in the second phase of the sanctuary at Khirbet Massakeb, the cella is reduced to a small chamber that opens directly onto a wide courtyard.[922] In the case of Saḥr, the actual statue of the deity in the adyton is on a raised level but the actual adyton is not elevated. Furthermore, it is a small vaulted room, like a large niche (roughly 2–3 m by 5 m) at the back of the cella, with two small rooms at either side.[923] The cella of Sī' 8 looks like a tripartite chamber (adyton) that directly opens onto a wide courtyard that has steps on the sides (Figure 5) (§ Ch.4.2). However, the actual adyton consists of a small room with two deep lateral niches that are highly decorated (Figure 5).[924]

The eastern building of the Mithraeum at Shā'rah, from the provincial period, has a similar but not identical layout to these pre-provincial cult centres: the adyton consists of a small, squared apse on a podium with a vaulted entrance, opening onto a banquet room that includes benches and niches on both sides[925] (§ Ch.6.2 for further information).

The courtyard opening onto the reduced cella or the adyton has a colonnaded portico and two steps on the sides of the courtyards in three cult centres. At Sī' this layout appears in forecourt 1 associated with temple 1, forecourt 2 associated with temple 2 and the courtyard of Sī' 8. It is also seen at Sūr al-Lejā and in the larger forecourt that opened onto the smaller courtyard at Saḥr (Appendix) (Figures 3–5). On the basis of more recent archaeological investigation at Saḥr, the smaller courtyard associated with the adyton has remains of a colonnaded portico on sides where the re-worked elevated rocky terrain (0.40 m higher than the central part of the courtyard) would have been used for banquets or seating.[926] There was a horned altar at the centre of the small courtyard.[927] The French team suggested there would have been also an altar at the centre of the courtyard at Sī' 8 but it would have disappeared in the Ommeyad period.[928] In front of temple 1 at Sī' the courtyard is named *tyṭr'*, which would be *theatron* in Greek, according to the local Aramaic commemorative inscription of the temple of Baalshamin.[929] It was called *theatron* because it was a place where people viewed religious ceremonies that took place in the courtyard.[930]

The Greek term *theatron* appears in a Greek inscription from Kfēr,[931] but according to the Princeton University team it could have come from, and referred to, the temple at Deir al-Meshqūq as there are no remains of ancient buildings at Kfēr.[932] This may imply the presence of a *theatron* also at the cult centre at Deir al-Meshqūq; this supposition remains unclear due to the uncertainty of where the inscription comes from. The plural form of the Aramaic term *tyṭr'* appears in a Nabataean inscription dated to AD 2/3 found at Petra.[933] According to different scholars, this inscription could refer to three different theatre-like structures at Petra; they are in the Southern Temple, in the temenos of Qasr el-Bint or in the northern limit of the temple of Winged Lions.[934] However, there is no unanimous agreement and we have to bear in mind that the plural form of the term in the inscription implies that there were multiple courtyards of this type of structure, but it is unknown how many and if the inscription actually refers to those outlined by different scholars.[935] The sanctuary at Khirbet adh-Dharih in the Nabataean territory has also a colonnaded portico in the courtyard with the cella at the back wall of the sanctuary.[936] Therefore, it seems that this type of portico, with steps in the courtyard with the cella at the back wall of the sanctuary, was used in the Nabataean territory.[937]

However, according to Tholbecq,[938] the presence of *tyṭr'* in the Hauran and at Petra, dated to the end of the 1st century BC–beginning of the 1st century AD, could have been the consequence of Herod's presence and multiple interventions at the time of building these structures. Josephus narrates that Herod encouraged the construction of theatrical and amphitheatre buildings in the East.[939] Furthermore, a colonnaded portico in the courtyard, with the temple at the back wall of the sanctuary, appears at Kalat Fakra in the Lebanese Mountains and Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley, and in sanctuaries and palaces in the Parthian territory. It is common in the western Roman world, particularly the complex forum/temples in North

chronology, building phases and style, see the monographs on the temple of Baalshamin (Collart and Vicari 1969), of Bel (Seyrig *et al.* 1975), of Allat (Drijvers 1976; Gawlikowski 1990a; 1990b; 1997a) and Nebu (Bounni *et al.* 1992). For the urban development of the city, see Schlumberger 1935; Van Berchem 1976; Frézouls 1976.

922 Kalos 1999.
923 *Hauran* IV I: 133.
924 Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 73 ff. pl.56–61.
925 Kalos 2001
926 *Hauran* IV I: 133.
927 *Hauran* IV I: 136.
928 Dentzer-Feydy *et al.* 2003: 73–7 pl.58, 60, 61.
929 *CIS* II 163; *PPUAES* IV no.100; *PAAES* IV no.1; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1986: 175.
930 Dentzer 1989: 314.
931 *PPUAES* III no.180.
932 *PPUAES* II: 131.
933 Jones 2001: 346–8.
934 According to Joukowsky, the inscription refers to the semi-circular structure with steps in the Southern Temple at Petra, as it is also opposite the Wadi Musa, where the inscription comes from (Joukowsky 1998: 54–5; Joukowsky and Basile 2001: 51–4). Starcky and Strugnel suggest that *tyṭr'* was in the temenos of Qasr el-Bint (Jones 2001: 347). According to Tholbecq, it could have been against the northern limit of the temple of Winged Lions, where recent excavation directed by Hammond has revealed an open-plan rectangular building with steps on three sides. It is only roughly 10 m from the place of recovery of the inscription. Tholbecq admits that only future publication on this project will enlighten us on the structure and its dating that is so far unknown. Furthermore the inscription refers to multiple courtyards (Tholbecq 2007: 297).
935 Tholbecq 2007: 297.
936 *Hauran* IV I: 150.
937 *Hauran* IV I: 151.
938 Tholbecq 2007: 297–8.
939 Kokkinos 1998: 372–3.

Africa. The use of steps at the back of a portico also appears in sanctuaries in Greece in the Classical period.[940]

The plan of the courtyard with steps, including the *tytr*ʾ, leading into a reduced cella or an adyton, of the main pre-provincial rural cult centres in the Hauran discussed above, is particularly common, instead, in sanctuaries at Dura Europos where it could have originated.[941] In the temple of Artemis, from the 1st century BC, at Dura Europos (Figure 13) the courtyard leading to an adyton presents a theatre-like structure, as it has five steps on both sides.[942] Although the tripartite adyton is a common feature in the Near East, which evolved differently in the provincial period (§ Ch.6.5),[943] the examples in the pre-provincial sanctuaries in the Hauran (niche-adyton) are the most similar to the adyta from Dura Europos, as both are tripartite and not on a raised area. This type of adyton appeared at Dura Europos in the 1st century BC in the temple of Artemis.[944]

A small room at the back of the temple where the deity lives (which is the case of cella at Sahr, temple 2 at Sīʾ and cella at Sīʾ 8) is also a common element in the archaic temples in Palmyra (temple of Baalshamin,[945] the niche-cella in the sanctuary of Nabu[946] and the first cella in the sanctuary of Allat,[947] consisting of an oblong room with similar dimension of the adyton at Saḥr at the back cella),[948] and in Palmyrene area and Hellenistic Mesopotamia.[949]

In addition, although a vaulted entrance is common in Roman architecture, the small central niche-room of the adyton at Saḥr resembles more the structure of Parthian *iwans* from the 1st century AD.[950] The use of the horned altar found at Saḥr, instead, has a long tradition in Semitic Near Eastern territories, with multiple references in the Bible, examples in Arabia, and even one at Delos.[951]

The typology of courtyards and adyta described above persisted later in sanctuaries from the Parthian kingdom, as exemplified in the temple of Adonis (second half of the 2nd century AD)[952] and in sanctuaries from the Parthian city of Hatra in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.[953]

There are other types of theatre-like structures associated with rural cult centres in the Hauran, such as a theatre next to a sanctuary at Saḥr. Although the theatre at Saḥr has been compared with one built in the cella in the second phase of the Great Temple at Petra in the 1st century AD,[954] the two examples cannot be related. The theatre at Saḥr was built as a separate structure next to the sanctuary at the same time as the religious building, in the mid 1st century AD, whereas the one at Petra was a later addition and modifies the structure of the sanctuary itself. Similarly, the theatre at Saḥr cannot be compared with one at Jerash as the latter was associated with a *birket* (pool), and it was not located near a sanctuary. It was also dated to the beginning of the 3rd century AD,[955] later than the one at Saḥr.

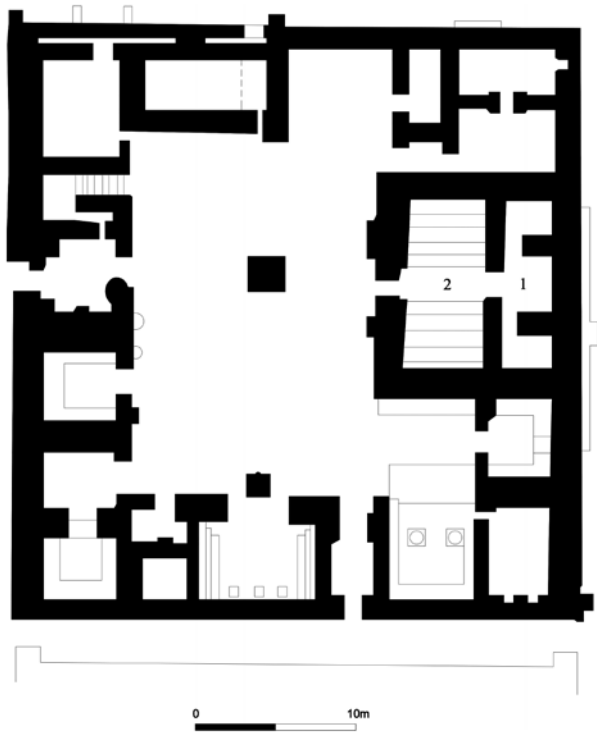


Figure 13: Plan of the Temple of Artemis at Dura Europos. 1 indicates the adyton and 2 the courtyard with benches (the author, after Susan Downey 1988: fig. 40).

The French team suggested that the theatre follows the type of Roman theatres for two reasons. First, although the terrain of the site is sloping and uneven, the *cavea* seemed deliberately built without the support of this type of terrain, like Roman theatres. Second, the architectural concept of the theatre is unitary, like Roman buildings, as the plan of the *cavea* is built around and surrounds the circle of the *orchestra* and it ends at the end of the building into what would be the end of the *frons scenae*. However, at the same time, the French team also pointed to some differences between the theatre at Saḥr and a Roman theatre. The *cavea* is

940 *Hauran* IV I: 150–1.
941 Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 236.
942 Downey 1988: 79–86, 89–92, 102–5 fig. 33, 35, 40.
943 Alt 1953: 100–16; Will 1957.
944 Downey 1988: 118–9.
945 Collart and Vicari 1969: pl.97; *Hauran* IV I: 139.
946 Bounni 1992-2004: 81–3; *Hauran* IV I: 139.
947 Gawlikowski 1997a: 847–9; 199, 500; *Hauran* IV I: 139.
948 *Hauran* IV I: 139.
949 *Hauran* IV I: 140.
950 *Hauran* IV I: 140; Richter 2017.
951 *Hauran* IV I: 137–8.
952 Downey 1988: 118–9.
953 Downey 1988: 159 ff.
954 Nielsen 2002: 246–7.
955 Segal 1995: 18, 11 no.33.

not a semi-circle like in Roman examples. It has a large *orchestra*, and it does not really have a *frons scaenae,* which is typical of a Roman model.[956] The features of the Saḥr theatre are those of a Greek theatre:[957] its *cavea* is more extended on the far ends than a Roman theatre and its orchestra is large and circular and does not have a complex *frons scaenae* (Figure 3).

The French team also emphasised that this theatre was extremely small, having the capacity of only about 600 people, contrasted with theatres like the one at Bosra of 1800/1900 people. This small size, together with the layout of the theatre at Saḥr described above, can be seen in *bouleuteria* (meeting rooms not necessarily functioning as a theatre) or *odea* in the Mediterranean and Near East, also in Roman times from the Greek tradition, including the small *odeon* in the second phase of the sanctuary of Artemis at Dura-Europos (the Parthian period or the 1st century AD).[958] In this case there is an explicit inscription that informs us that it was specifically used for meeting rooms (as a *bouleterion*).

The French team,[959] and previously Nielsen[960] and Will,[961] provided examples of the use of theatres in sanctuary complexes or the link between two from ancient Greece and Italian examples in pre-Roman times, in North Africa and the Near East, including the earliest Near Eastern example at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris in the Seleucid period (roughly 3rd–2nd century BC).[962] However, none of these examples presents a layout of a horse-shoe shaped theatre adjacent to the sanctuary.

Regarding common decorative motifs in the sanctuary at Sī', cable moulding,[963] geometric rosettes consisting of six-petalled rosettes inscribed in slight engraved circles, swastika meanders and pilasters decorated like palm-tree trunks,[964] were first used in Parthian monuments and in ancient Mesopotamia, roughly in the mid 2nd and 1st century BC.[965] The geometric rosettes consisting of six-petalled rosettes within engraved circles also appear on a frieze-like over-lintel of a door frame reused in the middle entrance in the mosque at Muṭā'iyyeh.[966] The swastika meander design at Sī' was used from the beginning of the early 1st century AD (on the door frame of temple 2) and in the second quarter

Figure 14: Block with geometric style of vine branches with straight stem, from the sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra (the author, after Seyrig 1940: 301, pl. 32, no. 21).

of the 1st century AD (on niches of Sī' 8, the Nabataean gateway at Sī', 1st/2nd century fragments out of context at Sī'), and in cult centres in the pre-provincial period (Muṭā'iyyeh, Smeij/Deir Smeij and Ṣalkhad) (Appendix) (Figure 10). It was also used on entablatures and niche frames of rural temples in the Hauran in the provincial period (al-Mushennef, 'Atīl, Deir as-Smeij, Dhakīr, Inkhil, Mayāmas, Rimet Hazim, Ṣanamein and Sleim), as this motif became popular in the Roman Near East (§ Ch.5.4) (Appendix).

Rosettes with double corollas and a geometric style of vine branches, recovered in the building phase of the second half of the 1st century at Sī', seemed to resemble decorative patterns used in the earliest phase of religious architecture at Palmyra. In particular, rosettes with double corollas decorated the ceiling of the northern and southern adyta in the temple of Bel at Palmyra (AD 32).[967] The geometric type of vine branches at Sī' consists of a straight stem with grape bunch and double tendrils or acanthus leaves attached to either side of the stem symmetrically. The grape bunch consists of small and round grapes. The leaves have three main pentagonal lobes and two smaller ones at the bottom, with small sinuses between lobes. Tendrils are formed of large double scrolls (Figures 14–15).[968] This type of vine branch is also recovered in blocks from the Nabataean gateway at Sī', in blocks reused at Hit,

[956] *Hauran* IV I: 162.
[957] Kalos 1997; 2003; Nielsen 2002: table 1.
[958] *Hauran* IV I: 162–3.
[959] *Hauran* IV I: 166–9.
[960] Nielsen 2002.
[961] Will 1985: 109–14.
[962] Downey 1988: 51 ff., fig.13, 17; Nielsen 2002: 240–1.
[963] Boëthius and Ward-Perkins 1970: 420 footnote 16; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97.
[964] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 267–9.
[965] Wetzel *et al.* 1957: pl.22; Andrae and Lenzen 1967: pl.14, 15 d–f no.15597, no.15599, no.15817 h, l, m, no.15537, no.16017 c, b, no.18075–6; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95–6 note 211.
[966] *PPUAES* II: 88–91; Sartre 2011: 131.
[967] Seyrig *et al.* 1975: 130–1, 200 pl.124. 1–4; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 98.
[968] Seyrig 1940: 281–2, 301 pl.32 no.21; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95.

and in houses at Canatha and as-Suweidā'.[969] Dentzer-Feydy traced this motif back to the decorative tradition of the hinterland of the Near East in the 8th century BC.[970] For instance, a geometric wreath alternating leaves and grapes festooned from one part to another on a stem in the relief of Assurbanapal from Kuyunjik in the late Assyrian period (1000–600 BC).[971] In this case, the stem was not straight, unlike the example from Sī'. A similar type of vine branch is a motif used at Palmyra, dated approximately to the mid 1st century BC, or at least before the 1st century AD. The motif embellishes blocks recovered alongside an inscription dated to 44 BC in a T-shaped structure in the sanctuary of the temple of Bel at Palmyra. The style of the group of these decorative blocks differs from that of the 1st/2nd-century phase of the sanctuary.[972] This type of geometric vine branches at Sī' evolves differently from those at Palmyra (Figures 10 and 14). At Sī' the floral motifs are some way from the main stem and consist of small leaves and tendrils with large double scrolls, the latter occasionally replaced by grapes. At Palmyra, in contrast, they consist of alternating, large acanthus leaves and grapes, both close to the stem, and the tendrils are further away from these motifs (Figures 10 and 14). This indicates a local reworking of the motif in the Hauran.

At Sī' there is a wide variation of grape vine decoration. One type consists of realistic sinuous stem with vine grapes and fruits. The leaves are a little curved, with fine nervures and small round sinuses; vine grapes are elongated and tendrils consist of double scroll. Fruits comprise pine cones, berries and pomegranates. This type of decoration appears on the architrave and door frame of the temple of Baalshamin at Sī', at al-Mushannef, Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah, Mayāmas, Rimet Hazim, Ṣalkhad, Sleim, and Sūr al-Lejā (Appendix). The realistic sinuous stem with vine grapes and leaves is recovered on the pilasters reused on the façade of a mosque at Muṭā'iyyeh, where there was a temple, on the basis of decorative elements including the grape vine. In this example there are no tendrils and the grapes are rounded.[973] When looking at the details of this type of grape vine decoration described above, the grape bunch appears at Sī' 8, in isolated blocks of door frames recovered in the hill of Sī', reemployed at as-Suweidā'[974] and pilasters of the west temple of 'Atīl.[975] This type of grape bunch, together with the tendril mentioned above, is reemployed on the main door of the west façade of Serail at Canatha and reused in the façade of the temple of al-Mushennef.[976]

The type of leaves described above is found on the door frame of the temple of Baalshamin, temple 3, the Nabataean door at Sī', isolated blocks at Sī' and at Sī' 8; in addition, there are blocks re-employed in recent houses and deposited in the Serail at Canatha, as well as from Sleim and Sūr al-Lejā.[977]

There is a variation of the vine branch with sinuous stem: it has only a slightly sinuous stem, with oval or small round grapes close to each other; the leaves are similar to the example with sinuous realistic stem and the tendrils are not visible.[978] It appears on the door frame of the temple of Baalshamin at Sī', at the entrance into the temenos of Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah, on isolated blocks at Sī 8, Canatha, Sūr al-Lejā and Sleim (Appendix). In the Hauran, the grape vine decorations sometimes include animals, for example birds on the stem.[979] Examples are on the architrave and door frame of the temple of Baalshamin and door frame of the *theatron* at Sī', a lintel re-employed at Hebrān,[980] a lintel at Mashāra,[981] a door frame re-employed in the school at the centre of the village at Canatha,[982] and the door frame re-employed in the sheikh's house at Sleim.[983]

Another variation of grape vine used on the niche frames at Sī' 8 is one that features lanceolate leaves attached symmetrically, two by two, on a straight stem spaced out from the stem.[984] Only some of the major types of grape vine decoration identified by Dentzer-Feydy have been listed above. The grape vine seems to be one of the most common decorations in the Hauran, it appears at the temple of Baalshamin, the *theatron*, temples 2 and 3 at Sī', the sanctuary of Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah, Muṭā'iyyeh, Smeij/Deir Smeij, as well as isolated blocks of unknown buildings from Canatha and as-Suweidā', most likely originating from Sī', Hebrān, Hit, Ṣanamein, Sleim, Ṣalkhad and Sūr al-Lejā.[985]

Examples of grape vine decorations with realistic sinuous stems and lanceolate leaves are also decorative motifs used at Palmyra and in the Parthian kingdom (Figure 14).[986] Decorative blocks with this kind of pattern were recovered in the T-shaped structure in the Temple of Bel at Palmyra, dated before the 1st century AD.[987]

[969] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: pl.83.4, 7, 9–11.
[970] Parrot 1961: 32–3, 37, 38, fig.36, 38, 43, 45; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97.
[971] Frankfort 1996: fig.217.
[972] Seyrig 1940: 281–2, 301 pl.32 no.21; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95.
[973] *PPUAES* II: 88–89.
[974] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97 footnote 235.
[975] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97 footnote 236.
[976] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97 footnotes 237 and 239.
[977] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97 footnote 237.
[978] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 98.
[979] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 96.
[980] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 96 footnote 219.
[981] Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80; 2003, 96 footnote 219.
[982] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 96 footnote 219.
[983] Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 76–77 fig.16; 2003, 96 footnote 219.
[984] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 90, 98.
[985] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 100 and Appendix.
[986] Cumont 1926: 247 pl.91. 3; Seyrig 1940: 296, 302; Wetzel *et al.* 1957: pl.22a Seyrig *et al.* 1975: 203 pl.33, 42; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 98, 90.
[987] Seyrig 1940: 281–2, 301 pl.32 no.21.

Figure 15: Heterodox Corinthian capital at Sī' (the author 2010).

Figure 16: Heterodox Corinthian capital out of context from Palmyra (Schlumberger 1933: pl. 27.1).

The earliest forms of Corinthian capitals in the Hauran, called heterodox by Denzter-Feydy, resemble the so-called 'archaic' capitals at Palmyra (Figures 15–16).[988] They are found in temple 2 at Sī', Khirbet Massakeb and Ṣalkhad, and dated from early 1st century AD. In both territories, the capitals have chunky acanthus leaves, also curved in profile, cable moulding, and, occasionally, human figures on the echinus. Found in the *agora* at Palmyra, among scattered remains from an unknown original context, the archaic Corinthian capitals have been dated possibly to the Hellenistic period because of their more archaic style[989] than those from the main building programme undertaken in the city (between the early 1st century AD and the 2nd century AD).[990] The acanthus leaves and the human figures on the echinus of these capitals were, in fact, decorative elements originating from the Near East during the Seleucid period (3rd–2nd century BC), like those from Seleucia on the Tigris.[991]

With regard to statues, the geometric style of human heads and human figures with a long tunic recovered at Sī'[992] belongs to the general koiné of the hinterland of the Near East.[993] This style is used in the earliest depictions on reliefs from a T-shaped structure in the Temple of Bel at Palmyra; therefore, such heads and figures can be approximately dated before the 1st century AD. This style forms a distinctive element of some statues recovered at Dura Europos[994] from the late 2nd century AD.[995] It is partially visible on statues from the 2nd–3rd centuries AD at Hatra[996] and Palmyra. In the latter case, however, the geometric style of human heads is less marked than earlier examples as their statues became more plastic.[997]

We can draw particular similarities between human representations from the earliest phase at Palmyra and those from Sī'. The former are stiff and frontal with parallel feet, and the figures wear long tunics, consisting of long, almost oblique marks below the cord around the hips and a long cloak over one shoulder (Figure 17).[998] The posture and drapery of these human figures appear on a male statue, possibly from Sī' (Figure 18). Like the statue heads at Sī' (Figure 18), fragments of early reliefs from Palmyra, from the foundation of the T-shaped structure, are approximately dated to the 1st century BC,[999] and display oval human heads with almond-shaped eyes, enclosed by clear-cut defined eyelids, and large ears (Figure 20).[1000]

This geometric style of sculptures at Sī', Palmyra and Dura Europos belonged to the general koiné of the hinterland of the Near East, as it differed from the Graeco-Roman art adopted in other parts of the Near East, such as in the Decapolis and cities of north-west

[988] Dentzer-Feydy 1993: 106.
[989] Seyrig 1940: 320, 329 pl.35: 4.
[990] Millar 1993: 319–36; Dirven 1999: 17 ff.; Kaizer 2002: 43 ff., 67 ff.
[991] Gullini *et al.* 1968–69: fig.27–8; Dentzer-Feydy 1993: 106; 2003, 83.
[992] We could argue that every depiction, or even every architectural decoration, from the Hauran and other places under examination here presents distinctive local features, but the aim of this research is not to make a detailed analysis of each element, but to contextualise the architecture and statuary of rural sanctuaries within other populations and cultures, and it is only possible to achieve this by looking at the overall similarities of the main elements and styles. For this reason, I have not considered other specific traits of the statue heads at Sī', such as the mouth of these human representations in the Hauran. It is possible to see a slight smile, typical of the Ptolemaic statues in Egypt (early 1st century), for instance (Parlasca 1967: 557).
[993] Downey 1977: 282. See Downey (1977: 280–2) for differences in the styles of sculptures between Palmyra and Dura Europos in the provincial period. See Downey (1977: 288–93) for differences in the styles of statues amongst Palmyra, the countryside of Palmyra, Dura Europos and Hatra.
[994] Downey 1977: 269, 276.
[995] Downey 1977: 231 ff.
[996] Ingholt 1954; Homès-Fredericq 1963; Sommer 2003: 24–5 fig.28–9.
[997] Michalowski 1962: 163 ff.; 1963, 116 ff., 209 ff.
[998] Morehart 1956: fig.2, 22.
[999] Seyrig 1940.
[1000] Seyrig 1936; Morehart 1956; Parlasca 1967: 559–60; Bolelli 1986: 334–5.

Figure 17: Drawing of a relief from 'the earliest phase' of the Temple of Bel at Palmyra (the author, after Morehart 1956: fig. 2).

Figure 18: A male statue with long tunic from the sanctuary at Sī' (Dunand 1934: no. 65).

Syria.[1001] We can deduce that the style originated from the hinterland of the Near East, as similar depictions have been recovered there in earlier times, in Assyrian, Aramaic and Hittite art works. There is, for instance, the case of human heads depicted with this geometric style recorded on Aramaic or Neo-Hittite statues. A similar argument can be forged concerning the geometric style

Figure 19: High relief of a male bust recovered in the debris of the *theatron* at Sī' (*PPUAES* II ill. 334 O).

Figure 20: A female head of a statue from the sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra (Seyrig 1936: pl. 31, 2).

[1001] Kaizer 2008: 27; Eliav *et al.* 2008.

of the representation of horses at Sī' that resemble those on Hittite reliefs.[1002]

Dentzer-Feydy and Bolelli argued that the sculptural, decorative and architectural style developed in the Hauran from the pre-provincial period, as discussed above, was local and influenced by ancient Near Eastern traditions dating back two or three centuries, or even earlier than the actual construction of these temples.[1003] For instance, Dentzer-Feydy argued that use of Hellenistic elements in rural cult centres in the Hauran originated from Seleucid architecture and thus was triggered by this region belonging to the Seleucid Empire.[1004] The fact that the Hauran, as well as the neighbouring regions, share common traditions reaching back to the Iron Age and beyond may therefore result in the *longue durée* argued by Sartre in Syria.[1005] This means, put briefly, a continuity of shared traditions in the Syrian hinterland from the Iron Age to Roman times.

In contrast to the French team, Millar[1006] uses the term 'amnesia'[1007] to refer to the absence of evidence to provide any sense of continuity that connects communities in pre-Roman and, especially, Roman times with their distant past, except for the Jews and perhaps in Phoenicia.

In the case of the Hauran, Khirbet Massakeb is one of the earliest and most archaic sanctuaries in the Hauran (dated from the second half of the 2nd century BC to 1st century AD). It can, therefore, potentially verify or disprove this sense of continuity from the ancient Near Eastern customs to the more recent rural cult centres of the 1st century BC–1st century AD in the Hauran. Although it is only one example, its statues are, nevertheless, roughly made anthropomorphic stones, which are different in style from the comparable ones that appear almost two centuries later at the end of the 1st century BC in the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East. Similar patterns can be argued for the architecture and decoration at Khirbet Massekeb, which does not display features that appear in the 1st century BC–1st century AD in the Hauran and in the hinterland of the Near East. An exception is the heterodox Corinthian capital that is also used at Sī', which, nevertheless, comes from the second phase of the sanctuary (1st century BC–1st century AD).[1008]

Therefore, the presence of similar building traditions and sculptural style in the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East could have been conveyed to the Hauran through contacts of its society with the hinterland of the Near East. The resemblance of the main ritual areas, the architectural decorations and the statues in pre-provincial sanctuaries in the Hauran with examples from Palmyra, Dura Europos and, in general, Parthian architecture, may indicate a movement of shared and similar decorative building traditions and sculptural styles carried by people, implying a connection between the Hauran, Palmyra and Parthia.[1009] The idea that the Hauran was associated with the general koiné of the hinterland of the Near East[1010] is strengthened by the style of some decorative motifs and statues used in the pre-provincial period in this region, which originated in the hinterland of the Near East.[1011] This influence and link between the Hauran and Palmyra can be also supported by a depiction of the Palmyrene god Shadrapha on an altar in the Hauran.[1012] Also both types of clothing (the long tunic with zigzag draping on the fabric of the sleeves and the cuirass) that are seen on the statues of horsemen from Saḥr appear in iconography from the hinterland of the Near East (§ Ch.3.2). So this specific example reinforces the belonging of the Hauran to the same Near Eastern hinterland koiné.

This stylistic link between the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East could have been triggered by contact with the elite of the Hauran, the people who shaped the rural cult centres in the Hauran, with the hinterland. The former included the people who either had strong ties with those who wrote Safaitic graffiti, or ethnic groups who themselves wrote Safaitic graffiti, possibly the Herodian army and, partially, the Nabataeans (§ Ch.3 and Ch.4.1).

If we start looking for connections or common patterns between the Hauran and Palmyra, Safaitic graffiti mention movement of Safaitic ethnic groups to Palmyra[1013] and the driving of pack-animals and camels to the city,[1014] implying there was some sort of trade between Safaitic ethnic groups and Palmyra. A small number of Safaitic graffiti are also found in

[1002] Bolelli 1986: 338–40.
[1003] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 285; Bolelli 1986.
[1004] They are, for instance, a theatre section of the religious complex, repeated examples of egg-and-dart and egg-and-tongue motifs, schematic palmettes, meanders on bands, and archaic Corinthian and Ionic capitals (Dentzer-Feydy 1991).
[1005] Sartre 2001: 14; 2005, 2–3; Kaizer 2008: 15.
[1006] Millar 1993: 6, 275, 470, 494; Kaizer 2008: 15.
[1007] This expression used by Millar is borrowed from Witakowski (1987: 76).
[1008] Kalos 1999.
[1009] Palmyra and the Parthian kingdom (Dura Europos) were interlinked because of their proximity and their commercial relations (Millar 1993: 322–3). For trade and contacts of Palmyra with Parthia and the Mesopotamian area, such as Babylonia, see Millar 1993: 322–3. For the commercial activities between Palmyra and Dura Europos, see Seyrig 1940: 334; Young 2001: 136–86. For a complete understanding of the Palmyrene population at Dura Europos, see Dirven 1999.
[1010] Dentzer 2003: 203. The cultural identity of southern Syria in the pre-provincial period clearly differentiates from the Hellenised one on the coast (Dentzer 2003: 203).
[1011] Bolelli 1986; Dentzer 2003: 202–3.
[1012] Seyrig 1970: 91; Weber 2006: no.56. It is identified as the Palmyrene god Shadrapha on the basis of the resemblance of the depiction with other cuirassed statues of this deity (Seyrig 1970: 91; Weber 2006: no.56).
[1013] *CIS* V 1649, 1664 –5.
[1014] *CIS* V 663; *PPUAES* IV no.718; Schlumberger 1951: 131.

Palmyra,[1015] the Palmyrene area,[1016] and Dura Europos[1017] and its surroundings.[1018] The paucity of Safaitic graffiti recovered at Dura Europos and at Palmyra does not need necessarily to be interpreted as signs of a sporadic presence of the people associated with Safaitic graffiti; that paucity could also have been a consequence of the use of sandstone graffiti in these instances. This sandstone deteriorates more easily than the basalt stone used for the majority of Safaitic graffiti recovered in the Near East.

The link between the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East is reinforced once more by Herodian military troops in the Hauran, especially in Leja, who originated from Babylonia (§ Ch.3.2). Historically, the Herodian army, specifically the troops of Agrippa II in the mid 1st century AD, supported the Romans in their conflict against the Parthians.[1019] Therefore this contact with the Parthians could have affected and influenced the Hauran, which belonged to the Herodian kingdom and was a buffer zone between the Roman Empire on the Levantine coast and the populations from the hinterland of the Near East.[1020] This is reinforced by the dating of the sanctuary complex at Saḥr, temple 3 and the courtyard that opens onto temple 3 at Sī', and at Sī' 8 (Appendix), which display Parthian influence in the layout of cult centres; they were dated from the mid 1st century AD to the second half of the 1st century AD. Parthian influence can also be seen in the garments of statues that could represent the Herodian soldiers or local elite from Saḥr (§ Ch.3.2). This direct link between the Parthian and Herodian kingdoms seems to have affected the Hauran, as can be seen, for instance, in the motifs of the geometric rosettes within circles. Originating in the Parthia, these motifs were not only used in the Hauran but also in other parts of the Herodian kingdom (§ Ch.3.2). Further evidence to support this connection between the Hauran and the Parthians in the mid second half of the 1st century AD comes in the recovery of a few coins at Sī' (3% of the whole coinage assemblage at this site) (Appendix) (Figure 7). Although they are possibly of local production, they have similar patterns (stripes, globules and points) to the coins used in Parthia from the second half of the 1st century AD.[1021] However, we cannot infer anything more about this type of coinage because of the coins' poor condition. These strong connections between Dura Europos and the Herodians seem to have started earlier than the 1st century AD and persisted into the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Interactions between people from Dura Europos and the predecessors of the Herodian kingdom, the Hasmonean dynasty (from mid 2nd to mid 1st century BC), is hinted at by the recovery of coins in Palestine from this period and the Herodian kingdom, dated from 135 BC until AD 43/4.[1022] The idea of this early connection between these two territories is supported by the military expedition of the Maccabean king John Hyrcanus (135–104 BC) to Babylonia (part of the Seleucid Empire and later of the Parthian kingdom) to assist the Seleucid Emperor Antioch VII in his campaigns against the Parthians, as historically attested by Josephus.[1023] The persistence of the link between the Herodians and the Parthians is made evident by the presence of a Jewish community at Dura Europos in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, as indicated by the recovery of a synagogue dated to this period in the city.[1024]

Furthermore, the Hauran can be considered a crossing area for commercial contacts between the Nabataeans and the hinterland of the Near East (i.e. Palmyra, Dura Europos and the Mesopotamian valley) (Maps 6–7), or at least it was affected by interactions between these populations due to its economic relations with the Nabataean kingdom (§ Ch.3.1).

The economic interactions between the Nabataeans and people from Palmyra and Dura Europos can be demonstrated by the following written sources and archaeological remains. A Palmyrene-type lamp was discovered in the foundation of the monumental cella of Saḥr, a type not appearing elsewhere in southern Syria and found in the sanctuary of Baalshamin, and the excavation of a tomb at Palmyra in the 2nd century AD (Appendix Table 2). Additionally a name of a dedicator in a fragmentary inscription at Saḥr is Xeilos, which is used at Palmyra. It appeared only seven times in inscriptions from the Hauran as Xeeilos, including another inscription at Saḥr.[1025] Anamos, one of the most common names in Hauran, including in an inscription at Sahr, appears in one inscription at Palmyra, implying that a wealthy man from the Hauran was at Palmyra and commissioned an inscription.[1026]

Despite the dearth of the non-Roman coinage assemblage recovered at Palmyra, a few coins recovered out of context were Nabataean.[1027] This, and the influence of the architectural and iconographical style in the Hauran, can be explained by the fact that Palmyra was an economic nexus between populations and cultures in the West and the East from the Hellenistic period. This is demonstrated by imported

[1015] Drijvers 1976: 34.
[1016] Ingholt and Starcky 1951: no.1.4, 8, 21, 34.3, 54b, 60, 63.2, 63.4; 80–2.
[1017] Baur and Rostovtzeff 1931: 172–7; Milik 1972: 334.
[1018] *CIS* V 5175–80; Moors 1992: 283; Macdonald 2005.
[1019] Tac. *Ann.* 13. 7; Millar 1993: 65–6, 69.
[1020] Cumont 1926: xxix; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 285.
[1021] Augé 2003: 240 no.226–33.
[1022] Bellinger 1949: no.173–80; Kraeling 1956: 326.
[1023] Jos. *AJ* 13. 8, 4.
[1024] Kraeling 1956; Gutmann 1973; Hachilili 1998: 45.
[1025] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 339 no.16; Appendix.
[1026] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 328 no.1; Appendix.
[1027] Fellman and Dunant 1975: 103–10 N19.

ceramics, including amphorae, from Egypt, North Africa, Greece and Palestine from the 3rd century BC, and by inscriptions that mention this city as a trade centre since the early 1st century AD.[1028]

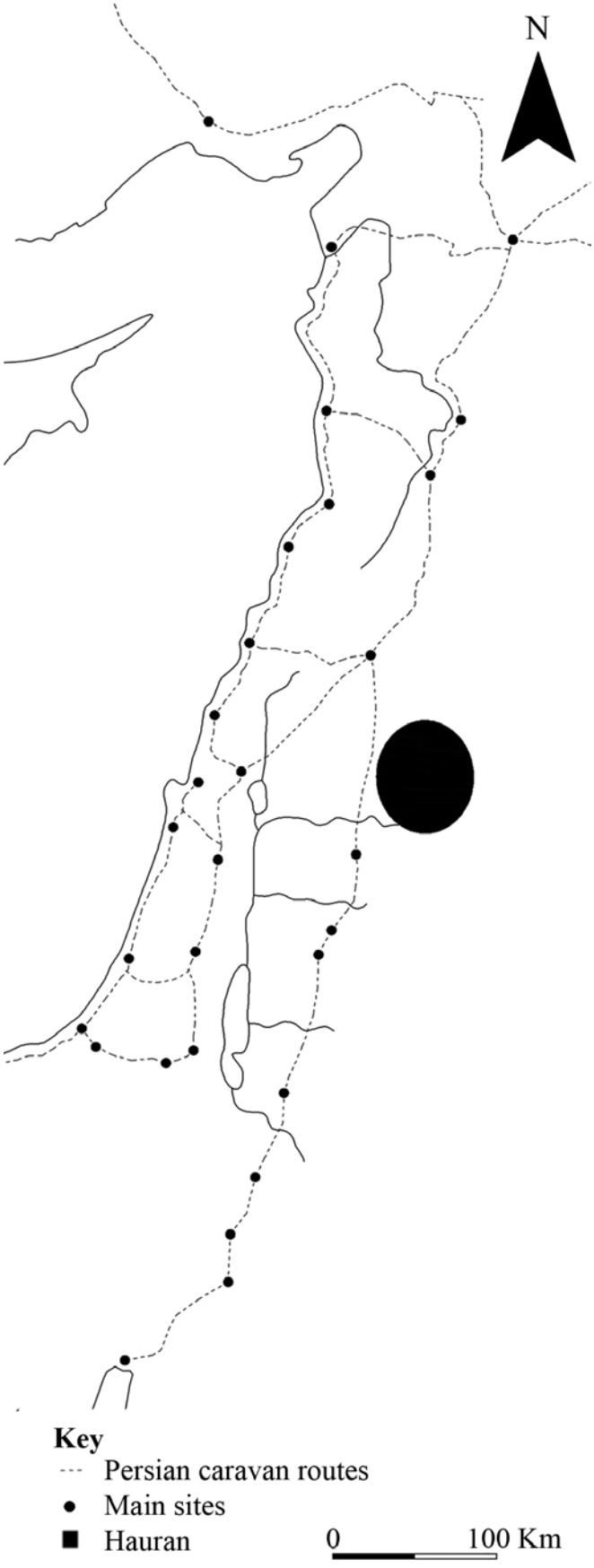
Pliny,[1029] Strabo[1030] and Diodore of Tartus[1031] mentioned trade and exchange between the Nabataeans and the wider Mesopotamian area. Most archaeological evidence that supports the notion of Nabataean contacts with the hinterland of the Near East comes from Dura Europos, as remains from the pre-provincial period are preserved more at this site than in other cities (such as Palmyra and Assur). Nine Nabataean coins have been recovered from the Parthian city of Dura Europos;[1032] this apparently small quantity represents the highest number of Nabataean coins in Mesopotamia[1033] and in other areas outside the Nabataean kingdom,[1034] with the exception of Sī'. This may strengthen the hypothesis of economic relationships from the end of the 1st century BC up to AD 106, as the coins found at Dura Europos date to the reigns of the Nabataean kings Aretas IV (9 BC–AD 40) and Rabbel II (AD 70–106).[1035] 1st-century pottery produced in Petra was also imported into the Parthian territory.[1036] The Hauran could have been affected by this commerce, considering Nabataean caravan routes. A common Nabataean route would have been from Bosra through the Persian Gulf to reach the lower part of the Mesopotamian valley (Map 6).[1037] Alternatively the Nabataeans could have crossed the Hauran to reach Palmyra and then Dura Europos, through Damascus[1038] (Map 7).

Although the road from Bosra to Damascus was built in the 2nd century AD,[1039] and the one from Palmyra to Damascus in the 3rd,[1040] they could have already been in use in earlier periods, as was the case for most Roman roads in the Near East. Bosra and Damascus were linked by a major caravan route from the Persian period (5th–4th centuries BC) (Map 12),[1041] and also in the Nabataean period (Maps 6–7).[1042] Even internal routes in the Hauran were used before the Roman road-building programme.[1043] For instance, this could be the case with the Roman road from Sī' to al-Mushennef (Map 2), as it follows the natural path of a wadi that passes the foot of the northern flanks of the hill of Sī',[1044] and sanctuaries at both sites were built in the pre-provincial period (Appendix). The village of al-Mushennef, Nela, was at least dated to the 1st century AD, according to epigraphic evidence.[1045] More difficult to identify is the earlier use of the route from Palmyra to Damascus, as most studies and evidence have focused on the Palmyrene and Parthian trade with the East (Map 7).[1046] A main route from Palmyra to Damascus was the *strata Diocletiana,* dated from the 3rd century AD.[1047] This did not appear to have been used in earlier periods. According to the *Tabula Peutingeriana,* a route that could have been present at the very least from the 2nd century did link Palmyra and Damascus and was almost parallel to the *strata Diocletiana*.[1048] This route was considered a major caravan link on the basis of ruins of villages, water cisterns and round watch towers along the way.[1049] Although these ruins are not dated, we can presume that the rounded watch towers were used before the 3rd century AD because of their structural differences in comparison with the 3rd-century squared examples alongside the *strata Diocletiana.* Furthermore, the presence of Safaitic graffiti in the western part of the Near East (e.g. Safā, north-eastern Jordan, Lebanon), and in the hinterland of the Near East (e.g. Palmyra, Dura Europos and west of Iraq) would have implied the viability and, therefore, the presence of routes between the east and the west of the Near East. These routes would have been travelled even before the 3rd century AD, considering the dating of Safaitic graffiti from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD (§ Ch.2.3).

The architecture and iconography from Palmyra and Parthia did not reach Nabataea, as demonstrated by the lack of their architectural influence on Nabataean architecture. This can be explained by the Nabataeans already having their own architectural style and traditions.[1050] By contrast, the Hauran started developing its first monumental cult centres between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD (Appendix).

All the evidence listed above, together with a similar style of architectural features and statues between the rural cult centres in the Hauran and the examples in the Near Eastern hinterland, seem to suggest the possibility of contacts between the populations of the Hauran, especially its elite, and the people from Palmyra and the Parthian kingdom. If this is the case,

[1028] Gawlikowski 1995: 84–5; Edwell 2008: 31 ff.; Smith 2013: 68 ff., especially 75–6 for the earliest evidence.
[1029] Plin. *His. Nat*. 6, 32; 12, 40.
[1030] Strab. *Geog.* 16, 4, 18.
[1031] Diodore of Tartus *Commentarii in Psalmos* 3. 42, 4.
[1032] Schmid 2007: 71.
[1033] Schmid 2007: 69–74.
[1034] Meshorer 1975: 41 no.118; Schmid 2007: 69–74, 71 N19.
[1035] Bellinger 1949: 10 no.166–8; Meshorer 1975: 41 no.118; Schmid 2007: 71.
[1036] Schneider 1996: 138 ff., 141 ff.; Schmid and Kolb 2000: 136 ff.; Schmid 2007: 69.
[1037] Dentzer 1986: 418 footnote 186.
[1038] Zayadine 2007: fig.207.
[1039] Bauzou 1985.
[1040] Bauzou 1989: 212 fig.20.
[1041] Graf 1995.
[1042] Healey 2001: map 1.
[1043] Bauzou 1985.
[1044] Dentzer 1999: 255.
[1045] *Wadd*. no.2217.
[1046] Millar 1993: 309; Young 2001: 137 ff., 193–4, map 4.1.
[1047] Bazou 1989: 212 fig.20.
[1048] Bazou 1989: 212 fig.20.
[1049] Bazou 1989: 212 fig.20.
[1050] McKenzie 1990; Healey 2001.



Map 12: Persian caravan routes in the Near East (the author, after Graf 1994: 170 fig.1)

it indicates the significance and centrality of the Hauran in relation to the hinterland of the Near East in the pre-provincial period.

Even if this list of evidence may not be strong enough to suggest links between the Hauran and the Near Eastern hinterland and if the occurrence of comparable styles of statues and architectural features, in the Hauran and throughout the Near East, was the result of a *longue durée*, their resemblance still implies that the Hauran shared these patterns on multiple levels and periods with other cultures, as they were used across the Near East over time. This implies the incorporation and merging of the traditions of rural society of the Hauran with those from other cultures in the Near East, as a result of dynamic interactions between multiple Near Eastern cultures as Kaiser discussed.[1051] However, at the same time these patterns were locally adapted in the Hauran and in other parts of the Near East, and were the result of renegotiating architectural features and styles of statues used in the Near East with the local response of the people from each region, in this case, the Hauran, as argued by Bendlin and Kaizer when considering pre-existing cultural traditions with the arrival of the Romans.[1052] This means that the distinctive character of the Hauran was still visible through architecture and statues.

4.6. Concluding remarks

This chapter has undertaken a first systematic analysis of the inscriptions that mentioned benefactors of pre-provincial rural cult centres, combined with a discussion of their main gods, their main architectural features and statues in the pre-provincial period, tracing their origin and distribution across the Near East. It has offered the potential for a reconstruction of the people of the Hauran in the pre-provincial period that is more complex than the local religious cultural identity that has been identified to date by scholars (Kropp, Freyberger, the French team, Wenning and Alpass), without completely rejecting previous work.

The French team generically suggested the presence of those nomadic tribes associated with Safaitic graffiti who became sedentary in the Hauran, according to inscriptions, without specifying their role, whereas Alpass undervalued the complexity of the religious cultural identity of the Hauran by identifying it as people associated with Safaitic graffiti on the basis of the gods worshipped in the pre-provincial period.

[1051] Kaiser 2015.
[1052] Bendlin 1997: 52–4; Kaizer 2000: 225–6; 2002: 27; 2013: 66–7.

This chapter has demonstrated that the elite of the Hauran had strong ties with people who wrote Safaitic graffiti. This is based on a detailed discussion of names of patrons of the main rural cult centres of the Hauran in the pre-provincial period, and their gods, which are both commonly mentioned in Safaitic graffiti. These data do not refute the argument of the French team and Alpass, which is that the elite of the Hauran could have been one of the ethnic groups who wrote Safaitic graffiti (§ Ch.4.1–2).

Additionally, and, in contrast with the predominance of local traits of the religious cultural identity of the Hauran argued by scholars, this chapter has also demonstrated that the religious identity of the Hauran, while still presenting local traits, was also embedded within the broader network of the Near East on the basis of the following findings: deities worshipped in rural cult centres of the Hauran (Baalshamin, Allat, Zeus, Athena, Tyche) have been documented outside the region (§ Ch.4.2–4); the representation of Baalshamin may stand for other deities and this may also be argued for the Greek deities (Zeus and Allat) with which Baalshamin and Allat were assimilated (§ Ch.4.2–3); there were also significant resemblances of the architecture and statues of the Hauran with those from the hinterland of the Near East, in spite of local adaptations in the Hauran (§ Ch.4.5).

Whether the occurrence of comparable architectural features, sculptural styles, religious symbols and gods in the Hauran and throughout the Near East may result from a *longue durée* rather than from the wide-ranging social and cultural affiliations of the local elite, it ultimately, still indicates that the Hauran was integrated into a broader network of the Near East by sharing the koiné of the Syrian hinterland.

The worship of Baalshamin and Allat in the pre-provincial period, and subsequently Zeus, Athena and Tyche from the 1st century AD into the provincial period, across the Hauran, shows a common religious identity in the region from pre-provincial to provincial times (§ Ch.4.3–4). It also demonstrates the new perspective argued in this monograph of considering this region and its cult centres as part of a broader network of the Near East into the provincial period. The specific focus on the provincial period will be fully discussed in the next chapter, in which the dedicators of rural cult centres from that period, their 'new' gods and their architecture will be systematically analysed (§ Ch.5).

Chapter 5

‘A rural religious cultural identity’ of the Hauran in the provincial period

Thus far, the Hauran has been considered as part of a broader Near Eastern network by looking at the benefactors of rural cult centres, their gods, and architecture in the pre-provincial period. In this discussion a first investigation of rural cult centres in the provincial period has been started by considering the main deities in rural cult centres in the pre-provincial period as they continued to be venerated into the provincial period (§ Ch.3–4).

This chapter will fully discuss who shaped the rural religious cultural identity of the Hauran in the provincial period and how it was defined by influences and connections with other cultures in the Near East. This will be achieved by analysing systematically for the first time similar multi-datasets from rural cult centres examined in the pre-provincial period: i.e. the introduction of new benefactors and dedicators; the ‘new’ gods (Mithras, Isis, Pax, Nemesis, Apollo, the Twelve Gods and Ares); and ‘new’ layouts, architectural and decorative elements, and styles of statues of rural cult centres in the provincial period.

Scholars, meanwhile, have not often focused on rural cult centres and they have not considered the different aspects of these centres jointly, as each section of this chapter will fully explain. In their discussion on the role of the Roman army and veterans in the Hauran, some scholars (Sartre, Goldon and Sartre-Fauriat) have included their main benefactions in rural cult centres in the Hauran (§ Ch.5.1). Sartre-Fauriat has discussed foreign gods in the pantheon of Hauran when presenting some of the new inscriptions recovered in the region, including, but not confined to, those from rural cult centres,[1053] as will be delineated in this chapter after the identification of the main benefactors and dedicators in the provincial period (§ Ch.5.2). However, Sartre-Fauriat did not include the cult of Mithras, which will be the next point of discussion, showing how this foreign cult was also integrated within the pantheon of the Hauran (§ Ch.5.3). The adoption of ‘Roman’ names by dedicators of rural cult centres has not, so far, been a topic of scholarly discussion at any great length (§ Ch.5.4). When looking at the architecture in the Hauran, scholars have looked at one aspect of their architecture (e.g. Dentzer-Feydy and Segal), often including architectural features not recovered in a religious context (e.g. Dentzer-Feydy’s work) and omitting minor rural cult centres (e.g. Segal’s work) (§ Ch.5.5). Bolelli’s approach was similar when considering statues (§ Ch.5.5).

Each aspect listed above, and which is strictly related to rural cult centres, will be systematically evaluated in order to reach an understanding of the rural religious cultural identity of the Hauran in the provincial period.

5.1. The Roman army

Sartre and Goldon have argued that Roman veterans were landowners of the fields in the Hauran that once belonged to the Herodian kingdom.[1054] On the same line of thought, in a more detailed and recent analysis of the presence of Roman soldiers in the Hauran, Sartre-Fauriat maintained that Roman soldiers, specifically, veterans, were part of the social elite in the region. In particular, she suggested that they originated from the Hauran, and once they retired and had enough money from their service, they acquired lands and invested in their community of origin. Her argument[1055] is based on the evidence that veterans were mentioned in the administrations of villages in the Hauran and of Bosra, the capital of the province Arabia.[1056] In the Hauran there is a higher number of dedications by Roman soldiers (including their contribution towards erection of monumental buildings, their epitaphs and their honorific inscriptions) than in the rest of the Roman provinces Syria and Arabia.[1057] In addition, the names of the dedicators seem to be indigenous.[1058]

[1053] Sartre-Fauriat 2015.

[1054] Sartre 1991: 328, 252; Gordon 2001: 94.

[1055] Sartre-Fauriat 2005.

[1056] Sartre-Fauriat 2005: 131–2.

[1057] 8.2% of the total number of the inscriptions recovered in the Hauran mention Roman soldiers; there are 262 inscriptions (128 dedications, 130 funerary inscriptions and 4 honorific inscriptions). This figure is higher than in the rest of the Roman province of Arabia (5.1%, 19 dedications, 10 funerary inscriptions and 2 honorific inscriptions) and of Syria (3.3%, 56 dedications, 106 funerary inscriptions and 13 honourific inscriptions). The higher percentage of inscriptions commissioned by soldiers in the Hauran than in the rest of the Roman provinces of Arabia and Syria, implying their significant presence in this region, is also reinforced when considering the number of dedications made by soliders contrasted with those commissioned by individuals: 21.8% in the Hauran (128 inscriptions commissioned by soldiers, against 585 by civilians) contrasted with 19.6% in Syria and 12.9% in the rest of Arabia. This predominance of soldiers in the Hauran is also given by the number of occurence of soldiers in relation to the inscriptions that deal with soldiers (57.4% in the Hauran, 35% in Syria and 6.7% in Arabia) (Sartre-Fauriat 2005, 117 ff.).

[1058] Sartre-Fauriat 2005: 130–1.

Whereas in their work, Sartre, Goldon and Sartre-Fauriat studied inscriptions from any context from the 2nd to the 5th centuries AD to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic, the analysis in this chapter is related to inscriptions recovered in rural cult centres or recovered from sites where there is evidence of a rural cult centre and inscriptions dated up to the 3rd century AD, when they can be dated. This is only a small fraction of the dataset discussed by Sartre-Fauriat. She looked at 456 inscriptions dated from the 2nd to the 5th centuries AD, whereas my analysis in this section covers only 20 that can be roughly dated from the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD. This means, therefore, that my analysis here may yield different results from previous scholars' understanding of the Roman soldiers in the Hauran. Additionally, whereas recent updated catalogues of inscriptions, including those that are newly recorded, in Banataea, Leja and Nuqra by Sartre and Sartre-Fauriat have been published, the catalogue for the Djebel al'Arab has not. Thus, this analysis is based on the limited number of inscriptions provided by *corpora* of over a century ago from this part of the Hauran.

On these premises, in most of the inscriptions (75%, 15 out of 20) commissioned by Roman soldiers in rural cult centres in the Hauran, the dedicators describe themselves as centurions, commanders, or, more generically, soldiers (Appendix). Only a small quantity of inscriptions from rural cult centres explicitly mention veterans (25%, 5 out of 20). On the contrary, there is a high quantity of inscriptions in the Hauran, in which soldiers refer to themselves as veterans. This implies that when the commissioner of the inscription did not refer himself as a veteran in the epigraphic text, it is because he was not a veteran. Soldiers offered dedications also during their service.[1059]

Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre suggested the possibility that buildings in only two rural cult centres were commissioned by a veteran, on the basis of inscriptions that explicitly referred to veterans. One is at 'Arīqah, where the inscription commemorated the construction of a building dedicated to an ancestral god (AD 182).[1060] At Mseikeh, a veteran called Gaios Antonios Roufeinos commissioned the erection of an οἶκος, together with its base and enclosure in AD 181–3. Οἶκος can mean a temple or a church, but considering the dating of the inscription the former is the most likely.[1061] We cannot identify the significance of these cult centres because no standing remains are preserved, no additional inscriptions are recovered and not a great deal of information can be gained from the inscriptions that mention the patronage of these veterans. Furthermore, veterans are explicitly mentioned only occasionally in inscriptions associated with rural cult centres from the Hauran: they commissioned simple dedications at Hebrān (AD 156)[1062] and at Sūr al-Lejā,[1063] and a statue of the Victory for the *Legio III Cyrenaica* at Shaqrā (AD 211–7).[1064]

Alternatively, 15 inscriptions were dedicated by soldiers, often centurions, in rural cult centres in the Hauran; this indicates a relatively high number of the military participating in the rural religious life of this region (Appendix). This first figure already indicates that Roman soldiers, commissioning temples and dedications in rural cult centres, formed a significant part of the rural elite of the Hauran in the provincial period.

When looking at the actual inscriptions in more detail, the Roman soldiers' places of origin were not mentioned. The legion to which the soldiers belonged is not mentioned in only three instances (Dhakīr,[1065] Hebrān[1066] and Sleim),[1067] most likely because of the fragmentary nature of the inscriptions. The fact that in the majority of cases the legion to which the soldier belonged is mentioned (12 out of 15), nevertheless, enables us to trace their journey to the rural cult centre from the legion with which they were associated. Even if we assume that these soldiers were of local origin, the fact that in the inscriptions they explicitly stated that they were part of Roman legions, which were Roman institutions, signifies that they felt they belonged to Roman provinces, and, ultimately, to the Roman Empire, and experienced a need to clearly state this in their benefaction in public religious buildings. Furthermore, the fact that these soldiers belonged also to Roman legions outside the Hauran implies that they had contacts with other cultures, and, therefore, could have been influenced by their travelling, as well as being part of a Roman institution during their service. Thus the provenance of the legion they were members of can help us to evaluate how and to what extent the elite of the Hauran, consisting to a great extent of Roman soldiers, was connected with the broader network of the Near East.

Two members of the *Legio III Gallica* were major benefactors of the temple at Ṣanamein and of the temple at Mismiyyeh. In the first case, Julius Germanus, a soldier from the *Legio III Gallica*, completed a temple in honour of the Greek deity Tyche (AD 191).[1068] In the

[1059] Sartre-Fauriat 2005.
[1060] *Wadd*. no.2439; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 395–6 no.331.
[1061] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 207–8 no.140a.
[1062] *PPUAES* III no.663.
[1063] *PPUAES* III no.797 4.
[1064] *Suw*. 1934, 80 no.164; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 219–21 no.154.
[1065] *PPUAES* III no.663.
[1066] *PPUAES* III no.665.
[1067] *PPUAES* III no.765 4.
[1068] *PPUAES* III no.652; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–4 no.548.

second case, Titus Helvius Marianus, a centurion of the *Legio III Gallica* commissioned a *naos* (cella) in about AD 180.[1069] At Mismiyyeh a member of the *Legio III Gallica* also commissioned a statue recovered in front of the temple.[1070] At Ṣanamein Julius Germanus is also explicitly named as the founder and benefactor of the community at the end of the 2nd century AD.[1071] For this reason, it has been suggested that he was a member of the local community.[1072] According to Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre, as Germanus is a Semitic name, he could have been a local member of the community at the end of his mandate in the legion.[1073] However, there is no explicit evidence that tells us which village he originated from. Even if the benefactor were local, he still wanted to be remembered as a centurion serving in the Roman army. This indicates a sense of honour for his position in the Roman organisation, a sense of respect towards the Roman authorities. It also indicates a sense of belonging to a group consisting of soldiers from different backgrounds, and to a communal entity larger than a village community, and, ultimately, a sense of belonging to the Roman province and the Roman Empire. His benefaction could have been a gesture of euergetism, by financially supporting the completion of a temple for the village community, a collective enterprise of and for the village. Therefore this soldier could have acquired the title of the founder of the community only because he helped the village community by completing a pre-existing temple. If Germanus was not a member of the village community, his financial contribution can be interpreted not only as a Roman soldier's respect towards a pre-existing religious tradition, but also more broadly as the integration of Roman soldiers within the village population. This was a policy of the Roman Empire towards not only pre-existing cults but also towards religious and cultural traditions and customs, especially in the Near East.[1074] At the same time, the military involvement in the religious life of the village at Ṣanamein would have been a reminder for the village community of the Roman political control in the territory.

The temple that was completed, according to Germanus's commission to finish it, was dedicated to Tyche, a different deity from the pre-existing god, Zeus, worshipped in the village, as indicated by the fact that a temple was dedicated to him in the 1st century AD.[1075] It is debatable if this early inscription refers to the provincial temple of Tyche, another temple built in its immediate proximity, or a temple that has not been preserved in the village (Appendix). The dedication of this temple to Tyche, rather than the pre-existing god worshipped in the village, proves that Roman soldiers did not always take on the pre-existing religious beliefs of the village by worshipping the pre-existing deity. On the basis of these elements, we cannot be certain that the benefactor of the temple at Ṣanamein was a member of the local community.

At Mismiyyeh the temple, alternatively, was most likely a cult place specifically for soldiers on the basis of the following factors. Apart from the inscription mentioning the building of a cella by a centurion of the *Legio III Gallica*,[1076] there is no evidence of a pre-existing temple; nor is there a reference in the epigraphy that the temple was for the village communities, unlike the temple at Ṣanamein; members of the *Legio III Gallica* most likely commissioned the main door of the temple, considering the location of its lintel,[1077] and dedicated four inscriptions;[1078] soldiers from the *Legio XVI Flavia Firma* commissioned statues of Isis[1079] and Pax,[1080] which were placed in the lateral niches of the main door of the façade of the temple, on the basis of the inscriptions placed on lintels at the bottom of the niches, as well as two inscriptions on consoles of the temple.[1081] At Mismiyyeh, the Roman village called Phoena, there was an inn that was specifically used by soldiers from this legion, according to an inscription.[1082] Mismiyyeh was located on the Roman road from Damascus to Bosra when entering Leja (Map 2), therefore this village could have been a key transit place for soldiers and a key place to control this route. We can conjecture that the *Legio III Gallica* could have been responsible for this route, considering its major role in the cult centre. However, the religious involvement of a soldier implies wealth, derived from his military role, but his active role in the temple would not necessarily match the significance of his legion and the military role of this legion in the territory. In this respect, in the middle of the Roman road crossing Leja from Mismiyyeh, there was a written dedication by a member of a different legion (*Legio IIII Scythica*) in

[1069] *Wadd*. no.2528a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 42 no.5.
[1070] *Wadd*. no.2536a; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 53 no.20.
[1071] *PPUAES* III no.652; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–4 no.548
[1072] Stoll 2001: 332–3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–4.
[1073] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–4.
[1074] Beard *et al.* 1998: 339.
[1075] Beard *et al.* 1998: 324.
[1076] *Wadd*. no.2528a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 42 no.5.
[1077] *Wadd*. no.2525; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 316; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 38 no.1.
[1078] *Wadd*. no.2528, no.2528a, no.2530, no.2536a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 317–8; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104, 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 41–2, 51, 53 no.4–5, no.17, no.20.
[1079] *Wadd*. no.2527; Sourdel 1957: 92 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 40 no.3.
[1080] *Wadd*. no.2526; Sourdel 1957: 48 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 39–40 no.2.
[1081] *Wadd*. no.2531–2; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 51–2 no.18–9.
[1082] *Wadd*. no.2524; Isaac 1990: 136, 298.

the cult centre at Manāra Henū.[1083] This implies that *Legio III Gallica* did not have the absolute monopoly of this route.

Additionally, there are other dedications commissioned by soldiers from *Legio III Gallica* in Leja (Shaqrā[1084] and Mseikeh)[1085] and in the Djebel al'Arab (al-Mushennef).[1086] In the case of Mseikeh, the soldier from this legion probably commissioned a building of major significance considering the size of the inscribed lintel, although we cannot put forward any hypothesis about it. The inscribed lintel is inserted into the façade of a modern house in front of a church. This large quantity of dedications by soldiers from *Legio III Gallica* in Leja and its surroundings shows their recurrent presence in this territory, and therefore the significant role and function that *III Gallica* might have played in this part of the Hauran. The commander of *Legio III Gallica*, Avidius Cassius, was an important character, becoming the governor in the Roman province of Syria and for the Hauran; this is attested by two inscriptions which provide the year of his governorship, rather than the rule of the emperor, to date the inscriptions.[1087]

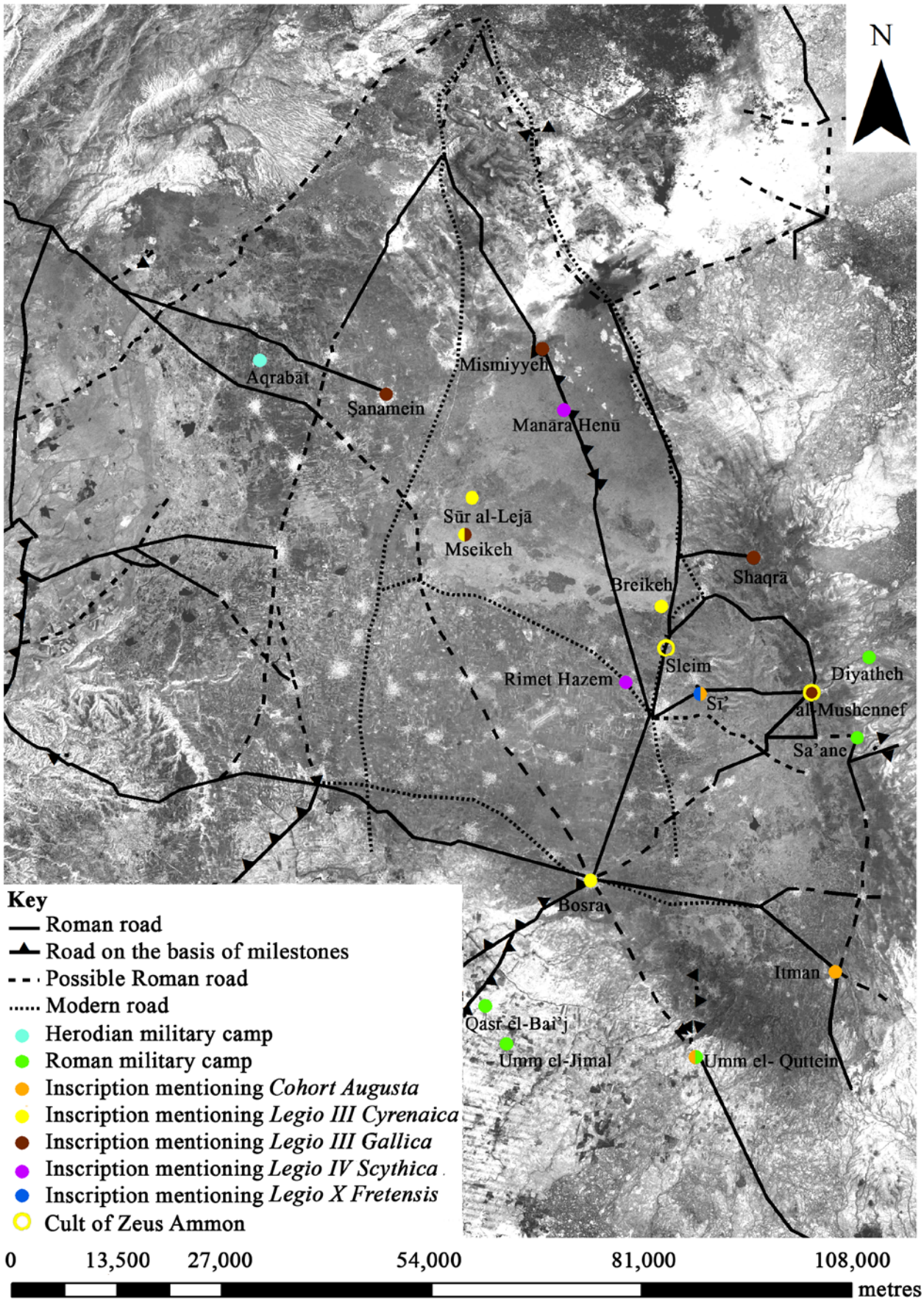
Since the military base of *III Gallica* was Raphanea in northern Syria,[1088] the soldiers would have been stationed in the inn at Mismiyyeh and they could have frequently visited, if not also been stationed in, other rural villages in the Hauran, such as Ṣanamein. This possibility cannot be ruled out, especially when we consider that soldiers of this legion were major benefactors of the cult centres at Ṣanamein and Mismiyyeh. From these two sites soldiers from III Gallica could have reached the Parthian territory and Judaea where they took part to the Parthian and Jewish wars.[1089] They were close and connected to Damascus, from which a main Roman road led to Palmyra, a place well connected to Dura Europos (a Parthian city) (Map 3). Mismiyyeh was on the immediate outskirts of Leja and Ṣanamein, on its north-west. Considering their location and the fact that Leja was known to have been crossed by bands of robbers and other lawless elements in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.2), we can suppose that this territory still needed to be monitored for the presence of these elements in the provincial period, and *III Gallica* could have had this responsibility. Ṣanamein was a key place, where routes to Jordan and Damascus diverged, and Mismiyyeh was situated along the Roman road from Damascus to Bosra when entering Leja from the north (Map 2).

Figure 21: A relief from al-Mushennef representing Zeus Ammon, now in the museum of as-Suweidā' (Syria) (the author 2010).

In addition to the legions mentioned above, others made dedications on a smaller scale in rural cult centres in the Hauran, i.e. *III Cyrenaica*, *X Fretensis*, the *Cohort I* (or *II*) *Augusta* and the *IIII Scythica*. Soldiers from *III Cyrenaica* commissioned an altar to Heracles Breikeh,[1090] a dedication, or possibly a building, at Mseikeh,[1091] and a dedication to Jupiter/Zeus Ammon at Sūr al-Lejā.[1092] Zeus Ammon was, in fact, the main god worshipped by *III Cyrenaica*.[1093] The presence of soldiers from this legion in rural cult centres, therefore, can also be verified by the cult of Ammon. A soldier made a written dedication to Zeus Ammon at Sleim.[1094] At al-Mushennef the finds include a statue head and a relief of Zeus Ammon[1095] (Figure 21), both of which show Zeus Ammon in a typical representation – a bearded male figure with ram's horns.[1096]

The distribution of these dedications shows that the soldiers of this legion were mostly present in the southern part of Leja and its immediate surroundings

[1083] Speidel 1998: no.32; Stoll 2001: 468–70 no.87; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 100 no.53d.
[1084] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 218–9 no.153.
[1085] *PPUAES* II no.795; Sourdel 1957: 2 no.2 N2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 204–5 no.137.
[1086] *PAAES* III no.381.
[1087] *Wadd.* no.2212; *PAAES* III no.380a, no.381; Dunand 1933: 539–40; Speidel 1998: no.34; Stoll 2001: no.88.
[1088] Pollard 2000: 24, 40, 42, 268; Sartre 2005: 60.
[1089] Alföldy 1977: 181 and n.179; Speidel 1998; Pollard and Berry 2012: 133–7, 145.
[1090] *Suw.* 1934 no.20 pl.8; Mascle 1944: no.20; Sourdel 1957: 34 no.3; *Suw.* 1991 INV20 [12] (5, 31); Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 458–9 no.405.
[1091] *PPUAES* II no.795 6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 209–10 no.143.
[1092] *CIL* III 13.604; *PPUAES* III no.797; Sourdel 1957: 91 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 156–7 no.95.
[1093] *PPUAES* II no.523; Seyrig 1941: 44 ff. and pl.4 no.2, Sourdel 1957: 89 ff., Pollard and Berry 2012: 158.
[1094] *PPUAES* III no.765 4.
[1095] Weber 2006: 117.
[1096] Pollard and Berry 2012: 158.



Map 13: Distribution of inscriptions by Roman soldiers (the author)

(Map 13). The headquarters of *III Cyrenaica* was at Bosra,[1097] but there are no dedications by members of this legion in the vicinity of the city, at least, those associated with rural cult centres, up to the 3rd century AD. This indicates their movement to a wider radius than just the surroundings of Bosra, which was, nevertheless, still circumscribed to the centre and south of the Hauran.

It seems that also the rural cult centres where soldiers from this legion made dedications were located in strategic places; they were on the Damascus to Bosra Roman road (Breikeh and Sleim). Their location may suggest that these inscriptions were commissioned during the soldiers' orders to monitor the movement along this road, rather than soldiers who moved there on retirement. A similar argument can be made about the dedication made by a member of this legion at Sūr al-Lejā. Roman soldiers in this village could have maintained the stability acquired with the Herodian army in Leja, as it was a village with an attested and needed military presence in the pre-provincial period.[1098] We can explain the presence of Roman soldiers in the village of Nela (al-Mushennef), next to the sanctuary at Sī', as a way to oversee and protect the passage of worshippers from robbers by monitoring the movements of people and pilgrims in this major cult centre, especially considering that al-Mushennef was on the border with the deserted area on the east.

In the sanctuary at Sī', a legionary of the *X Fretensis* commissioned an inscribed altar to Zeus.[1099] The presence of this legion at Sī' may indicate the connection between the Hauran, especially this main sanctuary, and the Herodian territory (§ Ch.2.1), as *X Fretensis* was based in Judaea.[1100] Soldiers from the *Cohort I* (or *II*) *Augusta* commissioned an altar to Zeus, which has been recovered in the forecourt in front of temple 2 at Sī'.[1101] It was probably the same *Cohort I* (or *II*) *Augusta Thracum Equitata* mentioned in five inscriptions found in the southern part of the Hauran (i.e. southern Syria, northern Jordan and the Negev desert).[1102]

Dedications by members of *IIII Scythica* are found across the Roman road (Manāra Henū and Rimet Hazem). Two inscriptions, one of them extremely fragmented, were commissioned by a centurion of *IIII Scythica* in a small cult centre at Manāra Henū (AD 161–2).[1103] Because of its location, i.e. it is the only building situated on the 40 km-long main Roman road from Damascus to Bosra, which passed Leja (Maps 2, 13), this small sanctuary can be considered a military as well as a religious stopping-place for soldiers, used when crossing and/or possibly controlling this main route within Leja. The presence of the *IIII Scythica* at Manārat Henou and at Rimet Hazim may be explained by the fact that Petronius Secundus, one of its main officers, was serving in Canatha before his appointment to Antioch.[1104] His valuable support to the society of the Hauran is witnessed by an honorific inscription dedicated to him at Sī' by *Seenoi*[1105] (people named after the sanctuary and its place) (§ Ch.6.3). We can suggest that the gratitude of *Seenoi* towards this officer implies that he and *IIII Scythica* made a significant contribution to the sanctuary at Sī'. Bearing in mind their military responsibilities, their role could have been to oversee and protect the passages of worshippers from lawless elements by monitoring the movements of people.

Since *IIII Scythica* was stationed at Zeugma,[1106] about 450–500 km from the Hauran, the presence of this legion there, including one of its main officers working at Canatha, suggests that the Hauran could also have been a key area for the legion. It could have been a transit territory because of the connection between *IIII Scythica* and *III Cyrenaica*, originally based at Bosra. The association between these two legions is strengthened by the co-patronage of the amphitheatre at Dura Europos by both legions.[1107] The soldiers from *IIII Scythica*, who had an outpost at Dura Europos,[1108] would have had to cross the Hauran to reach Bosra (Map 3). Like the other legions, the presence of soldiers from *IIII Scythica* in the Hauran can be explained by the fact that it was a buffer zone between the Jewish and Parthians wars, in which this legion also participated.[1109]

The distribution of inscriptions made by soldiers, combined with the dedication to Zeus Ammon and his representations, indicates a geographical division between the northern and southern parts of the Hauran (Maps 13). Dedications by soldiers coming from the south of the region (i.e. *III Cyrenaica*, the *Cohort I* (or *II*) *Augusta* and *X Fretensis*) are concentrated mostly in Djebel al-Arab, up to the southern Leja, whereas those dedications by soldiers from legions (*III Gallica* and *IIII*

[1097] Speidel 1984: 691–92 ff.
[1098] *PAAES* III no.797 (1); *IGLS* XV 103; Rohmer 2010: 129, 133 fig.7, 10.
[1099] Dunand 1926: 328 pl.69; *Suw*. 1934 no.15 pl.9; Mascle 1944: no.15; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64; *Suw*. 1991 INV 15 [190] 5, 23.
[1100] Dąbrowa 1993; Sartre 2005: 61 footnote 65; Pollard and Berry 2012: 146.
[1101] *PPUAES* II no.769.
[1102] They are from Motha (Imtan) (southern Hauran) (unknown date) (Dunand 1926: 204–05; *SEG* VII 1192), Umm al-Quttein (northern Jordan) (probably 2nd century AD) (Dunand 1926: 328, Kennedy 2004: 82), Kurnub (Memphis) in the Negev Desert (early 2nd century AD) (Speidel 1984: 710–1; Kennedy 2004: 49), Hallabat (*c.* 25 km south-west of Palmyra, Syria) (AD 212) (Kennedy 2004: 49).
[1103] Speidel 1998: no.32–3; Stoll 2001: 468–70 no.87–8; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 99 no.53c.
[1104] Speidel 1998: 185–87.
[1105] *IGRR* III no.1230; Speidel 1998: 185–7 no.35.
[1106] Speidel 1998: 166–8; Pollard 2000: 24, 40 footnote 16.
[1107] Rostovtzeff *et al.* 1936: 77–80 no.630; 1939: 85–7 no.847.
[1108] Pollard and Berry 2012: 141.
[1109] Pollard and Berry 2012: 141–2.

Scythica) based farther away (in northern Syria), are in Leja and in the north of Djebel al-Arab. This division could have been because of the proximity of these legions' military bases respectively to the southern and central parts of the Hauran and to north of the Hauran. The presence of *III Cyrenaica* in the southern part of the Hauran is justified by its military base at Bosra.

Taking into account the dating of the inscriptions commissioned in the rural cult centres of the Hauran by soldiers from different legions, this geographical division into two parts is dated to before AD 194. This could be the result of the division of the region into two Roman provinces until the end of the 2nd century AD: the Herodian part belonging to the Syrian province, with the Nabataean territory of the Hauran belonging to Arabia (§ Ch.2).

The frequent financial contribution of Roman soldiers towards rural cult centres in the Hauran, 20 dedications (including three by veterans, the benefactions of possibly two temples by veterans, and of two temples by centurions in the 2nd century AD), clearly confirm the significant role of Roman soldiers in the rural landscape of the Hauran, already argued by Sartre-Fauriat. Their major benefactions in rural temples of the Hauran may also confirm that they constituted part of the elite of the Hauran in the second half of the 2nd century AD. Sartre-Fauriat's similar view comes from her analysis of a greater number of inscriptions based on a larger time-frame. She considered 456 inscriptions dated from the 2nd to the 5th century AD, whereas the current analysis looked at 20 inscriptions that can be roughly dated from the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD.

Because of the different time-frames and the different quantity of data between Sartre-Fauriat's work and the analysis in this section, only a small percentage of dedications (25%) were commissioned by veterans in this current analysis. This implies a minor role of veterans in rural cult centres from the 2nd to the 3rd century AD, contrasted to an increasing presence and impact of the veterans in the Hauran after the 3rd century AD. However, the location of the temples, along certain roads, or in and around Leja, where the inscriptions have been found, and the fact that they were dedicated by centurions or soldiers, raises the possibility that such inscriptions were made by soldiers during their tour of duty to control and monitor Roman roads and Leja. However, one cannot presume that this would be the case for each dedication. In some cases we can only conjecture that each dedication commissioned by a soldier is evidence of his temporary presence in this territory. If that were the case, this points to the status of the Hauran as a nodal point of the broader, Near Eastern network in the provincial period.

Even if the elite of the Hauran consisted of Roman soldiers who were natives of the Hauran, but also members of legions originating from far afield (e.g. in northern Syria), it may still indicate that they were in contact with other cultures in the Near East and they were once part of, and involved with, the broader network of the Near East.

5.2. New gods

Sartre-Fauriat carefully pointed out foreign gods in the pantheon of the Hauran when presenting some of the new inscriptions recovered in the region.[1110] Here the foreign deities that will be discussed are those mentioned in inscriptions found at sites where there is evidence of a rural cult centre: Isis, Pax (Peace) and Nemesis at Mismiyyeh, Apollo at Rimet Hazim, the Twelve Gods at Ṣanamein, and Ares at Deir as-Smeij. Sartre-Fauriat argued that, being Roman, these deities were imported by the Roman soldiers, as verified by the presence of the latter at these sites, as already revealed in the earlier section, with the exception of Deir as-Smeij (§ Ch.5.1).

At Mismiyyeh, according to two inscriptions, a centurion of the *Legio XVI Flavia Firma* commissioned statues of Isis and Pax to be placed in the niches of the temple façade in AD 161–9.[1111] Although in this case it is explicit that their cult in this village was due to the presence of a Roman soldier, the Hauran was already familiar with the cult of Isis in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.3.1).

At Mismiyyeh, a temple was dedicated to Nemesis according to a Latin inscription.[1112] Nemesis can be considered a foreign deity brought in by soldiers in this case for the following reasons. The inscription dedicated to Nemesis at Mismiyyeh is in Latin, which is rare in the Hauran and in the Near East, although it commonly used by Roman soldiers[1113] At Mismiyyeh there is a high number of dedications by soldiers (six), including the patronage by a centurion of the cella and the building of an inn for soldiers (§ Ch.5.1). The cult of this deity in the Hauran is rare: it is attested only in an inscription of the flute of a small column in the garden of the Damascus museum, and in the garden of the museum of Deir Attire (north of Damascus) on a small steel showing the relief of her head and an inscription where only the last part of a name of a most likely dedicator is preserved.[1114] The original place of recovery of these two inscriptions is unknown.

[1110] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307–10.
[1111] *Wadd.* no.2526–7; Sourdel 1957: 48 no.4 92 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 39–40 no.2–3; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[1112] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 46–7 no.11; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[1113] Isaac 2009: 65.
[1114] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307–8.

An altar was dedicated to Apollo at Rimet Hazim.[1115] We can associate this god with the Roman army because a centurion of the *Legio IIII Scythica* commissioned a written vow at Rimet Hazim.[1116]

A Latin inscription is dedicated to the Twelve Gods at Ṣanamein.[1117] As Sartre-Fauriat has pointed out, this is the only written evidence of this cult in the Hauran and in the Near East,[1118] as confirmed by the absence of inscriptions for this part of the Empire in Long's catalogue dedicated to the Twelve Gods.[1119] Long mentioned three representations of the Roman Pantheon in a group that can be assimilated to the Twelve Gods in the Near East: diadems in Laodicea of Syria (kept in Cologne) (AD 160–235) and at Naples (currently preserved in Jerusalem) (AD 270–75), and a small statue of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Tartus, currently in the Louvre.[1120] In these representations, the identity and number of the gods belonging to the group of the Twelve Gods can vary, but Jupiter, Juno, Minerva and Poseidon are always present. Inscriptions at Der'a also refer to the anniversary of quinquennalia of Lucius, which is also mentioned in the inscription at Ṣanamein, and dated to AD 312.[1121] Therefore the inscription at Ṣanamein is most likely to be late Roman in date. The commissioner of the inscription dedicated to the Twelve Gods at Ṣanamein is mentioned in the text of face B. Although the text on this face still needs to be fully deciphered, according to Sartre-Fauriat the commissioner was either in command of a troop or of imperial administration. She is more inclined to the latter because the imperial domain was well attested in this part of the Banatea and this would explain why an imperial functionary who was a foreigner in the region made a dedication to the Twelve Gods, part of the Roman pantheon.[1122] However, the commissioner could also have been a member of the Roman army, considering that a centurion completed the temple at Ṣanamein (§ Ch.5.1).

The only case where there is no explicit evidence of the Roman soldier associated with the dedication to a foreign god is in the inscription recovered at 'Atīl, which is believed to have come from Deir as-Smeij. The written dedication is addressed to the god Ares.[1123] Nevertheless, this dedication can be associated with the presence of the Roman army, as Ares is the god of war,[1124] and can thus be readily associated with the Roman army. The inscription comes from a cult centre dated to the provincial period (mid 2nd century AD),[1125] and found only 15 minutes' walk to the north-east of Canatha and therefore close to Sī', where the presence of the Roman army was attested (§ Ch.5.1–2).

Although we still talk about a small number of dedications to foreign deities, they still indicate that the Hauran was part of the broader Near Eastern network in the provincial period and became an integrated part of the Roman Empire.

5.3. Mithras

Although Mithras was widely worshipped by the Roman army,[1126] alongside Jupiter Optimus Maximus[1127] and Jupiter Dolichenus,[1128] he was also venerated by non-military members of the Roman elite, such as merchants and manufacturers at Londinium (London) and Ostia, for instance.[1129] For this reason, his cult in the Hauran is discussed in a separate section from that of the presence of the Roman army. His cult is another *tessera* to support the central theme of this monograph, i.e. that the Hauran was part of the broader Near Eastern network in the provincial period, and of the Roman Empire, precisely, because the cult of Mithras was largely a product of the Roman Empire.[1130] There are 'standard aspects' related to this cult across the Empire on a general level, with occasional local developments.[1131] His cult comprises initiation cults,[1132] indoor cult practices in long or narrow spaces, with benches along the sidewalls

[1115] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 308.
[1116] *Wadd.* no.2407; IGRR III 1242; Speidel 1998: no.36.
[1117] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 550 no.561a; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[1118] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[1119] Long 1987.
[1120] Long 1987: 23, 26–7, 39.
[1121] Kienast 1996: 294.
[1122] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 310.
[1123] Dussaud and Macler 1903: 648 no.20.
[1124] Bruneau 1984; Augé 1984: 493.
[1125] *PPUAES* II: 352–54 ill.317; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297; 2003, 85, 97 note 236 pl.79 no.7.
[1126] Turcan 1989; 1993; Sartre 1991: 484–5; Clauss 1992; 2000; Gordon 2001.
[1127] Beard *et al.* 1998: 326–8.
[1128] Merlat 1960; Speidel 1978; Blömer 2012.
[1129] Turcan 1993: 38 ff.
[1130] Clauss 1990; Beck 1998; Huet 2009: 233–56; Dirven and McCarty 2014: 130. This present monograph is not the right place to discuss in detail the cult of Mithras, which has been a topic of ongoing scholarly interest for over a century. The earliest publication was Cumont's book in 1896, and one of the latest publications is by Panagiotidou and Beck (2017). Cumont (1896) argued that the origin of Mithraism was Anatolia after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire and during the Hellenistic Age, and which reached approximately its definitive form, without narrowing it down to a precise time and area. This theory continued to be supported by Will (1955a; 1955b), Colpe (1971), Schwertheim (1975; 1979) and Gordon (1978). Boyce and Grenet (1991) narrowed the date of origin to the mid 1st century BC. Will (1955a: 164 ff.) and Turcan (1993: 25–6) claimed the origin was through Cilician pirates. A good account that provided an overview of the scholarly theories on the origin of Mithraism is provided by Beck 1998. Despite certain elements that suggest that Mithras was of Persian origin, and/or from Anatolia (e.g. the eastern dress of the god, the use of Persian loanwords such as '*nama*', i.e. hail, in inscriptions), his cult developed in and around Rome in the mid 1st century AD, and there was no clear parallel in the Near East before that time (Vermaseren 1981; Clauss 1990; 1992; Beck 1998; Huet 2009: 233–56; Dirven and McCarty 2014: 130). The cult then rapidly spread across the Empire, including the Near East.
[1131] Dirven and McCarty 2014.
[1132] Clauss 1990; Dirven and McCarty 2014.

for banqueting.[1133] Moreover, the communities that participated in his cult were organized according to a ranked hierarchy.[1134]

In the Hauran, the cult of Mithras has been confirmed at two sites: Sī' and Shā'rah. At Sī' there are two Mithras reliefs depicting the tauroctony scene, that is a young male figure wearing a pointed hat and killing a bull;[1135] this is one of the classic iconographic images of Mithras across the Roman Empire[1136] (Figure 22). According to their recent archaeological investigations, the French team has identified temple 2 at Sī' as the area of worship of the cult of Mithras, which they have dated to the mid 3rd century AD.[1137] However, their argument is based only on the relief bearing the inscription found in courtyard 2 in front of temple 2.[1138] They have also looked at the second relief of Mithras recovered near temple 3 with Nabataean capitals.[1139] No information is provided on how the reliefs of Mithras at Sī' were dated, or on the exact context of their recovery, or on how the sanctuary evolved structurally with this new cult. We can surmise that the cult of Mithras was confined to a marginal area of the sanctuary, as was commonly assumed to be the case in other places in the Roman Empire. Its marginalisation is further suggested by the fact that this cult did not involve public ceremonies.[1140] This can be considered a valid hypothesis concerning the additional structures built in the provincial period at Sī'. Apart from the Roman Gate still dedicated to Baalshamin/Zeus (specifically Zeus Megistos) (§ Ch.4.2–3), only a structure of unclear layout in a northwest extension of courtyard 3 was built in the provincial period. One hypothesis is that it functioned as a temple.[1141] However the cult of Seeia/Tyche, or gods associated with the fertile land of Sī', including possibly Dionysus, has been suggested on various fragmented depictions representing or symbolising these deities recovered in the debris of this structure, or proposed to have come from this structure (§ Ch. 3.1, Ch.4.4). Therefore the place of worship of the cult of Mithras at Sī' still remains unclear.

One of the two reliefs at Sī' has a brief Latin inscription 'D I S', standing for 'Deo Invicto Soli'.[1142] The fact that the inscription is one of the reliefs depicting the tauroctony scene confirms the hypothesis of the appellative 'Sol Invictus' associated with Mithras, as suggested by some scholars.[1143] The fact that this dedication is in Latin can be considered as a form of signature by a member of the Roman legion,[1144] since Latin inscriptions are rare in the Near East and often limited to the military sphere.[1145]

Figure 22: A relief of Mithras at Sī', now in the Damascus museum (the author 2010).

The association of the cult of Mithras with the Roman troops at Sī' is supported by the presence of Roman soldiers at the site and attested by dedications from men of *X Fretensis* and *Cohort I* (or *II*) *Augusta* to Zeus (§ Ch.5.1) (Appendix). However, the latter are written in Greek, whereas the former are in Latin.

Sī' was also roughly 25 km east of two Roman garrisons, Diyatheh and Sa'ane, founded in AD 250–300 (Map 13).[1146] Certainly the appearance of military garrisons in the vicinity would have encouraged the building of a cult place specifically for soldiers. Although at Sī' the dedications by Roman soldiers were dedicated to the main deity of the sanctuary, Zeus (§ Ch.4.2–3), and not to Mithras, it does not mean that the cult of Mithras was introduced later and took over from Zeus. There is no evidence to argue or disprove this.

Looking at the other site of the Hauran with evidence of the cult of Mithras, Shā'rah, we can confidently argue that this is a cult place exclusively for this god, as he is the only god represented within the sanctuary, and

[1133] Gordon 2001; Martens 2004; Dirven and McCarty 2014.
[1134] Clauss 1990; Dirven and McCarty 2014.
[1135] Turcan 1989: 235; 1993: 45–72; North 1990; Beard *et al.* 1998: 307; Beck 2006; Dirven and McCarty 2014.
[1136] Turcan 1989: 235; North 1990.
[1137] Gordon 2001: 94.
[1138] *PPUAES* II: 398 ff. fig.344 B; Will 1952: 68 footnote 1; Gordon 2001: 83, 129 fig.6; Weber 2006: 213 no.93 pl.73 a.
[1139] Will 1952: 67 ff. pl.6, 2; Gordon 2001: 83; Weber 2006: 213 no.94 pl.73 b.
[1140] Turcan 1989: 211–6.
[1141] Steinsapir 2005: 22; Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 323.
[1142] Will 1952: 67–8.
[1143] Turcan 1989: 238–39; Beard *et al.* 1998: 309; Clauss 2000: 146 ff.
[1144] Will 1952: 70.
[1145] Isaac 2009: 65.
[1146] Gregory 1996: 179.

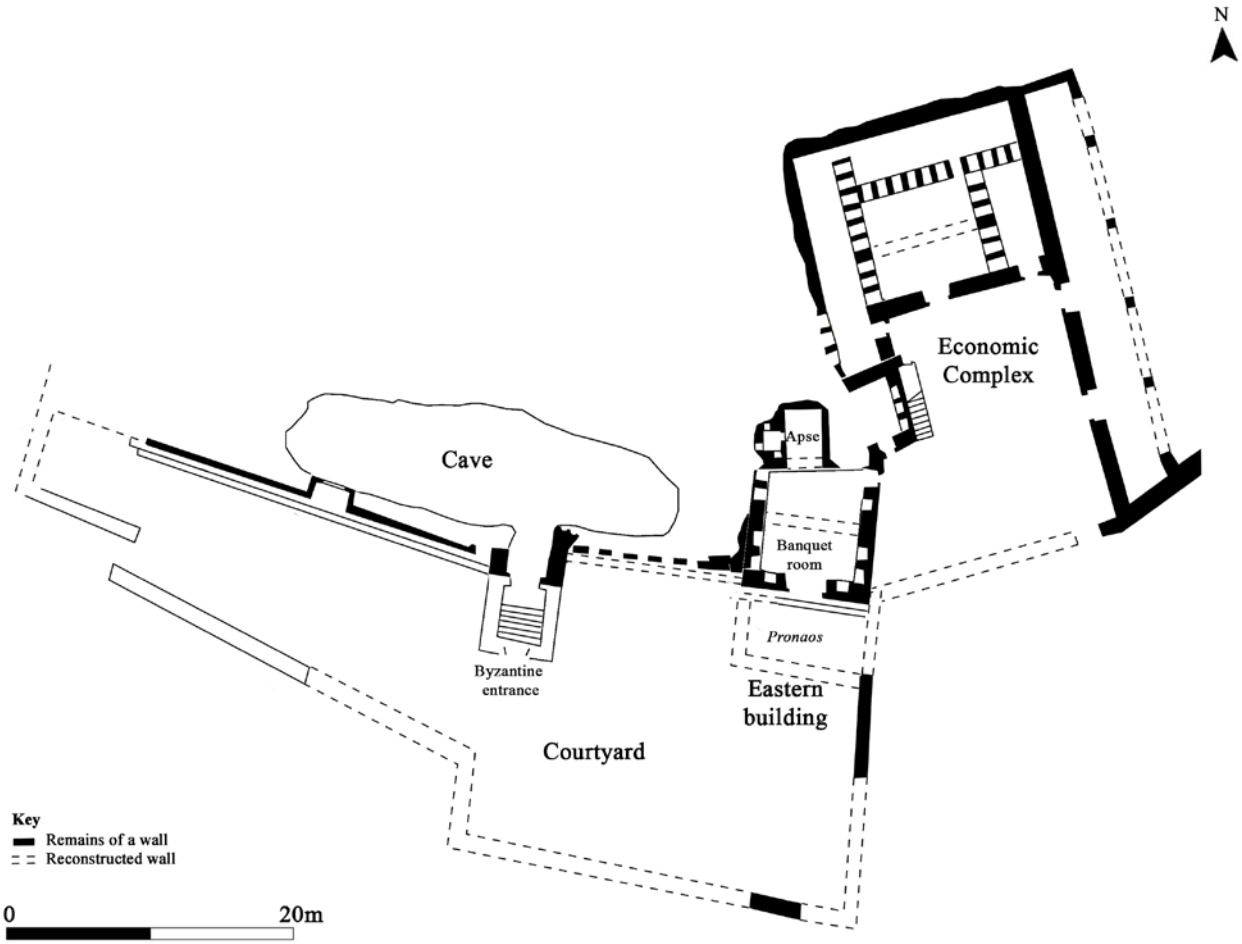


Figure 23: Plan of the Mithraeum at Shā'rah (the author, after Kalos 2001: fig. 3).

this one presents the 'standard aspects' of a Mithraeum (a religious complex specifically for worship and the undertaking of ritual practices in honour of Mithras). The Mithraeum at Shā'rah comprises two reliefs of Mithras, depicted as a young male figure wearing a pointed hat, at the bottom of either side of the archway of the entrance of a banquet area, and zodiac figures that decorate the archival of this archway. The banquet area comprises benches on both sides and niches set into the wall. This structure is arbitrarily named the 'eastern building' due to its location within the sanctuary complex (Figure 23).[1147] The cult of this god is strengthened further by the presence of a cave with a spring next to the eastern building containing reliefs of Mithras. A spring is, in fact, a recurrent element in Mithraea,[1148] and caves have been used as places for the cult of Mithras in the Near East,[1149] with examples at Haoarte (Apamea)[1150] and Dolichè (modern-day Turkey).[1151] The interior of the cave at Shā'rah cannot be fully described because it has been destroyed by looters. Niches, which could have been used to place cult statues, are carved into the natural rock and remain the only visible features.[1152] The entrance to the cave appears to have the same orientation as the eastern building.[1153] This points to the necessity of having two areas for religious activities in the sanctuary, probably because Mithraic cults involved different ceremonies,[1154] or because special groups of priests might have needed a different area where devotees could meet to worship on certain occasions, which would have usually been the cave.[1155] The division into more than one area in the Mithraeum is seen in other examples, such as Dolichè at Commagene,[1156] which may imply the wealth of this congregation. This cult centre at Shā'rah must, therefore, have been an important Mithraeum and a 'hidden' place of an important congregation for Roman soldiers. This is further implied by its location, on the north-west of Leja, which needed to be controlled by soldiers and 6 km away from the *Via Traiana Nova*, a

[1147] Kalos 2001: 245.
[1148] Turcan 1993: 76.
[1149] Beard *et al.* 1998: 88.
[1150] Gawlikowski 2001.
[1151] Schütte-Maischatz and Winter 2001.
[1152] Kalos 2001: 256.
[1153] Kalos 2001: 236.
[1154] Vermaseren 1963: 41 ff.
[1155] Clauss 2000: 45.
[1156] Shütte-Maischatz and Winter 2001.

main road that connected Damascus and Bosra,[1157] which, therefore, also needed to be monitored by the Roman army.

These two rural Mithras cult centres in Leja and in the north of the Djebel al'Arab, together with the high number of written dedications in rural cult centres and their patronage by Roman soldiers, most likely indicate the active participation of soldiers in the rural religious life of the region and the significance of this area for the Roman soldiers there. This cult shows the incorporation of a foreign, fundamentally 'Roman', religious tradition in the religious life of the Hauran, and thus a further *tessera* to support the integration of the Hauran in the broader network of the Near East and of the Roman province.

5.4. The use of 'Roman' names

The adoption of 'Roman' names on inscriptions associated with rural cult centres of the Hauran does not only signify the physical presence in the region of people from the Roman Empire. People from the Hauran could have used Roman names for fashion, as suggested for the use of Safaitic personal names and tribes by Macdonald (§ Ch.2.3 and Ch.4.1). If so, it implies that the elites of the Hauran were open to the world outside the local communities and influenced by this trend coming from elsewhere and originating in the Roman Empire. This means the integration of the elite in the Hauran of non-local, but Roman, customs, and therefore their integration into the broader network of the Roman Empire. This trend could have come from connections and influence by the elite of the Hauran on other cultures in the Near East, not directly from Rome.

Having a 'Roman' name also shows the intention of the people who used this type of name to behave like Romans, to be part of, and belong to, a high-social status associated with the elite from the Roman provinces and with Roman authorities, and possibly to seek acceptance from these Roman authorities. A peasant could not, or would not have been interested in having a 'Roman' name. It was an external manifestation of prestige; we are dealing with individuals who were wealthy enough to commission a dedication or a part of the rural cult centre. Thus, they would have been considered the elite of the Hauran. Bearing a 'Roman' name would mean that they were ultimately influenced and fascinated by the 'Roman' culture. Therefore, the integration of a custom of such a personal element of individuals which had not originated locally indicates that the elite of the Hauran was not simply indigenous with local traditions and customs, but was also influenced by, and connected with, the outside world beyond the Hauran. This proves that the rural society of the Hauran was part of a wider network of the Near East in the provincial period.

This section lists the sites where 'Roman' names appear in inscriptions associated with rural cult centres and investigates their role in these centres in order to understand to what degree it is plausible to talk about this influence of 'Roman' customs in the Hauran, and to what extent the rural elite of the Hauran was open to non-local customs and wanted to be part of, and to belong to, a high social status associated with an elite from the Roman provinces and with the Roman authorities.

We need to bear in mind that the identification of 'Roman' names is not always straightforward. Some might represent the Greek transliteration of a Semitic name or root. It is therefore necessary to seek names that are extremely popular in the Roman world, such as Julius and Aurelius, and to contextualise them within their socio-historical setting.

In two cases in the Hauran a 'Roman' name (*Aurelius*) appears as the name of a main benefactor: one of the *oikonomoi* in charge of the temenos at Shā'rah,[1158] and one of the temple-treasurers who helped in the construction of the cult centre at Lubbên.[1159]

In the first case it has been suggested that the individual called Aurelius was a member of the local community but adopted a 'Roman' name, based on the evidence that his father (Khalaṣat), and the other two *oikonomoi* who commissioned the temenos (Usaid'ēl, son of Phaṣai'ēl, and Muḳīm, son of Taum), did not have Roman names; they were probably local, as the names do not appear to be common in the Near Eastern, Greek and Roman onomasticon.[1160] Roman influence in the naming of people from the village community at Shā'rah can be put down to the presence of the Roman army in this village, as indicated by the ruins of a Mithraeum (§ Ch.5.3). One of two temple treasurers who helped in the construction of the cult centre at Lubbên (possibly AD 213) is named Aurelius, the other is called 'Abūn, which is not a 'Roman' name. Despite his apparent 'Roman' name the cult centre is dedicated to a local god named after an individual, the god of Aumos.[1161]

Roman names appear in another eight inscriptions associated with rural cult centres where individuals made a contribution to a sanctuary on a smaller scale

[1157] Gordon 2001: 95.

[1158] *PPUAES* III no.803 2.

[1159] *Wadd.* no.2055; Ewing 1895: 69; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324; *PPUAES* III no.793; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 338–40 no.275.

[1160] *PPUAES* III no.803 2.

[1161] *Wadd.* no.2055; Ewing 1895: 69; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324; *PPUAES* III no.793; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 338–40 no.275.

(e.g. the colonnade inside the temenos wall or of the temple at al-Mushennef, the pavement and the altars at Ṣmeid, two ἀψῖδας at Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah and the Roman Gate at Sī'), or commissioned a dedication or an altar in a sanctuary (Sūr al-Lejā and Sī'). Their names are Julius, Julianus, Aurelius and Aelius Dio. They seem straightforward 'Roman' names transliterated into Greek in inscriptions (Appendix). These examples are concentrated in the northern part of the Djebel al-Arab (Sī',[1162] al-Mushennef[1163] and 'Atīl[1164]) and Leja (Sūr al-Lejā,[1165] Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah[1166] and Ṣmeid),[1167] during the provincial period, mostly in the 3rd century AD, but starting from the 2nd century AD (Map 14).

Additionally, an individual named Bassos made dedicatory inscriptions in rural sanctuaries at Saḥr,[1168] Shā'rah,[1169] Ṣalkhad (AD 252–3),[1170] Zebīreh (AD 213–4)[1171] and Obṭ'a.[1172] This name has been initially considered a Greek transliteration of the Latin name Bassus, but this is still a matter of debate. According to Sartre, we cannot determine if Bassos is a transliteration of the Latin Bassus or the Hellenised version of the Semitic name.[1173] It has been suggested, instead, that it could be derived from Safaitic or Semitic roots.[1174] To support the first hypothesis, the name appears in 20 examples of Safaitic graffiti;[1175] relating to the second suggestion, Bassos could stem from a fairly common Semitic root, *bs*; Arabic names with this root or with *basa*' are frequent in the Near East (55 examples).[1176] However, Bassos is an extremely common cognomen in Latin. Furthermore, in some case people bearing this name were Roman citizens (Aurelii), or had their father named with a classical Greek or Roman name. Therefore, the use of Bassos could have been most likely promoted by Roman soldiers and administrators in the province of Syria.[1177]

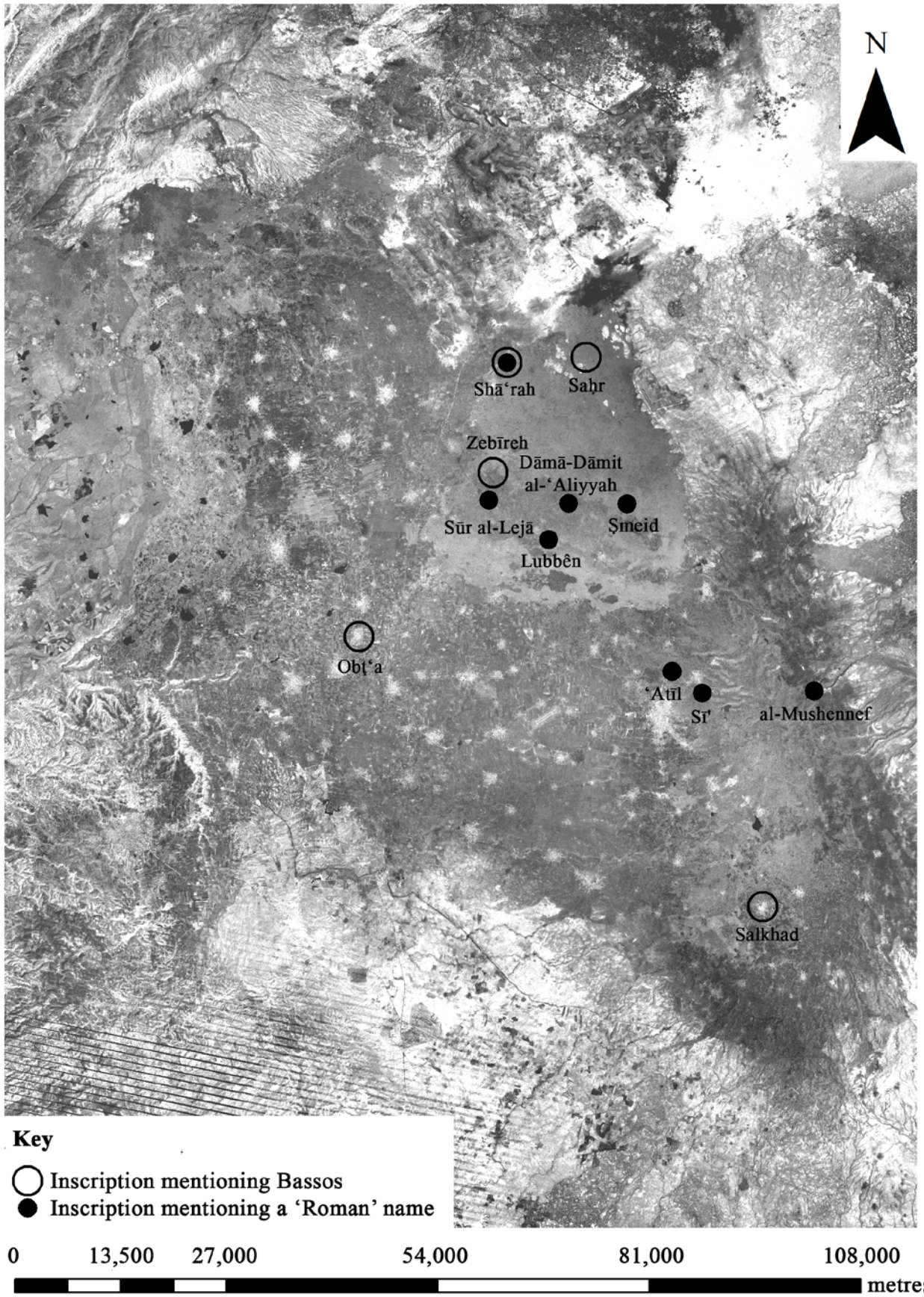
We can additionally attempt to have a more complete and accurate understanding of where Bassos could have come from in the examples of Hauran under examination by contextualising inscriptions that mentioned this name within the historical context of the sanctuaries where the epigraphic texts have been recovered. In the case of Ṣalkhad[1178] and Zebīreh[1179] the inscriptions are dated to the 3rd century AD. In the other examples the inscriptions are not dated. We can guess that the inscription at Shā'rah was from the provincial period as there was a Mithraeum of provincial times and Shā'rah was a late Roman-Byzantine village.[1180] Although Saḥr was built at the end of the pre-provincial period, it was used throughout the provincial era (Appendix). At Obṭ'a[1181] the inscription is dedicated to Tyche, like the provincial inscriptions at Ṣalkhad[1182] and Zebīreh.[1183] Therefore in these cases in the Hauran by contextualising the inscriptions commissioned by at least one of the individuals named Bassos, we are inclined to suggest that Bassos could have been a Latin name.

On the basis of the analysed inscriptions, benefactors who had a 'Roman' name jointly contributed to the building of parts of rural cult centres, or made dedications in these centres, together with individuals who did not have a 'Roman' name (Appendix). This means that the use of 'Roman' names by temple benefactors or dedicators was not a common practice, as explained above in the cases of Shā'rah and Lubbên. Furthermore, the coexistence of 'Roman' with 'non-Roman' names in the provincial period may indicate the coexistence of a new trend and tradition from outside the region with pre-existing ones. This can be interpreted as the continuous renegotiation of cultural traits, in this case personal names, between imperial dominion and local response, first argued for religious matters by Bendlin and supported by Kaizer (§ Ch.1.2).[1184]

However, as individuals using 'Roman' names commissioned parts of rural cult centres, or simply made dedicatory inscriptions, it implies that it was an occasional practice adopted by the elite, who belonged to a different social class.

At the same time, the 12 rural cult centres where inscriptions mentioned individuals with 'Roman' names were not concentrated in one area but covered the whole Hauran from north to south (Map 14). Therefore, it indicates a certain significant interest, equally spread but not unanimous, in using a name from the Roman Empire within the rural setting of the Hauran. It is unlikely that whoever used 'Roman' names were unaware that they were non-local names and associated with the Romans, considering the presence of Roman soldiers across the Hauran (§ Ch.5.1). Therefore the

[1162] *RAO* I no.11; *PAAES* III no.431–2; *Suw*. 1934 no.27 pl.8; Mascle 1944: no.27; *Suw*. 1991 INV27 [191] (5, 33); Sartre 2003.
[1163] *PAAES* III no.382; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324.
[1164] *CIG* 4609; *Wadd*. no.2374a; *IGR* III 1238; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 105, 322.
[1165] *CIL* III 13.604; *PPUAES* III no.797; Sourdel 1957: 91 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 156–7 no.95.
[1166] *PPUAES* III no.800 5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 363–4 no.302.
[1167] *PPUAES* III no.786 6; Sourdel 1957: 109 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 548–9 no.478.
[1168] *PPAES* III no.805 5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 78 no.42.
[1169] *Wadd*. no.2522; *PPUAES* III no.803 6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 108–9 no.58.
[1170] *Wadd*. no.1990.
[1171] *Wadd*. no.2512; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 144–6 no.90.
[1172] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 348–9 no.363.
[1173] Sartre 2007a: 204.
[1174] Sartre 2007a: 204.
[1175] Harding 1971: 105.
[1176] Harding 1971: 105.
[1177] Sartre 2007a: 204.
[1178] *Wadd*. no.1990.
[1179] *Wadd*. no.2512; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 144–6 no.90.
[1180] Clauss-Balty 2010.
[1181] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 348–9 no.363.
[1182] *Wadd*. no.1990.
[1183] *Wadd*. no.2512; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 144–6 no.90.
[1184] Bendlin 1997: 52–54; Kaizer 2000: 225–6; 2002: 27; 2013: 66–7.



Map 14: Distribution of inscriptions mentioning 'Roman' names (the author)

inscriptions commissioned by people who had 'Roman' names in the 12 rural cult centres points to a fair amount of influence and contact by elites represented across the region by these religious centres with the outside world beyond the Hauran. The adoption of 'Roman' names by dedicators of temples of the Hauran can be interpreted as evidence that the rural elite of this region aspired to belong to a high social class associated with elites from the Roman provinces, and to incorporate themselves within the Roman Empire and the broader network of the Near East.

5.5. Religious architecture

Before looking at previous work focused on architecture in the Hauran in the provincial period, we need to contextualise it by considering an overview of scholars' understanding of architecture, especially in a religious context, in the Roman Near East, which often includes rural sanctuaries in the Hauran.

Dentzer-Feydy stated in her 1989 article on architectural decoration in Syria that the debate about the development of architectural decoration in Syria is still open.[1185] This is still valid today, and the brief outline of scholars' views presented here shows the diversity of their arguments when analysing architecture in Syria in the provincial period.

Most of the scholars working on monuments, including temples, in the Near East generally concur that, although flourishing especially in the provincial period, religious architecture in the Near East differed completely from other parts of the Roman Empire, and that, depending on the scholars' perspective, it comprised features either hardly ever, or alternatively solely, originating from Rome.

Wiegand maintained that decorative art in Syria was influenced by Roman cultural traditions at the start of the provincial period by adopting normal (Roman) forms, but still maintaining its own distinctive traits through the re-elaboration of Roman features. His work was the first systematic investigation of the forms of the architectural decoration of Baalbek, including comparison with the forms of Rome, and other parts of Syria and nearby regions, especially Corinthian capitals. He demonstrated that some of the standard Corinthian capitals at the large temple of Baalbek (in particular their leaves, cauliculi, vaults, helices and decoration of the abacus) are similar to late Augustan production in Rome and elsewhere in Italy, and differ from other standard capitals of the large temple which originated from Eastern production in Syria and Asia Minor in the provincial period.[1186]

Schlumberger disputed Wiegand's argument by suggesting that the basic Corinthian capitals in Syria do not seem to have been influenced by Augustan Roman examples, but do seem to have some links with late Hellenistic examples.[1187]

Collart and Coupel still favoured some effect from the imperial forms of Rome in the late period (the beginning of the Flavian era) as well as the presence of the crude style of the Syrian tradition when looking at the decoration of coffers (caissons).[1188]

Heilmeyer and Lyttelton rejected the argument of Roman impact on the decoration at Baalbek. Heilmeyer argued that the Roman model of the pre-Flavian types had an impact on the capitals from the small temple, but other capitals from the 2nd century AD were influenced by architecture in Ephesus and Pergamum, together with the Syrian style from Palmyra.[1189] Lyttleton maintained that some of the decorative elements identified as coming from Rome by Wiegand appeared at different sites in Greece, Asia Minor or Egypt, so they should be considered as decorative elements from the Hellenistic art of the Eastern Mediterranean; this can also be said for other elements of imperial decoration from Rome.[1190]

According to Dentzer-Feydy, the Near East created its own distinctive, decorative and architectural style in the provincial period, presenting some homogeneous elements across the Near East. This derived from a fusion of typical architectural features that developed in Syria with the architecture from Asia Minor, which was inspired by Roman decorative art in the Augustan period.[1191]

When looking at the types of architecture of sanctuaries in the pre-provincial and provincial periods, including pre-provincial examples in the Hauran, Dentzer argued for their distinctive characters and variety in Syria. He divided them into those that are organised, regular and geometric (e.g. the temple of Bel at Palmyra), and those apparently that are not (e.g. the sanctuaries at Dura Europos and in the Palmyrene area); the majority of sanctuaries are between the two, for example the sanctuary at Sī'.[1192]

Gawlikowski pointed to the uniqueness of temples in Syria and their regional variants, including examples from the Hauran, which presented a double heritage: their own Syrian and regional religious tradition, which

[1185] Dentzer-Feydy 1989: 466.
[1186] Wiegand 1914; 1924.
[1187] Schlumberger 1933.
[1188] Collart and Coupel 1977.
[1189] Heilmeyer 1970.
[1190] Lyttleton 1974.
[1191] Dentzer-Feydy 1989: 466 ff.
[1192] Dentzer 1989.

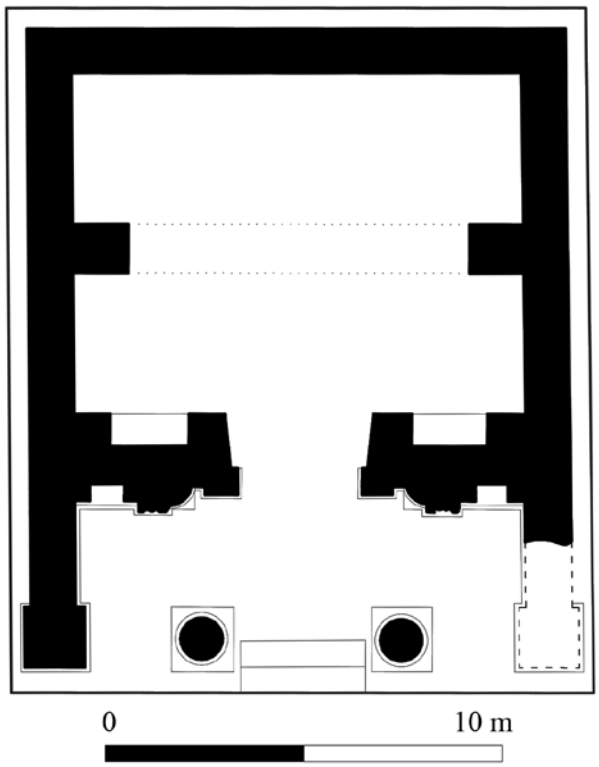


Figure 24: Plan of temple at ʻAtīl
(the author, after *PPUAES* II fig. 120).

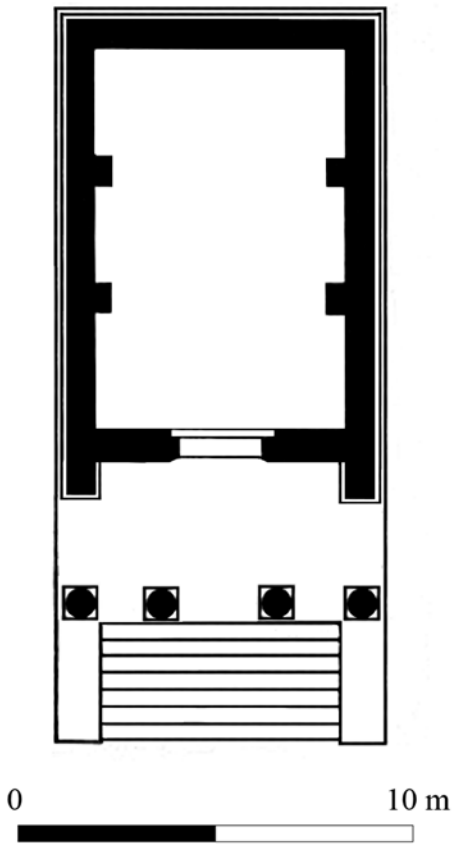


Figure 25: Plan of temple 3 at Sī' (the author, after *PPUAES* II ill. 341).

predominated, and Hellenistic architecture with regard to temple exteriors.[1193]

According to Ball, even in the provincial period, when there was a boom in monumental public buildings, the architecture in the Near East, including sanctuaries, still maintained a strong Near Eastern character, expressing the region's individuality. Similar to Gawlikowski's argument, Ball suggested that there is merely a superficial appearance of Graeco-Roman architectural forms which only embellishes those sanctuaries that remained fundamentally Near Eastern, especially when looking at their interiors.[1194]

Butcher concurred with Ball's argument on the diversity of temples, expressing the region's individuality, claiming that it is unrealistic to provide any standard models for religious architecture in the Near East, despite providing some generic common architectural patterns. At the same time, Butcher did not disregard the presence of the many basic elements of Graeco-Roman architectural decoration and the fact that it undoubtedly had a meaning. He, nevertheless, questioned whether those who visited or worshipped in such places perceived this as a foreign import. For instance, according to Butcher the use of the podium, a typical feature of Graeco-Roman archetypal temples, can have a religious purpose, i.e. the general desire to raise the sanctified above the level of profane everyday life. He maintained that it is very unlikely that this 'new' exterior appearance altered the rituals and natures of the cults, especially considering the interior of temples, which were different from Graeco-Roman models.[1195] He also suggested that the adoption of Classical elements may be more an expression of taste and fashion of the elite,[1196] as they would be the people who contributed to the erection of temples and their embellishment. As Kropp pointed out, it could be just a veneer with no meaning,[1197] so, a 'superficial veneer', using Sartre's term when he considered the phenomenon of Hellenisation (§ Ch.4.3). Kropp also complemented Butcher's argument by saying that most of these architectural features indicate an 'unbroken continuity' over time which does not affect religious performances and cults.[1198]

[1193] Gawlikowski 1989.
[1194] Ball 2000: 394, 396.
[1195] Butcher 2003: 357–8.
[1196] Butcher 2003: 274.
[1197] Kropp 2013a: 340.
[1198] Kropp 2013a: 340.

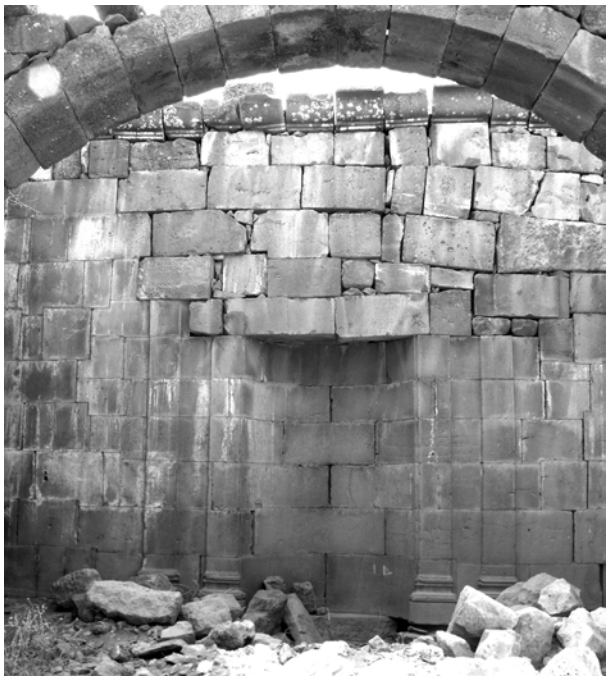


Figure 26: The temple apse at Breikeh (the author 2010).

Figure 27: Photograph of the apse in the temple at 'Atīl, showing niches on the façade (the author 2010).

Freyberger and Segal did not really engage in this discussion on the complexity of Near Eastern religious architecture.[1199] Freyberger, instead, dwelt on the use of Graeco-Roman design and architectural decoration coming from Rome when looking at major sanctuaries in the Near East.[1200] Segal divided temples and sanctuaries in the Near East (from the late 1st century BC to the late 3rd AD) into Vitruvian types, which derived from and had Hellenistic-Roman layouts, and non-Vitruvian temples. The former are those from the provincial period. He provided detailed information about their architecture, although this can only be verified for the rural cult centres in the Hauran; occasionally he did not consider new interpretations of the sanctuaries provided by recent archaeological investigations, such as the French team's investigations over the last three decades.[1201] In one of his articles, Segal previously offered the same division specifically for temples in the Hauran in both rural and urban contexts,[1202] but he did not consider other architectural elements in the provincial period and how temples with a Graeco-Roman plan were incorporated into the pre-existing sanctuaries.

When looking specifically in the Hauran, Dentzer-Feydy argued that the architectural style of the Hauran did not adopt architectural and decorative elements directly derived from Rome but rather integrated those that had developed almost exclusively in the Near East. She discussed Ionic and Corinthian capitals in the Hauran and she provided an overview of the architectural transformation in Syria in the provincial period.[1203] Thus, a systematic comprehensive analysis focusing only on the architecture of rural cult centres across the Hauran, which has been lacking, is now supplied in this chapter. I will start by examining the layout of rural cult centres in the Hauran, then move on to analyse their capitals and finally outline the architectural decorative motifs.

Looking at their layout, ten temples seem to have an external Graeco-Roman layout (al-Mushennef, 'Atīl, Breikeh, Deir al-Meshqūq, Hebrān Mismiyyeh Rimet Hazim Ṣanamein, Sleim and temple 3 at Sī') and have a podium. The temple at Deir al-Meshqūq is the only example from this group that does not present a podium on the basis of the Princeton University team's reconstruction (Appendix). They are mostly dated to the provincial period apart from temple 3 at Sī' and the first phase of the temple at Sleim dated to the first century AD.[1204] Their Graeco-Roman layout generally varies from the distyle *in antis* to the protostyle tetrastyle type (Appendix). The former means that the entrance hall of the vestibule has two columns with the side walls of the room where god statue was placed, extending to the front of the

[1199] As Ball points out, Millar also mentions that that temples in most remote locations, such as those in the Damascus region, were built in the Graeco-Roman style (Millar 1993: 310– 1, 505; Ball 2000: 217).
[1200] Freyberger 1989; 1991; 1998: 55–62.
[1201] Segal 2013.
[1202] Segal 2008.
[1203] Dentzer-Feydy 1989: 466 ff.; 1990a; 1990b.
[1204] Dentzer 1985: 69; Dentzer Feydy 1986: 277–9.

porch and terminating with two antae. This type is found at ʻAtīl (Figure 24), al-Mushennef and Sleim. Prostyle type has standing columns across the front of the temple, forming a portico. Protostyle tetrastyle type means that it has four columns. This type is found at Breikeh, Deir al-Meshqūq, Ṣanamein, temple 3 at Sī' (Figure 25) and Hebrān. However, we cannot be certain of the plan of temple 3 at Sī', temples at Deir al-Meshqūq and Hebrān, as they are based on a reconstruction from the early 20th century and it is not possible to re-examine their layout due to the presence of modern-day structures (like in the second case) or there are no standing remains in situ apart from scattered remains the backyard of the sheikh's house (in the case of Hebrān). There is one example of a hexastyle prostyle plan at Mismiyyeh meaning that there was a portico with six columns in front of the temple (Appendix). At Rimet Hazim the temple was a simple rectangular cella on a podium (Appendix).

In examples where the interior of the temple has survived, or can be reconstructed, it does not have a Graeco-Roman plan; it has an adyton, which is common feature in temples in the Near East in the provincial period,[1205] but was already used in the Hauran and in the Near East in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.4.5). Unlike other examples in the Near East, the back of the adyton in the Hauran has an apse at its centre, and, in most cases, it is not on a raised level. The apse at the back of adyton is not a common feature elsewhere in the Near East; Will has considered it a typical distinctive feature in the Hauran.[1206] It is found at Mismiyyeh, Ṣanamein and possibly also at Sleim.[1207] It also appears at Breikeh (Figure 26). In the case of Ṣanamein, the adyton is preceded by a few steps.[1208]

Furthermore, rural temples in the Hauran often have two niches placed at either side of the doorway in the façade; this appears in two temples from the 1st century AD (Sī' and Sūr al-Lejā), but seems to become a common feature in the provincial period (ʻAtīl, al-Mushennef, Breikeh, Mismiyyeh, Manāra Henū and Mashāra) (Appendix) (Figure 27). In the case of Manāra Henū and Mashāra, only conchs that would have been from niches have been recovered in the ruins of the temples (Appendix). The niches at Sī' differ from the other examples in the Hauran: they are two decorated framed openings, like windows, on either side of the doorway, and with a decorated door frame of the adyton at Sī' 8. They have been considered as decorated niches, such as those that appear, instead, in façades of other rural cult centres in the Hauran.[1209] Niches are used in a few sanctuaries in the provincial period at Palmyra, and in one case in Lebanon and in the northern Phoenician area (the sanctuary of Baetocaece), but they were inserted in the façade of the adyton, instead, as at Sī' 8. [1210] Due to the high concentration of this feature in the area (9 out of 19 temples whose façade is known) and its difference from examples in the Near East, Gawlikowski and Dentzer-Feydy proposed that this feature was a typical characteristic of the Hauran.[1211] It would be more precise to say that this feature was also used elsewhere in the Near East (in Lebanon and at Palmyra) but it was locally adapted in the Hauran to feature in a different part of the temple.

Additionally, Sī' has a variation of propylaea, monumental gateways that are often components of major sanctuaries in the Near East in the provincial period, which were not used elsewhere in the Roman Empire.[1212] Unlike propylaea in the main sanctuaries of the Near East that have a straight path, at Sī' there are two monumental propylaea with a different orientation. These give access to two different temples. One consists of a forecourt and a flight of steps leading to a temple built on an elevated area. The forecourt is the first courtyard at the entrance of the sanctuary but it is the third and the farthest away forecourt from temple 1 (i.e. the temple dedicated to Baalshamin); it is, therefore, conventionally labelled 'forecourt 3.' The temple under examination is temple 3 with a protostyle tetrastyle layout; it was built on an elevated area and dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (roughly AD 70–106) on the basis of the style of Nabataean capitals (§ Ch.3.1),[1213] whereas the temple of Baalshamin (temple 1), with

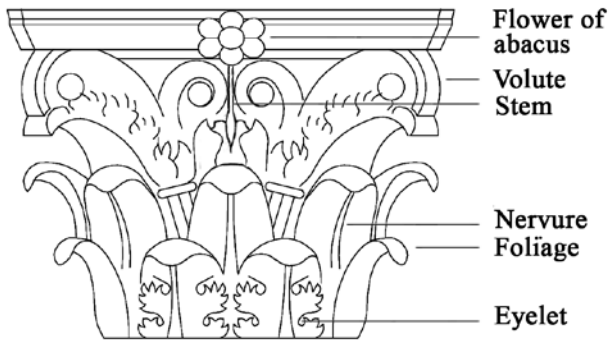


Figure 28: Drawing of a Vitruvian Corinthian capital (the author, after Amy and Gros 1979: fig. 23).

[1205] Will 1957.
[1206] Will 1957: 138–9.
[1207] Will 1957: 138–9; Gawlikowski 1989: 331.
[1208] *PPUAES* II: 316–7 ill.289.
[1209] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 107–08.
[1210] Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 104 fig. 1–3, pl.48–9, fig. 76; Schlumberger 1951: 33–4, fig. 14; Collart and Vicari 1969: 155 ff.; Seyrig *et al.* 1975: fig. 52; Gawlikowski and Pietrzykowski 1980.
[1211] Gawlikowski 1989: 333–4; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 107–8.
[1212] Dentzer 1989; René 1998: 34; Ball 2000: 326–9; Butcher 2003: 351–8. Examples are in the sanctuaries of Zeus at Damascus, of Artemis at Gerasa, of Hercules at Amman, and in sanctuaries at Palmyra and Baalbek (Ball 2000: 326–9).
[1213] Dentzer 1985: 69.

Figure 29: Corinthian capitals from the temples at 'Atīl and al-Mushennef (the author 2010).

Figure 30: A capital from the temple at Dmeir (the author 2010).

Figure 31: A Corinthian capital from the eastern portico of the sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra (Schlumberger 1933: pl. 34.4).

the *theatron*, was from the end of the 1st century BC, while the temple dedicated to Seeia, and preceded by a courtyard (forecourt 2), was dated to the early 1st century AD. With the other propylaea, worshippers had to cross forecourt 3 through two monumental gateways, then on to courtyard 2, associated with temple 2, before being able to enter the *theatron* before temple 1 (Figure 4). One of the monumental gateways was the gate between forecourts 2 and 3, which originally was erroneously called 'Nabataean' because of the floral decoration erroneously associated with the Nabataean decorative style (§ Ch.3.1).[1214] The second, named the Roman Gate, was positioned at the entrance of forecourt 3 and dated to mid 2nd/ early 3rd century AD on the basis of inscriptions.[1215] It is aligned with the earliest temple of the sanctuary and leads to it. It indicates the continuity of the use of temple 1 until the late provincial period.[1216] The sacred way from forecourt 3 to Sī' 8 in the valley[1217] seems to be an extension of the two propylaea. The sacred way from the Roman Gate to Sī' 8 does not seem to show evidence of a monumental structure, such as a colonnade.

This series of forecourts with a staircase and gates at Sī' indicates the assimilation of the common features of *propylaea* used in the Near East in the provincial period, as well as its local adaptation due to the ongoing use of the 1st-century BC temple and *theatron* in the second half of the 1st century AD when temple 3, and most likely forecourt 3, were added, and in the late provincial period: we can assume this on the basis of the Roman Gate at the entrance of forecourt 3 aligned with temple 1. This is an example that shows integration

[1214] Dentzer 1985: 69.
[1215] *RAO* I no.11; *PAAES* III no.431–2.
[1216] Dentzer-Feydy 2010.
[1217] Dentzer 1985.

of a Graeco-Roman feature (temple 3 with protostyle tetrastyle layout) and a common element of the Near East in the provincial period (propylaea) into a pre-existing building with 'Near Eastern' characteristics, as well as the persistence of the latter into the provincial period. This local adaptation is also dictated by the irregular terrain on the hill where the main complex of the sanctuary at Sī' is situated; therefore, the expansion of the sanctuary can be seen more as organic building development while trying to maintain the standard geometric pattern of Near Eastern religious sanctuaries.[1218]

Capitals from provincial cult centres in the Hauran predominantly follow the style of Attic bases and standard Corinthian capitals widely developed in the Roman provinces in the Near East. Attic bases seem to have the same design: a lower torus that is more projecting and convex than the upper torus, and a fillet above the concave scotia, which is detached from the upper torus. In the Hauran, they are found in temple 3 and in courtyard 3 at Sī', as well as in the temples at 'Atīl, Ṣanamein and al-Mushennef.[1219]

The Corinthian capitals from the provincial period are named by Denzter-Feydy as 'normal' as they resemble the model widely used in Rome and in the Western Roman Empire, which is the Vitruvian model, named after Vitruvius, who wrote a treatise on Roman architecture (*De Architectura*) (Figure 28). Yet examples from the Near East do not follow the norms of proportions imposed by Vitruvius.[1220] The main elements of this type are: two rows of leaves, two cauliculi (stalks rising behind the upper row of leaves), two calyces (cup-like flower) that go outwards, two helices (small volutes under the abacus) and angular volutes[1221] (Figure 29).

The 'normal' Corinthian capitals recovered in rural cult centres of the Hauran are classified into two categories by Dentzer-Feydy on the basis of similar features of capitals.[1222] One group (called group 5) includes Corinthian capitals from the temple of Sleim. The other (group 6) includes capitals from the temples at Sleim, 'Atīl, al-Mushennef, Ṣanamein and Mismiyyeh, as well as examples recovered out of context in the sites where temples have been recorded, as in the case of Rimet Hazim, Hebrān, Deir (South), and from the provincial structure at Sī' (Appendix) (Figure 30).[1223] The common elements of groups 5 and 6 are the cauliculae and the moulding below the echinus. The cauliculae are thin, cylindrical, smooth or twisted, and crowned by a smooth collar and visible from the top of the leaves of the first row. The stem of a small flower on the abacus is finely rolled at the centre of the calathus. Bead-and-reel moulding and a line of meanders are the mouldings below the echinus. The capitals from group 5 (one type at Sleim) additionally have cable moulding. The volutes and leaves differ in these two groups. In group 5, volutes are large and contrasted with the small abacus; their profile is quadrangular. The volutes roll upwards and they a button at their tip. The helices do not join at the middle of the calathus and they are slightly oblique. In group 6, the volutes are small and consist of two superimposed fillets, or a cavetto superimposed by a fillet. The volutes coil towards the top. The helices touch each other and the abacus[1224] (Figure 29). The acanthus leaves from group 5 are flat and smooth and have a trapezoidal base and small foliage that consists of four parts. Their nervures are V-shaped and their eyelets are small and drop-shaped. This type of plain and long acanthus leaf is also used in composite capitals, which consist of the upper part of the Ionic capital and leaves from Corinthian capitals below the echinus[1225] (Figure 30). Instead, the leaves from group 6 are rinceaux drop-shaped. They consist of five lobes and two half-lobes at the base, each lobe comprising three or four long and lanceolate digitations. The axial rib is broad and flat, widens in trapezium at the base, and is limited by grooves. Digitate lobes are hollowed out with open V-grooves and at the bottom of the sinus there is a very large curled eyelet[1226] (Figure 29).

These standard Corinthian capitals share common elements with the pre-provincial heterodox Corinthian capitals, i.e. the simple abacus with floral decoration, one moulding below the echinus, and the bead-and-reel astragal (§ Ch.3.5). These indicate the partial, unbroken continuity with pre-provincial traditions.

The temple of Sleim has the two types of Corinthian capitals from groups 5 and 6.[1227]

When looking at similar examples of 'normal' capitals outside Hauran, Dentzer-Feydy suggested that they belonged to a common style developed in the province of Syria, as this type of capital was found in 1st-century temples in Baalbek, Damascus and Palmyra, and later, in temples in the Hauran from the end of the 1st century AD, but mainly in

[1218] Dentzer 1989: 305.
[1219] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 81–2 pl.78.
[1220] Dentzer-Feydy 1990a.
[1221] Schlumberger 1933: 285.
[1222] Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 645–62.
[1223] Dentzer-Feydy 1990b. In Dentzer-Feydy's analysis there are other groups (1–4) that are not considered here, as they are found in urban contexts of the Hauran or are from the pre-provincial period.
[1224] Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 646, 652.
[1225] Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 646.
[1226] Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 652.
[1227] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 279, 297.

the 2nd century AD (Figure 31).[1228] The type of leaves from group 6 is largely used in Syria, especially in Palmyra from the end of the 1st century AD and the 2nd century AD (where the capitals have large curled eyelets).[1229] However, the rinceaux acanthus leaves with large eyelets are also found in the Forum of Rome,[1230] at various sites in Italy, Gaul[1231] and North Africa.[1232] These, nevertheless, differ from the examples from the Hauran: in the former each lobe is treated as a concavity, in which the relief of the digitations is not often marked, whereas in the capitals from the Hauran the relief of the digitations is marked with flared V-shaped curvatures. This type of treatment is found in the baluster of an Ionic capital in Ephesus[1233] and in the temple of Antioch of Pisidia, where the lobes have three fingers whose tips bend up and down.[1234]

The capitals from group 5 (the early example at Sleim) are not as common as those from group 6 in the Near East: they most likely originated at Palmyra, where the earliest example is found,[1235] and a few examples are known in the Lebanon[1236] and sporadically across the Near East.[1237] They are not found in the Western Roman Empire.

Among the common elements of the two types of 'normal' Corinthian capitals (Dentzer-Feydy groups 5 and 6), this type of cauliculus is found on the capitals labelled Syrian in the large temple at Baalbek,[1238] the capitals of the southern theatre at Gerasa and at Corinth.[1239] A similar variant of this type of cauliculus (fluted and untwisted) is found on capitals from the beginning of the 1st century AD at Palmyra,[1240] with other examples in Rome in the Trajanic and Hadrianic periods.[1241]

The second common features in these capitals in the Hauran – meanders – are used as decorative patterns in Ionic capitals in Hermon and[1242] Doric capitals from the synagogues of Gamla and Dikke on the Jawlan[1243] (first part of the 1st century AD).[1244] It has an Alexandrine influence, as found in earlier examples in the museum of Alexandria,[1245] Palazzo delle colonne at Ptolemais,[1246] Apollonia, and the harbour of Cyrene.[1247]

Despite their fragmentary nature, it is possible to have an understanding of architectural and decorative elements in rural cult centres across the Hauran. They have plain (al-Mushennef and Ṣananmein)[1248] or decorated Ionic doorframes (fragmentary evidence at Būsân, Dhakīr, Deir as-Smeij, Mayāmas, al-Mushennef, courtyard 3 at Sī' and Sleim). Only the provincial southern temple at 'Atīl has an arched pediment.[1249]

Among the rural temples in the Hauran, there is a difference in the decoration of cornices: the drip cornice at Sleim and al-Mushennef has a fascia alternating between swastika meanders and rosettes, whereas the one at Ṣanamein has floral decorations

Figure 32: Cornice and sima from the temple at Sleim (the author 2010).

[1228] Dentzer-Feydy 1988: 224.
[1229] Schlumberger 1933: pl.XXIX, 2,3, 4; XXX; XXXI, 2, 3, 4; Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 654.
[1230] Heilmeyer 1970: pl.2.1–2 and pl.3.3-4.
[1231] Amy and Gros 1979: pl.56–65.
[1232] Pensabene 1982: 20 ff. pl.10 ff.
[1233] Heilmeyer 1970: 86 pl.22. 2.
[1234] Heilmeyer 1970: 81–3.
[1235] The examples at Palmyra are: the sanctuary of Baalshamin (AD 67–90) (Collart and Vicari 1969: 145–8 pl.88–90), the temple of Nebu (1st century AD) (Bounni 1992-2004: 31; Bounni *et al.* 1992: 31 pl.XLV fig.70, 72) and in the Diocletian Camp (end of the 3rd century AD) (Michalowski 1962: 39–41, 85–8, fig.88–91.
[1236] Examples are: Tyr (Lebanon) (Pensabene 1997: 300 fig.21), isolated column at Baalbek (Parrot 1929: 104–11), temple (A) at Hoson Niha (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: fig.169e), sanctuary at Fakra (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: fig.61), the temple in *antis* at Ain Libnaya (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 176 fig. 264), and the temple at Zekweh (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 200 fig.296–7).
[1237] Cases from northern Phoenicia are the temple at Baetocaece (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: fig.107), temple at Mastabeh (Ahmed 2010: 113), one in Palestine (the tomb of the Queen Helena of Adiabene) (Fischer 1990: 24–6 pl.7.38–9), one from north of Gerasa (Detweiler 1938: 121 pl.23 c), and one from northern Syria (the sanctuary of Zeus Medbakhos at Shekh Barat) (Tchalenko 1953-58: 108, pl.CLXXIV 2).
[1238] Wiegand *et al.* 1921: pl.65.
[1239] Heilmeyer 1970: 64–5 pl.13.1.
[1240] Schlumberger 1933: pl.XXIX 2, 4, XXX, XXXI, p.XXXII 1.
[1241] Heilmeyer 1970: pl.29.3–4, pl.30, pl.51.3.
[1242] They are: Rahlé, Burkush and Deïr al-Shair (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 224, fig. 330–1, 237, fig. 361, 260, fig. 399).
[1243] Ma'oz 1981: 36-7, 109.
[1244] Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 650.
[1245] Ronczewski 1923: 155-6 fig.43.
[1246] Pesce 1950: fig. 13, pl.X.
[1247] Wright 1976: 197 fig.17 pl.XLb.
[1248] Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 646–51, fig.7–8.
[1249] Abou-Assaf 1998: fig.24.

Figure 33: Cornice and entablature of the temple at Sleim (the author 2010).

(undulating tendrils and long leaves with three leaflets on each side of the stem and two cherries in the middle of a tendril) (Figures 32 and 35). This variation most likely indicates the different building phases of the temples. The preserved entablature of the temples at al-Mushennef and Sleim is dated to the beginning of the provincial period (the end of the 1st century), whereas the one at Ṣanamein to the second half of the 2nd century AD (Figures 33-35). [1250]

The swastika meander was a common motif on entablatures and niche frames of rural temples in the Hauran in the provincial period (al-Mushennef, ʻAtīl, Deir as-Smeij, Dhakīr, Inkhil, Mayāmas, Rimet Hazim, Ṣanamein and Sleim), starting to be used in the Hauran in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.4.5).

Another common decoration in temples in the Hauran in the provincial period is the wreath-like motif. It is formed of S-shaped thick stems and long leaves (small pointed leaflets) that do not seem separated and distinct but they are part of the same block of the stem; it does not have tendrils. This adornment decorates a frieze possibly coming from the provincial structure in the north-western part of courtyard 3 at Sīʼ, and the doorway of the façade and friezes of the temples at al-Mushennef, ʻAtīl, Deir as-Smeij, Ṣanamein, blocks from Dhakīr, Hebrān, Muṭāʻiyyeh, Sleim, Saḥr and in Serail at Canatha (Appendix) (Figures 34 and 35). However, this decoration also appears in clear pre-provincial contexts, such as the frieze of the temple of Baalshamin, and blocks of the façade of the *theatron* at Sīʼ (Appendix).

Realistic and sinuous palmettes, consisting of long leaves with both upwards and downwards spirals at the end are found in the *sima* of the entablature of the temple of Sleim and Ṣanamein and architectural

[1250] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 279, 297.

Figure 34: The wreath-like branches and swastika meander motifs from the temple at ʻAtīl (the author 2010).

Figure 35: The façade of the temple at al-Mushennef, showing fragments of decorative motifs widely used in rural cult centres of the Hauran (the author 2010).

blocks of the entablature at Saḥr (Figures 32–33) (Appendix). Realistic and sinuous rosettes are used as an intermediary motif for meanders on architraves of provincial temples of the Hauran (ʻAtīl, al-Mushennef, Rimet Hazim, Saḥr, Ṣanamein and Sleim) (Figures 34–35) (Appendix).

According to Dentzer-Feydy's analysis, the egg-and-dart motif is usually sculpted upside down and the egg can be oval or almond-shaped, which arbitrarily varies from one block to another. It evolves over time in the Hauran. In the pre-provincial examples the upper part of the egg is cut and the darts are long rods with a visible central nervure. On profile the actual relief is rather flat. It appears in the Nabataean doorway and lintel with the inscription mentioning Agrippa II at Sīʼ. The motifs seem to be tight and in a constricted place, appearing more simplified than other examples in the religious architecture

Figure 36: The North Gate at Gerasa, Jordan (the author 2010).

of the Hauran which also presents Graeco-Roman features. In this latter case, the profile of the motif is more concave and the decorative motifs are more articulated, with eggs represented as wider, sinuous and realistic. Dentzer-Feydy pointed out that this developed motif is found on architrave blocks at Mayāmas, al-Mushennef, Saḥr, Sleim, and in the rubbles of forecourt 3 at Sī', which possibly belong to the provincial structure,[1251] architraves at 'Atīl,[1252] Ṣanamein[1253] and Rimet Hazim.[1254] Some isolated blocks at Mismiyyeh[1255] are also decorated with this motif (Figures 32–33, 36). It seems to be a typical decoration in Syria and the Near East in the provincial period,[1256] including the examples in the Hauran, with the exception of the cult centre of Saḥr, dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (Appendix). Additionally the niches at Sī' 8 and the door frame of the sanctuary at Sūr al-Lejā seem to have this motif in an even more stylised way than the first group, as it consists of a row of simple incised half-eggs.[1257] The variation of this motif seems to be determined overall by the different period in which the temple was built.

The bead-and-reel motif used in temples at the end of the pre-provincial and beginning of the provincial period consists of a rhomboid or oval-shaped reel. This is found on architraves of temples at al-Mushennef and Sleim, on a cornice at Saḥr, on an architrave at Rimet Hazim,[1258] on niche-frames at Sī' 8,[1259] as well as on architectural blocks, e.g. a fragment of a Corinthian capital from the provincial structure at Sī'.[1260] The motif developed into a chubby, rounder, bead-like shape of the reel in architraves of certain temples at Ṣanamein[1261] and 'Atīl (second half of the 2nd century AD).[1262] This decorative element is mainly found in the provincial period, but was already used in the last part of the pre-provincial period (second half of the 1st century AD) (e.g. Sī' 8, Saḥr, Rimet Hazim). The evolution of this decoration depends on when the structure of the temple was built, as it was for the egg motif.

Most of the architectural elements mentioned above appear in the architecture of the Near East in the provincial period, including arched architraves and pediments, Ionic doorframes, decorative motifs of wreath-like vine branches,[1263] realistic sinuous

[1251] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 90.
[1252] *PPUAES* II: 344–6 Pl.120.
[1253] Freyberger 1989 Pl.23b.
[1254] Dentzer-Feydy 1998: 207–9 fig.14–5, 18.
[1255] *Hauran* IV I: 106–7.
[1256] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 90; *Hauran* IV I: 106–7.
[1257] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: Pl.82: 11–13, Pl.84.
[1258] *Hauran* IV I: 125.
[1259] Dentzer-Feydy *et al.* 2003: Pl.84.
[1260] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 321 Fig.23.17.
[1261] Freyberger 1989 Pl.23b.
[1262] *PPUAES* II: 344–6 Pl.120.
[1263] Examples are from the sanctuary at Baetocaece (northern Syria) (visit by the present author 2010), blocks in the foundation T of the sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra (Syria) (Seyrig 1940: 302, pl.29–30; Seyrig

palmettes[1264] and rosettes,[1265] swastika meanders,[1266] egg motifs[1267] and the bead-and-reel design (Figures 32–36). The upper part of the entablature of provincial rural temples in the Hauran where it survives (Sleim, al-Mushennef and Ṣanamein) follows the same design as those used in the architecture in the Near East in the provincial period (Figures 32, 33, 36), comprising, from the top, a cornice decorated with a band for the drip, consoles and dentils on corona decorated with modillions and egg-and-dart motif (Figures 32–33);[1268] the consoles are covered and surrounded by a continuous row of oval egg-and-dart pattern on all three sides (Figures 32 and 33). This type of decoration is also found on architectural blocks at Saḥr.[1269]

The architectural and decorative elements that seem exclusively developed in Syria are arched architraves and pediments, [1270] the swastika meander decoration (Appendix),[1271] as well as adyta[1272] and Corinthian capitals with smooth, long acanthus leaves.[1273] Ionic doorframes,[1274] Attic bases,[1275] realistic sinuous palmettes[1276] and egg motif[1277] are, instead, architectural and decorative elements used in the Hauran and in Near East, but they come from Asia Minor, inspired by Roman decorative art in the Augustan period. This set of architectural elements shows that the religious architecture in the Hauran had similar patterns and styles across the Hauran in the provincial period.

The number of rural cult centres built and in use in the provincial period in the Hauran, including pre-existing sanctuaries modified in the provincial period, or that were still in use in the provincial period, such as al-Mushannef (66%, 29 out of 44 examples accurately dated, 74% if we include sites that seem to be provincial, but no accurate dating evidence is provided) (Appendix) (§ Ch.2.3 footnote 228), signifies the peak of the religious public building programme in the provincial period. It can be interpreted as being a consequence of the demographic boom, especially under the Roman control, as the founding of various

et al. 1975: pl.33), blocks and lintels of niches with griffins and the triad in the sanctuary of Baalshamin in Palmyra (Syria) (Collart and Vicari 1969: 95, 97 pl.1–3), doorway of the small temple and frieze of the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Wiegand 1925: pl.51–2; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97 note 236), and the lintel of the architrave of the sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra (Syria) (Seyrig *et al.* 1975: pl.33. 2).

[1264] Some examples come from the sima of the cornice of the sanctuary of Jupiter at Damascus (southern Syria) (Freyberger 1989: pl.22), the sima of the cornice of the kalibé at Bosra (Freyberger 1989: pl.11a, 34b), the *nymphaeum* of Gerasa (Jordan) (Freyberger 1989: pl.34a), lintels of the temple of Bel at Palmyra (Syria) (Seyrig *et al.* 1975: pl. 132), the sima of the cornice of the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Wiegand 1925: 8 ff. fig.11, 14, 19), the sima of the cornice of temples from Asia Minor and northern Syria, i.e. Lattakia (Freyberger 1991: 24 pl.10c).

[1265] Examples are from the sanctuary at Baetocaece (visit by the present author 2010); the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Wiegand 1925: 8 ff. fig.12, 14, 19, 37), the sanctuary of Damascus (southern Syria) (Freyberger 1989: 24, 22d), the North Gate at Jerash (Jordan) (Detweiler 1938), the cornice and modillions of the cornice ceiling of the temple of Bel at Palmyra (Syria) (Seyrig *et al.* 1975: 130–2), the lintel of the door of sanctuary of Baalshamin at Palmyra (Syria) (Collart and Vicari 1969: pl.71).

[1266] Some examples are from the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Wiegand 1925: 8 ff. fig.19, pl23; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208), the temple at Burqush (Lebanon) (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 237; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208), the sanctuary of Jupiter at Damascus (Syria) (Freyberger 1989: pl.22b–d, 23a; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208), the temple of Bel at Palmyra (Syria) (Seyrig *et al.* 1975: 124; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208) and the altar of Artemis at Ephesus and temple of Aphrodite in Aphrodisias (Asia Minor) (Gros 1976: pl.56).

[1267] Examples are from entablatures of temples at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Schlumberger 1933: pl.32: 2; Seyrig *et al.* 1975: pl. 128; Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 649), the temple of Bel at Palmyra (Wiegand 1925: pl.55, 60; Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 649), temples in Asia Minor from the Hellenistic, Augustan to the Roman period, such as the temple of Apollo and the altar of Artemis at Ephesus (Gros 1976: pl.56–7).

[1268] Freyberger 1989: 21, pl.22b–d, 23a, 34a–b.

[1269] *Hauran* IV I: 124–5.

[1270] Brown 1942: 389–93, 399; Lyttleton 1974: 197.

[1271] Some examples are from the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Wiegand 1925: 8 ff.fig.19, pl.23; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208), the temple at Burqush (Lebanon) (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 237; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208), the sanctuary of Jupiter at Damascus (Syria) (Freyberger 1989: pl.22b–d, 23a; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208), the temple of Bel at Palmyra (Syria) (Seyrig *et al.* 1975: 124; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95 note 208), and the altar of Artemis at Ephesus and temple of Aphrodite in Aphrodisias (Asia Minor) (Gros 1976: pl.56).

[1272] Will 1957.

[1273] Some examples are found in the sanctuary of Baalshamin at Palmyra (Syria) (Collart and Vicari 1969: 145–48 pl.88–90), the temple of Nebu at Palmyra (Syria) (Bounni 1992–2004: 31; Bounni *et al.* 1992: 31, pl.45, fig.10, 72), the Diocletian Camp at Palmyra (Syria) (Michalowski 1962: 39–41, 85–88, fig.88–91), the North Gate at Gerasa (Jordan) (Detweiler 1938: 121, pl.23 c), the tomb of the Queen Helena of Adiabene (Palestine) (Fischer 1990: 24–6 pl.7.38–9), the temple at Baetocaece (northern Phoenicia) (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: fig.107), the temple at Mastabeh (northern Phoenicia) (Ahmed 2010: 113), Tyr (Lebanon) (Pensabene 1997: 300, fig.21), isolated column at Baakbek (Lebanon) (Parrot 1929: 104–11), temple (A) at Hoson Niha (Lebanon) (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: fig.169 e), the sanctuary at Fakra (Lebanon) (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: fig.61), the temple in *antis* at Ain Libnaya (Lebanon) (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 176, fig. 264), the temple at Zekweh (Lebanon) (Krenker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 200, fig.296–97), the sanctuary of Zeus Medbakhos at Shekh Barat (northern Syria) (Tchalenko 1953–58: 108 pl.174, 2).

[1274] Denzter-Feydy 2003: 87.

[1275] Shoe-Meritt 1969.

[1276] Some examples come from the sima of the cornice of the sanctuary of Jupiter at Damascus (southern Syria) (Freyberger 1989: pl.22), the sima of the cornice of the kalibé at Bosra (Freyberger 1989: pl.11a, 34b), the *nymphaeum* of Gerasa (Jordan) (Freyberger 1989: pl.34a), lintels of the temple of Bel at Palmyra (Syria) (Seyrig *et al.* 1975: pl. 132), the sima of the cornice of the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Wiegand 1925: 8 ff. fig.11, 14, 19), the sima of the cornice of temples from Asia Minor and northern Syria, i.e. Lattakia (Freyberger 1991: 24 pl.10c).

[1277] Examples are from entablatures of temples at Baalbek (Lebanon) (Schlumberger 1933: pl.32: 2; Seyrig *et al.* 1975: pl. 128; Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 649), the temple of Bel at Palmyra (Wiegand 1925: pl.55, 60; Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 649), temples in Asia Minor from the Hellenistic, Augustan to the Roman period, such as the temple of Apollo and the altar of Artemis at Ephesus (Gros 1976: pl.56–57).

cities and mother-villages in the provincial period in the Hauran clearly demonstrates (§ Ch.2.3). The Hauran was part of this widespread boom in monumental religious building development across the Near East in the provincial period. Its rural cult centres have some major architectural elements commonly used in the Near East.

This building development presenting similar architectural patterns across the Near East, gradually spreading in accordance with the Levant's annexation to the Roman Empire: first, in Palmyra (in AD 33) and in the northern part of the Levant, then, at the end of the 1st century–beginning of the 2nd century AD, towards the south (in Palestine, Decapolis, the Hauran, and what was part of Nabataea). A homogenous evolution of architectural and decorative style carried on into the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.[1278]

In addition, architectural features widely developed in the Near East in the provincial period, were gradually introduced before the actual annexation to the Roman province. Examples are the Graeco-Roman layout of the temple at Sleim and temple 3 at Sī', decorative patterns of architectural blocks at Saḥr, and occasionally at Sī' 8, which are all dated to the second half of the 1st century AD.

On the one hand, the use of provincial decorative elements in the Hauran may have been eased by the temporary Roman control of the Hauran in AD 34–37, as recorded by Josephus. On the other, pre-provincial architectural, sculptural and religious traits in rural cult centres in the Hauran already belonged to the koiné of the hinterland of the Near East (§ Ch.4). Additionally, some typical provincial architectural elements across the Near East, including the Hauran (e.g. the tripartite adyton and the swastika meander motif) were already part of the koiné in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.4). Later they were integrated into, and became part of, the architecture developed in the Near East in the provincial period. Therefore, this indicates a continuous merging and assimilation of building traditions between the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East since the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.4.5), which was carried on into the provincial period and which could have been caused by movements of people who carried these traits and their interactions. The unification of different cultures and kingdoms in Syria, including the rural territory of the Hauran, under one political power, facilitated contacts and exchange, and boosted the chance of influences, including religious architecture, between different identities in the Near Eastern network. This may have been helped by the Roman road system that connected the main urban centres (Palmyra, Petra, Dura Europos) and areas within the Hauran, for instance (§ Ch.4.5).

The analysis of rural cult centres in the Hauran has demonstrated that we cannot talk about the impact of Romanisation, implying a drastic change in the religious architecture as a consequence of the annexation of the Hauran to the Roman Empire. We cannot even talk about influence on religious architecture from Rome, as argued by Freyberger, or about new Graeco-Roman elements in the religious architecture in the Near East, as Segal did, without going into a deeper discussion.

As argued for architecture in the Near East, apart from the Graeco-Roman exterior of temples, which is widely accepted and discussed by scholars, architectural elements of rural cult centres in the Hauran did not come from Rome; they developed almost exclusively in the Near East when that area became part of the Roman Empire.

Furthermore, the new provincial Near Eastern architectural features were assimilated with the religious architecture of the Hauran, but at the same time occasionally locally adapted (the propylaea at Sī', the adyton and use of niches on the temple façade). This indicates the continuous renegotiation of religious elements between imperial dominion and local response, first argued by Bendlin and then supported by Kaizer (§ Ch.1.2).[1279]

The analysis of most of the architectural features of rural cult centres in the Hauran has, therefore, indicated that they were fundamentally Near Eastern with occasional local variation, such as the unusual plan of the propylaea at Sī' (due to the irregular terrain), the adyton and the use of niches on the temple façade. As with the use in rural cult centres in the Hauran of the Graeco-Roman exterior layout, the decorative elements originating from Asia Minor, ultimately from Rome, were used in the Near East, thus we cannot talk about a direct influence from Rome or Asia Minor, but more of the integration of Near Eastern elements within the religious architecture of the Hauran.

On the one hand, architectural features in provincial rural cult centres of the Hauran already used in the pre-provincial period (the adyton, the meander motif, and some of the heterodox Corinthian capitals) suggest 'the unbroken continuity' with the past, which is argued by Kropp for the use of adyton in the Near East. On the other hand, a large number of new, rural cult centres in the Hauran, with Graeco-Roman layout and provincial Near Eastern decoration, show that

[1278] Dentzer-Feydy 1989: 467, 469.

[1279] Bendlin 1997: 52–4; Kaizer 2000: 225–6; 2002: 27; 2013: 66–7.

there was a development and a substantial change in religious architectural style.

Following Butcher's suggestion on the adoption of Classical elements in the Near East as an expression of taste and fashion of the elite, Graeco-Roman exterior layouts and provincial Near Eastern decorative elements in the rural landscape of the Hauran may be down to the individual choices of members of the elite. As argued by Sartre for Greek inscriptions (§ Ch.4.3),[1280] adopting religious architectural elements widely known in the Near East, and which elites from other parts of Syria also used for their public monuments, indicates the need and the intention of the elites of the Hauran to be integrated within the Near East and to be recognised by other elites in the Near East.

Worshippers must have perceived this change in terms of embellishment and monumentalisation and the increase in number of temples with a different exterior layout. Worshippers must have been aware that these building developments and variations were connected by a political change in the region, together with the presence of Roman soldiers.

The use of a new exterior layout for Graeco-Roman temples, together with provincial Near Eastern architectural features, may have been more a sign of political propaganda, enabling the elites to show their social status and ability to produce a similar type of monumentality and embellishment already adopted by other cultures and elites in the Near East. Therefore, it would be inadequate to argue that these new elements were simply superficial veneers, albeit they mostly concern the exterior of these temples. The continuation or change of ritual practices from the pre-provincial to the provincial periods will be discussed in the following chapter when looking at the religious function of rural cult centres in the Hauran (§ Ch.6.1). Even if these new Graeco-Roman and provincial Near Eastern architectural elements were only a superficial veneer, they still indicate the influence of the Hauran on other cultures in the Near East, and its own resemblance to them in return.

5.6. Statuary style

In observing sculptures in the Near East in the provincial period, it is evident there is not a major alteration in their style from the pre-provincial period. In general, they maintained their own distinctive regional features, although these were occasionally less marked than in pre-provincial times.[1281] For instance human figures were less rigid and less rough than they appeared in pre-provincial statues, and the folds of the drape were more plastic. Furthermore, a major stylistic change came in the garments of human representations, with the adoption of Roman clothing: this would have been a distinctive trait used to represent a citizen loyal to the Roman Empire.

When looking at the overall statuary in the Hauran in the provincial period, Bolelli proposes an introduction of new subjects in the art of the Hauran in the provincial period: they are Heracles, Athena, Tyche, Nike and characters with specific garments, like the armour used by Roman soldiers, and a couple of examples of characters with mantles.[1282] However, the geometric style adopted in art from the Hauran in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.4.5) seems to have continued overall into the provincial period.[1283] Therefore, Bolelli's division between statues and reliefs in the pre-provincial and those from the provincial period is mostly based on a change of subject. Heracles, Athena, Tyche and Nike also appear in pre-provincial contexts, such as the sanctuaries at Sī' and Saḥr (Appendix). However, as the original place of recovery of statues is in most cases unknown, it is difficult to distinguish examples from the pre-provincial period from those from provincial times.[1284]

Therefore, in this section I will look only at statues that have specific garments and features that differ from those in the pre-provincial period, and examples that have less rigid representations of the human body and garments. I will consider cases that seem to come from a provincial context, i.e. two statue fragments from Dhakīr and a group of statuary fragments from the provincial structure at Sī'.

From Dhakīr, an armoured torso is depicted with a muscled cuirass with pteryges[1285] that was used by Roman soldiers. From the same site, a male statue head shows imperfections and wrinkles;[1286] this type of depiction is typically used in Roman art to portray a realistic human image.[1287] As the head is the correct size for the bust,[1288] these two fragments probably belonged to the same sculpture. Although the exact location the fragments were recovered from, and their original contexts, are unknown, they could have belonged to an honorific statue in the cult centre at Dhakīr, because vestiges of a temple are the only remains of a monumental building at this site.[1289] These two statue fragments are taken to represent a member of the Roman army for several reasons: a fragmentary inscription recovered at Dhakīr

[1280] Sartre 1985: 201–2.
[1281] Parlasca 1989.
[1282] Bolelli 1991: 73–80.
[1283] Bolelli 1991: 73–80.
[1284] Bolelli 1986: 311–72; Dentzer 1986: 407.
[1285] Bolelli 1991: 77; *Suw.* 1991 INV608 [341] (7, 22) pl.19.
[1286] Bolelli 1991: 75; *Suw.* 1991 INV568 [346] (7, 28) pl.19.
[1287] Walker 1995: 81–2.
[1288] *Suw.* 1991 INV568, 608 [341, 346] (7, 22, 28) pl.19.
[1289] Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297; 1992: 73, 76; 2008: 87.

has been interpreted to be dedicated by a centurion;[1290] Dhakīr was on the border of Leja, which was a territory that needed soldiers to control the road, and probably to maintain the order attained by the Herodian army (§ Ch.2), and where the Roman army's involvement in the religious life of rural cult centres was extensively attested (§ Ch.5.1).

Looking at the debris of carved blocks from the provincial structure in the north-western part of the courtyard 3 at Sī', there are finds of several nude, or semi-nude, reclining figures with drapes featuring floral decoration, and a winged figure (Nike) holding a crown. Amongst this fragmentary statuary group, Dentzer-Feydy included two fragments of a frieze from Sī', displayed in the Damascus museum, and at as-Suweidā'. One is a winged, nude, female bust (Nike) holding a vine branch. The other is a male nude accompanied by a maenad and a satyr holding a vine grape – it most likely represents a depiction of Dionysus, although it may also stand for Poseidon (§ Ch.3.1, Appendix).[1291] As Dentzer-Feydy pointed out, this series of representations seem to belong to a more classical Graeco-Roman Syrian artistic world, as the folds of the drapes of the figure are supple and the figures were depicted in three-quarters – favoured during the provincial period – instead of the pre-existing frontal static representation from the Syrian-Parthian region.[1292]

The infrequent, almost rare, variation of sculptural style in the Hauran from the pre-provincial to the provincial period suggests 'the unbroken continuity' favoured by Kropp for the religious architecture. This is most likely because figurative art was a more distinctive and less homogenous artistic form of expression than architecture. Moreover, it must have been difficult for local craftsmen to reproduce a similar sculptural style across the Near East, especially due to the physical properties (vesicular texture) of the black lava basalt which in the Hauran was used to carve every kind of image. The only exceptions from this stylistic continuity are the statue of a Roman soldier at Dhakīr, and a group of statuary fragments from the provincial structure at Sī'.

5.7. Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided a first complete picture of rural cult centres in the provincial period, through a comprehensive analysis of their benefactors, architecture, statues and gods. It has also confirmed the arguments of previous scholars on the significance of Roman soldiers in the Hauran, and which came to constitute the elite of the region; it has demonstrated their central role in the religious life of rural cult centres of the Hauran. Whereas the researches of Sartre, Gordon and Sartre-Fauriat concurred on the major impact of the veterans on the social network of the Hauran from the 2nd to the 5th centuries AD, this study has produced different findings. The benefaction by veterans of two rural cult centres in the Hauran, whose full significance cannot be understood, and their dedications in three instances, indicate the active participation of only a small number of veterans in the religious life of the cult centres from the 2nd to the 3rd century AD. This different result is most likely because the number of veterans would have increased towards the end of the Roman period, after the 3rd century AD, a time-frame that the present study has not taken into account. I have suggested that soldiers may have contributed to the rural cult centres in the Hauran during their service, while protecting the Roman roads and Leja, on the basis of the location of the sites where their dedications are recovered (§ Ch.5.1).

The identification of the elite as Roman soldiers and their central role in rural cult centres could have triggered new customs in rural cult centres and for their dedicators. Those identified in this study include the introduction of new deities (Mithras, Isis, Pax, Nemesis, Apollo, the Twelve Gods and Ares), who were products of the Roman Empire, and gods mostly introduced by Roman soldiers in the Hauran (§ Ch.5.2–3); the occasional adoption of Roman names by the elite across the Hauran, which has not been considered by scholars at any great length (§ Ch.5.4); and the integration of provincial 'Near Eastern' architectural features, as well their local adaptations (§ Ch.5.5).

It is clear that these new elements are not evidence of Roman influence and impact on the rural religious identity of the Hauran, contradicting the arguments of Freyberger and Segal. The cult of Mithras was worshipped elsewhere in the Near East. The new architectural features in rural cult centres in the Hauran in the provincial period were fundamentally provincial Near Eastern elements that were sometimes locally adapted.

On one hand, there is no substantial change in sculptural style (§ Ch.5.6) and the most common deities worshipped in the pre-provincial period continued to be worshipped in the provincial period (§ Ch.4.3). On the other hand, the integration of provincial Near Eastern architectural elements in rural cult centres of the Hauran and the adoption of Roman names by their dedicators from different social strata in the provincial period should not be undervalued.

Therefore, this general finding questions whether the new Graeco-Roman and provincial Near Eastern architectural elements were only superficial veneers,

[1290] Sartre-Fauriat 2005; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 576 no.498.
[1291] Weber 2006: 112–3 pl.72c; Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 322 fig.23.21.
[1292] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 322.

as argued by scholars, or had a meaning, as suggested by Butcher. In the case of the Hauran, I have attributed a socio-political meaning to the integration of provincial Near Eastern architectural elements in rural cult centres. These, together with the adoption of Roman names by their dedicators from different social strata in the provincial period, may be interpreted as evidence of the political propaganda of the rural elite of this region. They aimed to acquire a high-social status associated with the elite from the Roman provinces and to incorporate themselves into the Roman Empire and to the broader network of the Near East. These new architectural features, together with the use of Roman names and new cults, also indicated the influence and resemblance of the Hauran to other cultures from the Near East, and, only occasionally, with the Roman Empire.

This chapter has also offered an insight into the people who visited and financially contributed to the rural cult centres in the Hauran (the Roman soldiers) and their sense of belonging to the Near Eastern Roman provinces in the provincial period. This result suggests a major integration of the rural elite of the Hauran into the broader network of the Near East in the provincial period. It has also shown no differences in terms of architectural and sculptural traditions, or choice of personal names across the Hauran, implying an homogenous religious cultural identity across the area.

The next chapter (§ Ch.6) will complete the reconstruction of the life of these religious centres by identifying their cult activities from the pre-provincial to the provincial period, the economic activities associated with them and their personnel.

Chapter 6

Rural cult centres as meeting places in terms of their religious and economic functions

Having provided an insight into the people who visited the rural cult centres in the Hauran and their elites in the pre-provincial and provincial periods (§ Ch.3–5), this study ends with the reconstruction of the life of these religious centres and a re-evaluation of their function as meeting places for religious and non-religious purposes. This monograph, especially this chapter, repositions rural sanctuaries away from being isolated empty buildings, with no function apart from their aesthetic value, towards an understanding of them as significant meeting centres. This is achieved by investigating cult (§ Ch.6.1) and economic activities (§ Ch.6.2), as well as the personnel of rural cult centres (§ Ch.6.3). The last point will contribute towards understanding the religious and non-religious functions of these centres and how they were organised.

Being the main cult centre in the region, and one of a few examples of a multi-structure complexes, Sī' has been the main, and almost the only rural sanctuary where scholars have discussed cult practices. A chapter of Steinsapir's book is mostly devoted to this topic by carefully pointing out the development of cult practices and religious processions. Freyberger dwelt on ritual processions, particularly in relation to the nearby city of Canatha and rituals associated with water. In his discussion of the latter point, Freyberger also briefly included the rural temples at Ṣanamein and al-Mushennef in the Hauran.[1293] Steinsapir, and previously Dentzer, are the only scholars who have pointed out the possibility of economic activities at Sī', but they devote only a couple of sentences to this topic without providing any detail.[1294]

This chapter will discuss the religious and economic functions of sanctuaries, giving the topic the attention it merits, starting with the most discussed case study in the Hauran, and, then, focusing on other cult centres that scholars have not discussed in any depth.

6.1. Religious activities

The spatial organisation of cult centres plays a key role in the understanding of the religious experience,[1295] which also means cult practices. The study of the spatial organisation is even more significant and valid when it is not possible to have data (e.g. material culture, ecofacts, animal bones) recovered from excavated layers of a site that can inform us about the rituals[1296] (sacrifices, offerings, feasting): overall, this is the position for rural cult centres in the Hauran. Therefore, large courtyards, porticos, banquet rooms and theatre-like structures within the sacred walls become key elements in reconstructing the different types of religious activities that took place in sanctuaries. These include rituals, sacrifices, offerings, feasting, cult performances and processions.[1297] Furthermore it seems that water was an important element in cult activities, including in the Near East, where a cistern in the proximity of the area of sacrifice near the cella was used for ablutions (e.g. the temple of Aphlad at Dura Europos) and where natural water sources or artificial pools near the sanctuary (e.g. at Hierapolis) were used for lustrations in certain religious festivals.[1298]

[1293] Freyberger 1998: 62; 2013: 138.

[1294] Dentzer 1989: 317; Steinsapir 2005: 23.

[1295] Van Andriga 2015: 37. See the edited volume by Raja and Rüpke (2015) for the latest scholarly views on reconstructing the reality of religious experience in the Graeco-Roman world including in cult places; each chapter also includes a useful guide to further reading on the subjects discussed.

[1296] Dentzer 1989: 309–17; Raja 2015; Van Andriga 2015: 37.

[1297] For sacrifices, offerings and burning incense, see DDS 39; Lightfoot 2003: 432–3; Méniel 2015; Tuginbühl 2015. The last two references include a useful guide to further reading on the subject. For feasting and banquet rooms, see Dentzer 1989: 309; Tarrier 1995; Raja 2015; Marten 2015. The latter reference includes a useful guide to further reading. For theatres, see Dentzer 1989: 314; Nielsen 2002; Gödde 2015. The latter reference includes a useful guide to further reading. For processions, see Exode 26, 1 in Aliquot 2009: 98 note 73; Will 1991: 260; Lightfoot 2003: 486; Tuginbühl 2015; Stavrianopolou 2015. The latter two references include a useful guide to further reading.

[1298] Dentzer 1989: 316. Water has always been considered sacred and was used for ritual practice in the Greek and Roman periods (Horden and Purcell 2000: 412), as verified by several examples of artificial lakes within sanctuaries in the ancient Mediterranean and the Near East. We have examples from Rome, i.e the temple of the Syrian gods on the Janiculum (Nielsen 2002: 257), from Egypt, such as the temple of Amun at Karnak (Nielsen 2002: 31 ff.), from Syria, like the temple of Amrit in the northern Syria (Dunand and Saliby 1985: 14–20; 19–30; Will 1957: 140 pl.38.3), and from Asia Minor, i.e. the temple of Apollo near Myra in Lycia (Robert 1963: 112–13 no.9). According to the literary source *De Dea Syria*, some of the rituals associated with water took place in lakes and pools – which could have presumably also have been artificial – not far from the sanctuary (*DDS* 45). They consisted of washing cult idols that stood in the water during festivals, as ascertained through the description in *DDS* (*DDS* 47). It also mentions that in the middle of the lake there was a stone altar (*DDS* 45). This one had a large pillar to support the altar from underneath; it was always wreathed and was used to burn spices. Many people wearing garlands swam out to it in fulfilment of a vow (*DDS* 46). Water was associated with healing and purification. Water-pouring rituals and votive depositions in the pool would have been performed. A pond or artificial pool was also used for sacred fish, as a sacred animal associated with the cult of Atagartis. River, sea and other natural water sources, such as sulphur springs, were used for ritual practices in the Near East and the Roman Empire generally (Kamash 2010). For more recent discussion of the use of water in religious experiences, see de Cazanove 2015.

In this section, the study of cult activities in rural cult centres in the Hauran will start with Steinsapir's detailed analysis of Sī', followed by Freyberger's work on Sī', al-Mushennef and Ṣanamein. Based on the archaeological evidence that survived, religious practices in other sanctuaries in the Hauran will also be discussed. These have previously received very little attention, namely Khirbet Massakeb, Shā'rah, Sūr al-Lejā, Saḥr, 'Atīl, and Breikeh.

Steinsapir carefully pointed out the development of cult practices and religious processions at Sī', by considering each phase of the building expansion of the sanctuary (a first phase without permanent monumental evidence followed by five building phases). Steinsapir asserted that rituals first took place outdoors earlier than the end of the 1st century BC, and prior to the erection of the first temple (temple 1 or temple of Baalshamin).[1299] Pottery and animal bones with gnawing and butchery marks, both dated to the 2nd–early 1st century BC, were recovered on the top of the hill. They suggest sacrificial acts and feasting associated with a cult,[1300] as there is already evidence of the worship of gods in that period on the basis of a stele dedicated to Baalshamin, Seeia, Isis and the Angel of the God, dated to the end of the 2nd century BC, found in the valley of Sī'.[1301] Steinsapir also suggested that rituals involved a sacred procession from the valley up the northern slope of the spur circling the monument and a spring. We can only assume that ritual processions would have been taken place before the actual monumentalisation of the cult centre.

The first actual building phase was the erection of the temple of Baalshamin (temple 1) and the *theatron,* both surrounded by a precinct at the end of the 1st century BC (Figure 4). The layout suggests a processional route and the significance of the cult stone in the middle of the circumambulatory temple of Baalshamin, as suggested by Steinsapir.[1302] There would have been enough space for visitors to enter the precinct, by walking around the 2 m-wide corridor that surrounded the temple, and then possibly circumambulating the 4 m-wide corridor that surrounded the interior cella. Steinsapir additionally hypothesised that sacrifices were made and incense burnt on the roof of the temple 1, on the basis of the earliest reconstruction by de Vogüé and the Princeton University team,[1303] and an inscription that supports the hypothesis of a second storey on the top of the temple.[1304] However, this early reconstruction is not confirmed by the more recent French investigation, and in the actual inscription that Steinsapir uses the high cella may refer to the location of the temple situated on a higher level rather than the courtyard that precedes it[1305] (§ Ch.3.1).

In front of the temple, a forecourt with two steps and a portico on the sides and four steps in front formed what was named *tyṭr'*, which would be *theatron* in Greek, on the basis of the commemorative local Aramaic inscription in the temple of Baalshamin (Figure 4).[1306] The layout of the forecourt and the inscription itself suggest that this courtyard was a place for ritual performance, including sacrifices and burning incense or animals, as argued not only by Steinsapir but previously by Dentzer, one of the major specialists from the French team, as well as Nielsen in her book on ritual dramas.[1307] Therefore, receiving a group of worshippers who came to attend rites, and offering them good levels of visibility and comfort seemed to become important factors in the design of the sanctuary.[1308] Steinsapir explained that there would have been enough space for attendants to easily negotiate the rows of steps on the upper and lower levels and between the lower level seats and the peristyle.[1309] The columns in the peristyle did not obstruct the view of the performance from the stairs since the columns were of small diameter and on high pedestals.[1310] At the same time, the steps in the colonnaded portico could have been used by worshippers to display their offerings, e.g. statue figurines, and placing temporary small altars for burning incense.[1311] Steinsapir pointed out that the erection of temple 1 and the *theatron* enclosed by a wall precinct marked the change from the cult of Baalshamin being open to any visitor to it becoming exclusively for elites, who could enter and sit on the stairs.[1312] She suggested that the elite family who commissioned the sanctuary and made dedicatory statues were privileged people who could access the precinct that enclosed the temple of Baalshamin and the *theatron:* namely the local family of Malikat, who commissioned the temple and the *theatron*; and the *Seenoi* and *Obaisenoi*, who commissioned statues at the entrance of the temple as a sign of gratitude to Malikat (§ Ch.4.1).[1313] She added that the division between those devotees who were allowed to access the precinct of Baalshamin and those who could not was emphasised by the fact that people standing outside the precinct would have still heard prayers and music, smelt incense and burnt offerings, while not being able to access them and attend

[1299] Steinsapir 2005: 13.
[1300] Dentzer 1985: 70.
[1301] Milik 2003.
[1302] Steinsapir 2005: 15.
[1303] de Vogüé 1865–67: 33; *PPUAES* II: 376, ill.325.
[1304] *PAAES* III no.428b.
[1305] Tholbecq 2007: 294.
[1306] *CIS* II 163; *PPUAES* IV no.100; *PAAES* IV no.1; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; Starcky 1985: 175.
[1307] Dentzer 1989: 314; Nielsen 2002: 56, 246; Steinsapir 2005: 15; *Hauran* IV I: 166–7.
[1308] *Hauran* IV I: 166–7.
[1309] Steinsapir 2005: 15.
[1310] *PPUAES* II: 376.
[1311] Tholbecq 1997: 1084; Dentzer-Feydy *et al.* 2003: 107.
[1312] Steinsapir 2005: 16–7.
[1313] Steinsapir 2005: 15–6.

directly.[1314] The precinct is a clear evidence of a division between places and people – it is a physical barrier and limitation for everyone entering the precinct. However, in contrast to Steinsapir's reconstruction, devotees outside the precinct could still have prayed to Baalshamin and made sacrifices directly to him, as depictions of the deity and his symbols (eagles) were also placed at the entrance to the *theatron* (§ Ch.4.2–3). They could, therefore, still have been participants and attendants of the cult activities outside the *theatron*.

The second phase of the building programme of the sanctuary (the beginning of the 1st century AD, soon after the completion of the temple of Baalshamin and *theatron*) saw the erection of a second courtyard (forecourt 2) in front of the *theatron*, with a second temple (temple 2, erroneously named temple of Dushara) to the south-west (Figure 4). According to Steinsapir, forecourt 2 had a twofold function: as a pathway to the temple of Baalshamin, because of its location in front of the *theatron* and temple 1, and as a congregation point, being 60 m by 23 m.[1315] She also argued that ritual activities, most likely sacrificial offerings to the deities or sacred communal meals, may also have taken place, on the basis of the discovery of animal bones with marks of gnawing or butchery,[1316] numerous votive offerings, fragments of statue bases and a plaque depicting Mithras.[1317] Steinsapir suggested that the devotees advancing up the sacred way to the courtyard were part of the ritual and of cult dramas, and the ritual procession might have been part of these performances.[1318] Steinsapir stressed that this phase of the building programme was also aimed at emphasising and marking the relationship of a sacred spring situated in the south-western corner of forecourt 2 with the cult stone in the temple of Baalshamin. This was a deliberate attempt to realign the visitor's experience at the spring and the views over the agricultural fields, which perhaps referred the goddess Seia, 'who stands above the land of the Auranitis' according to the inscription.[1319] Steinsapir stated that this spring is deep (over 6 m), it has a substantial amount of water on the basis of an investigation in 1997. It is visible in the reconstruction of the plan by the Princeton University team,[1320] although the present author struggled to locate it on the plan.[1321] According to Steinsapir's reading, the placement of every single building seems to have had a specific meaning and planned in relation to the wider natural landscape of the site and to other structures within the sanctuary. The geomorphology of the terrain could also have dictated, or could have been a factor that determined, the location of the courtyard and of temple 2 in relation to temple 1 and the *theatron*: the location of temple 2 south-west of the temple of Baalshamin could have been the only space available on the terrace of the hill without obstructing access to the *theatron* and the temple of Baalshamin. Additionally, building courtyard 2 might simply have been the result of the necessity to expand the cult centre because of the increasing importance of the sanctuary and the increasing number of devotees. It could have accommodated roughly 1500 people, and the *theatron* more than 400.[1322]

The third stage was the building of the Nabataean Gate and Sī' 8 (Figure 4).[1323] According to Steinsapir, the Nabataean Gate was a backdrop for sacred dramas and rituals that were experienced by elites in forecourt 2 and in the *theatron* before entering the sanctuary.[1324] According to Steinsapir, a vestibule was attached to the five openings of the gate and they would have been used to manage the flow of pilgrims, as well as possibly marking a symbolic passage of the initiate's journey towards the divine, because these were passageways from the darkness of the vestibules to the light of the open courtyards.[1325] Although Steinsapir's supposition about the initiates' pathway is a plausible allegory, not every monumental structure that includes a gateway with a small vestibule would have had this symbolic meaning. A gate, even if composed of multiple structures, is still monumental and decorative. It usually has other meanings: it stands for political propaganda of the person who commissioned it, or may commemorate a particular event. These purposes are more apparent when an inscription or a relief depicting a war scene, for instance, survives. Furthermore, Steinsapir's supposition can be now discarded based on a recent reading of this structure by Dentzer-Feydy, who indicated that the main passageway was the only access from courtyard 3 to forecourt 2, as on its two sides there are symmetrical lateral buildings that have a bay, not a doorway, facing courtyard 3, on a higher level than the courtyard (1.20 m).[1326]

Sī' 8 expanded the sacred area of the cult centre into the valley and that is the point where the three roads leading to the sanctuary (one from Canatha, one from Dionysias and another from al-Mushennef)

[1314] Steinsapir 2005: 17.
[1315] Steinsapir 2005: 17.
[1316] Dentzer 1985: 70.
[1317] Steinsapir 2005: 17.
[1318] Steinsapir 2005: 18.
[1319] Steinsapir 2005: 18.
[1320] Steinsapir 2005: footnote 69.
[1321] *PPUAES* II fig. 324. This spring has not, however, been mentioned in any discussions by the French team and I did not notice it during my visit to the site.
[1322] I calculated this figure based on an estimation by the French team on the number of people that could fit in the main courtyard of Saḥr (more than 250 persons per 300 m^2, whereas the *theatron* at Sī'covers 500 m^2 and courtyard 2 at Sī' covers approximately 1750 m^2) (*Hauran* IV I: 151).
[1323] Steinsapir 2005: 20.
[1324] Steinsapir 2005: 18, 20.
[1325] Steinsapir 2005: 20.
[1326] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 318.

converged.[1327] According to Steinsapir, the grapevine ornament used for the Nabataean Gate and at Sī' 8 has been interpreted as a visual link between the promontory and the valley.[1328] The similar style of these two structures can be explained simply by their having been built at the same time. As Dentzer and Dentzer-Feydy argued, Sī' 8 was an initial small area of worship within the sanctuary complex of Sī' and a compulsory resting place for pilgrims seeking to reach the heart of the sanctuary of Sī' on the promontory. Pilgrims could have rested before undertaking the religious procession, as well as worshipped, and made their first offerings to the deity.[1329] Sī' 8 consists of a cella reduced to what appears to be a tripartite chamber (adyton), opening directly onto a wide courtyard that has steps on the sides (§ Ch.4.5). The actual adyton consists of a small room with two lateral deep niches that are highly decorated. As the central chamber and the two large niches would have housed cult images, devotees could have worshipped and made offerings to the god represented by the statue or statues situated here. The recovery of ritual furniture and votive offerings in the courtyard[1330] confirms the use of this area for rituals. The lateral steps could have been used to deposit these votive offerings, as well as a place for pilgrims to sit and relax while watching cult activities taking place in the courtyard. At the entrance of the courtyard, many small fragments of coins were found, which can be interpreted as votive offerings, or tolls, for the procession and access to this major religious centre on the promontory.[1331] Steinsapir similarly maintained that Sī' 8 would have been the place for a ritual preparatory stage before ascending the hill where the actual rituals would have taken place.[1332] A sacred way would have linked Sī' 8 to the main sanctuary complex on the top,[1333] but there is no preserved evidence of its monumentalisation, such as a colonnade.[1334]

Furthermore, I believe that the reduced cella of Sī' 8, like that of temple 2, facing a courtyard with steps, can be interpreted as a closer connection of devotees with their god, where the god would have metaphorically taken a direct part in cult activities and believers would have felt closer to their deity and had direct dialogue with him/her. This was a common phenomenon in the Near East[1335] and it became widely diffused in the Hauran, appearing in various cult centres (§ Ch.4.5, Ch.5.4), as will be discussed further below.

Steinsapir considered courtyard 3 and temple 3 as the next phase of the sanctuary in the late 1st or early 2nd century AD,[1336] although it is attested that temple 3, most likely together with courtyard 3, would have come from the same period as the Nabataean Gate and Sī' 8.[1337] Being 50 m by 19 m, courtyard 3 would have been a congregation point for religious ceremonies of devotees before they climbed the steep staircase that led to the more sacred part of temple 3.[1338]

The last phase of the building programme, dated to the provincial period, are the Roman Gate at the entrance of forecourt 3, dated to the late 2nd-early 3rd century AD,[1339] and a building in the north-western corner of the courtyard.

The fact that the gate built in the provincial period directs the pilgrims to the temple of Baalshamin points to a continuity into the provincial period of the religious focus and the direction of the ritual procession towards the earliest phase of the sanctuary. Furthermore, this sense of continuity is reinforced by the fact that the gate was dedicated to Zeus, possibly Zeus Megistos, who was the Greek assimilation of Baalshamin, the deity of the earliest temple at Sī' and mentioned in the 2nd-century BC stele (§ Ch.4.2–3).

Following recent cleaning of the north-western corner of courtyard 3, the French team recovered a substructure of parallel walls supporting a terrace delimited by a wall to the west, north and east. It formed a space of about 15 m by 20 m, and thus covered roughly the same area as the temple and *theatron* of Baalshamin. This structure was not on the same east-west axis as the Nabataean Gate, but perpendicular with an opening towards forecourt 3. Various architectural blocks and reliefs indicate that this building was dated to the provincial period and was a monumental building; the French team has offered two hypotheses for its function. One is that it was a monumental gate leading to the north-west extension of courtyard 3, with porticos or structures that could have been used for banqueting. The other is that it was the façade of a building, possibly a temple.[1340] Steinsapir similarly supported the hypothesis of a banquet room for ritual meals through the recovery of a relief of a reclining nude male with his elbow resting on a stool, as if representing a feasting scene. Alternatively, she proposed that this provincial structure could be a temple, on the evidence

[1327] Steinsapir 2005: 20.
[1328] Steinsapir 2005: 20.
[1329] Dentzer 1985: 75; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 106.
[1330] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 103–4.
[1331] Dentzer-Feydy 2013: 106.
[1332] Steinsapir 2005: 20.
[1333] Dentzer 1985: 75.
[1334] An example is for the sanctuary of Artemis in Gerasa (Jerash in Jordan) (Ball 2000: 326–9). For a recent discussion about colonnaded streets in the Near East in the Roman period, see Burns 2017.
[1335] Collart and Coupel 1977: 72–4; Will 1991: 198.
[1336] Dentzer 1985: 75.
[1337] For instance, the Nabataean capitals of this temple are dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (§ Ch.3.1 for more detailed information).
[1338] Steinsapir 2005: 21.
[1339] *PAAES* III no.431–2, Steinsapir 2005: 22.
[1340] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 323.

of its careful construction, graceful proportions and placement within the sanctuary.[1341]

As Dentzer-Feydy correctly proposed, the fact that this provincial structure was visible from the valley and the sacred way, implies that it was the most important part of the sanctuary and it clearly was propaganda for and homage to Roman power and the taking of one of the most important cult centres in the region for centuries.[1342] Therefore, this provincial phase, especially the location of this structure, indicates the change of religious focus, and, possibly, of the direction of the ritual procession. However, fragmented reliefs from this structure show that it would have been dedicated to a deity associated with fertility and the vineyards of Sī, i.e. Seeia/Tyche, the deity who accompanied Baalshamin in the 2nd-century BC stele. Temple 2 was also dedicated to Seeia/Tyche (§ Ch.3.1, 4.4), thus there is a sense of continuity in terms of worshipping the same deity but not the god of the earliest temple, Baalshamin. At the same time, this provincial structure is situated at the same ground level as forecourt 3. Dentzer-Feydy pointed out that temple 3 with the Nabataean capitals, instead, was on the top of the rocky outcrop which still dominates the sanctuary complex, being above the other structures and temples,[1343] also taking over the provincial structure. So the provincial structure may not have played a major role in the religious complex. Although temple 3 displayed Nabataean capitals (§ Ch.3.1), it still has a Graeco-Roman layout (§ Ch.5.5), therefore it cannot be said that this temple was evidence of Nabataean power (§ Ch.3.1).

Temple 3, therefore, on a wide elevated terrace preceded by a step of flights, must still have diverted the pilgrims from either the main pathway of the religious procession to temple 1, or to the provincial structure. Its monumental layout offers a new path for the ritual procession; therefore, it offers a change of religious focus. According to Freyberger, temple 3 was also dedicated to Seeia, deity of temple 2, considering that her cult image was visible from a distance.[1344] However, there is no actual evidence to inform us which deity temple 3 was actually dedicated to.

Steinsapir also argued that this provincial structure made the northern side entrances of the Nabataean Gate unusable, consequently, controlling and minimising the flow of pilgrims towards temple 1 and facilitating a more arduous preparatory ritual before the procession into other forecourts.[1345]

Steinsapir also suggested that a relief of a horse and rider in the debris in front of the *theatron* may represent a scene of a pilgrimage to the site.[1346] Bolelli was inclined to argue that these relief fragments, together with others representing human characters, including a male figure playing possibly a trumpet,[1347] represent more specifically a scene of a rite, in particular, of a religious parade.[1348] The role of the character playing a trumpet is corroborated by a fragmentary inscription that says 'trumpeter'.[1349] Music was, in fact, a key part in ritual practices in the Near East. In the case of the sanctuary at Hierapolis, musicians were probably permanent members of staff[1350] as they were included in the list of priests according to *De Dea Syria* (*DDS*)[1351] – the only literary evidence that provides information on cults in the Near East.[1352] The active role of musicians in Near Eastern sanctuaries is confirmed by the graffiti from Palmyra that mentioned musicians' participation in religious banquets.[1353] The presence of musicians in religious parades is also demonstrated in a relief at Carchemish.[1354] Being large events, processions would have been undertaken during religious festivals. Therefore, the set of evidence presented on the elaborate religious parades at Sī, together with evidence for ritual dramas, suggests the occurrence of religious festivals and the significance of the religious centre itself.

The re-interpretation of religious activities at Sī', mostly by Steinsapir, has demonstrated her correct and detailed reconstruction of ritual dramas and processions from Sī' 8 to the *theatron* through gates and courtyards, and the use of the *theatron* for the select few. However, her reading of every single placement of a structure within the sanctuary complex as holding a specific religious meaning and function may appear, at least occasionally, to be uncorroborated, as already mentioned. I have also tried to enhance her reconstruction of cult activities at Sī' in a couple of instances with other scholars' and my personal contribution.

Another scholar who discussed religious practices, Freyberger looked at those at Sī' that are associated with Canatha and with water. He suggested that statues of the gods from sanctuaries at Canatha would have been transferred to the cult centre at Sī', presumably during religious processions, and the road from the religious complex to the city would have been the

[1341] Steinsapir 2005: 22.
[1342] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 324.
[1343] Dentzer-Feydy 2015: 324.
[1344] Freyberger 1998: 51.
[1345] Steinsapir 2005: 22.
[1346] Steinsapir 2005: 17.
[1347] *PPUAES* II: 380–5 ill. 334; *PAAES* II: 416; Bolelli 1986: 349 no.20; Wenning 2001.
[1348] Bolelli 1986: 344.
[1349] *PPUAES* III no.772.
[1350] Lightfoot 2003: 486.
[1351] *DDS* 44.
[1352] Lightfoot 2003.
[1353] Milik 1972: 255.
[1354] Naumann 1983: 28, 38; Lightfoot 2003: 486.

pathway for the parade.[1355] Despite the undeniable proximity, inscriptions from Canatha do not mention explicitly any gods worshipped at Sī'.[1356] However, a radiate head, standing for a solar god, is depicted in the cornice between the consoles of the sanctuary of Rabbos in Canatha[1357] and in the keystone of archivolts above the entrance to the *theatron* at Sī'. The solar deity, nevertheless, is not the main deity of the sanctuary at Sī'. This divine solar figure accompanies, usually together with the lunar deity (Selene), the great god of the sky, Baalshamin. On the basis of the inscriptions the main deity of the sanctuary at Sī' is Baalshamin/Zeus, while the god of Rabbos is not mentioned in any inscriptions. Rabbos nevertheless, means the 'Great' and he is assimilated to Zeus Megistos which means Zeus the Great[1358] and is a common epithet of Zeus/Baalshamin (§ Ch.4.2–3).

Freyberger additionally argued that rituals were associated with water at Sī'[1359] and also at Canatha[1360] since their surrounding territory, including the area between the two settlements, had a rich water supply, including cisterns within their sanctuaries.[1361] A second reason was the common use of water in cult practices, as mentioned above. According to Freyberger, Sī' 8 was named as a spring sanctuary because it was the focal point for rituals associated with water because of the two underground canals linked with a large tank situated at the entrance of Sī' 8.[1362] He argued that the cistern of Sī' 8 would not have been accessible to the public, so it was protected and free from adulteration and pollution, and, ultimately, suitable for rituals consisting of the immersion of idols in the tank by the priests of the sanctuary.[1363] According to him, a procession of idols would have started from the sanctuary of Sī' passing through the sacred way to reach Sī' 8 where rituals associated with water would have taken place.[1364] Freyberger additionally suggested that a building a few yards from the east side of the East Gate of the settlement that extended from the sanctuary, recorded by the Princeton University as a Roman bath building,[1365] was a ritual bath house. Visitors would have cleansed themselves before entering the sacred area of the sanctuary complex. It is dated to the late 1st century AD.[1366] However, neither the French team nor Steinsapir mentioned this building.

Freyberger supported his theory of rituals associated with water at Sī' by considering the significance of the water in this centre, as suggested by the use of a vine motif in the sanctuary that he argued to be a symbol of prosperity thanks to the abundant water supply. In particular, he referred to the vine motifs used to embellish the two niches at Sī' 8 and on the statue base of the statue of Seeia.[1367] He did not provide dating evidence for the water tank or canals. He may have been referring to the basins for a wine press placed in Sī' 8 in the Umayyad period (first half of the 8th century AD).[1368] In support of Freyberger's argument, Dentzer-Feydy pointed out that on the same axis as the doorway in the façade on the west, in the direction of the cistern, there is no paving but the ground surface is levelled, which may have facilitated access to Sī' 8 from the closest cistern during rituals.[1369]

Moreover, there is a main reservoir (*c.* 40 m x 35 m) and a smaller one (15 m x 25 m) that are still in use today in the surroundings of Sī' 8 (Figure 37),[1370] although we cannot be certain that they have been operative continually since the pre-provincial period. The only datable evidence for the water system is a fragment of a water channel found on the eastern end of the cluster of houses attached to the sanctuary, which has been dated to the 1st–3rd centuries AD.[1371] It was part of the water system used for houses of this cluster and possibly extended to the sanctuary, taking into account its inclination towards the settlement.

The vine motifs mentioned by Freyberger were widely used across the whole site over time and throughout the Hauran (§ Ch.3, Ch.4.5, Ch.5.5). Although their association with water cannot be denied, they were most likely representing local vineyards and wine production on the basis of several factors: the sanctuary is surrounded by vineyards; there is evidence of viniculture from the pre-provincial period onwards (e.g. environmental samples),[1372] and of wine production confirmed by wine presses in the 5th to the first half of the 8th centuries AD.[1373] There are also two other cisterns *c.* 350 m west of Sī' 8 (10 m x 8 m and 30 m x 20 m).[1374] This evidence leads us to suggest that these

[1355] Freyberger 2013: 154–5.
[1356] Donceel and Sartre 1997.
[1357] Freyberger 2010: 247; 2015, 286.
[1358] Freyberger 2015: 286.
[1359] Freyberger 1998: 55; 2013: 155; 2014: 139.
[1360] Freyberger 2013: 155; 2014: 139.
[1361] Freyberger 2009: 287 fig.20; 2013: 154–5; 2014: 139.
[1362] Freyberger 2014: 139.
[1363] Freyberger 2013: 155; 2014: 139.
[1364] Freyberger 1998: 55.
[1365] *PPUAES* II Plan a O.
[1366] Freyberger 1998: 54–5.
[1367] Freyberger 1998: 55.
[1368] Blanc 2003: 35.
[1369] Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 106.
[1370] Denzter 1985: fig.1; Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 216 fig.11.
[1371] Dentzer 1985: 76 fig.6 pl.28d.
[1372] Vineyards have been continuously highly cultivated in the fields that surround the sanctuary at Sī' from the Bronze Age to the present day (Villeneuve 1985; Braemer 1990; Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 165 ff.). This matter will be discussed in more detail in the main text when dealing with non-religious activities Sī' (§ Ch.5.2).
[1373] Only 2 of the 20 ancient presses recovered roughly within a radius of 2 km of the cult centre (Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 169) can be dated: the wine press that reused the building of Sī' 8 in the Umayyad period (first half of the 8th century AD) (Blanc 2003, 35) and the wine press 353 dated to the 5th century AD (Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 139, 145).
[1374] Denzter 1985: fig.1; Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 216 fig. 11.

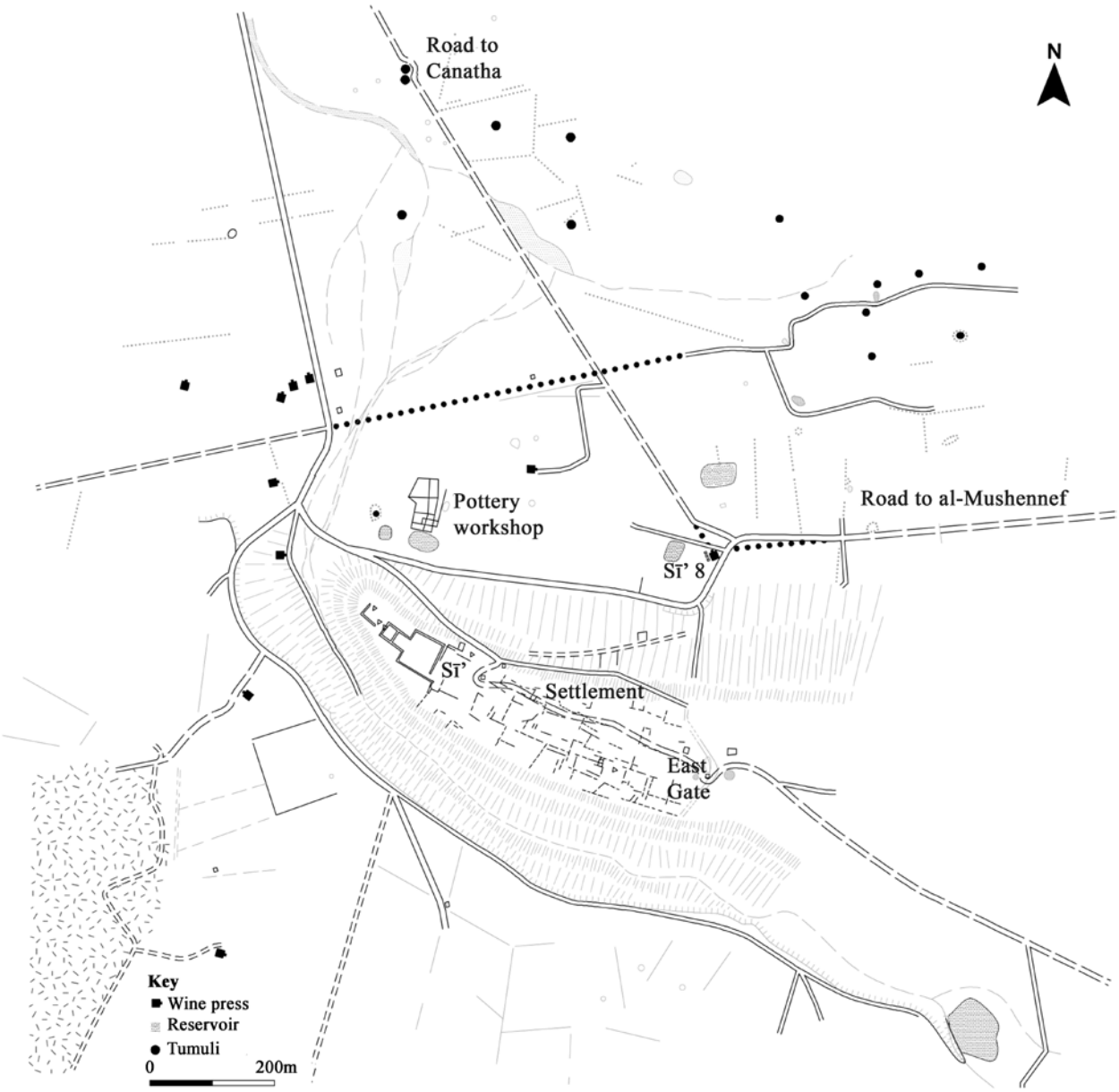


Figure 37: Plan of the sanctuary at Sī' and its surroundings (the author, after Dentzer 1985: fig. 1 combined with Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 216, fig. 11).

cisterns were used for practical and economic reasons, like the cisterns at Saḥr in the vicinity of the sanctuary discussed below – their water supply could not have been used only for rituals.

At the same time, it is tempting to suggest the use of the pool near Sī' 8 for rituals, especially considering the evidence pointed out by Dentzer-Feydy. Looking at water sources in the sanctuary complex, there is a fountain in forecourt 3 that leads to temple 3,[1375] something that Freyberger did not mention. Apart from its aesthetic purpose, we could ascribe also a religious function to this fountain. Its water could have been used to wash idols, including perhaps during the ritual procession either directed to temple 1 or temple 3, as the fountain was within the sacred precinct and therefore more likely not polluted.

Freyberger also suggested rituals associated with water in the temple at al-Mushennef,[1376] on the basis of mid 19th- and early 20th-century records indicating that the wall of the reservoir adjoins the temple precinct.[1377] Similarly, the cistern adjoins the temple back wall at Ṣanamein, according to the drawing by Bankes in the mid 19th century.[1378] This connection has

[1375] Dentzer-Feydy 2010.

[1376] Freyberger 1998: 59.
[1377] Freyberger 1998: 62; 2013: 138; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 241.
[1378] Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 74–5.

Figure 38: The cistern and temple at al-Mushennef (the author 2010).

been seen as evidence of religious use of the reservoir for rituals.[1379] This link is not visible today and the wall of the pool has been reconstructed over time in both instances, as indicated by the use of modern plaster in its masonry. According to Freyberger, the use of the reservoir at al-Mushennef for rituals is supported by the steps leading to the deeper basin visible at the back of the original temenos wall behind the temple.[1380] Again, it is not possible to date the remains of the steps (Figure 38).

To the south side of the pool at Ṣanamein are the remains of a colonnade, from which only two Corinthian columns are preserved according to the Princeton University team. They may have been part of a colonnade that enclosed the temple and the cistern, which would have functioned as a pool of water for ritual activities.[1381]

in their analysis both Steinsapir and Freyberger neglected various rural sanctuaries from the Hauran situated near water sources which could have implied the undertaking of rituals associated with water. There is a pool near the cult centre at Khirbet Massakeb,[1382] and a pool near a 1st-century sanctuary outside of the village Shā'rah.[1383] At Shā'rah there was also a spring in the cave that was part of the Mithraeum (for further information, see below for discussion of other cult practices at this site). It would have been used for rituals,[1384] including for the initiation rites typical of Mithraic cults.[1385] A large underground cistern was situated below the cult centre at Sūr al-Lejā.[1386] No additional information on any of the examples listed above is provided in published materials. At Khirbet Massakeb sacrificial offerings and libations would have been taken place on the altar at the centre of the courtyard.[1387] At Saḥr there was a small cistern near the cella (2 m wide and 3 m deep). It is located in the lateral room on the south-eastern corner of the adyton in front of the courtyard (Figure 3). It would have been used for rituals,[1388] including animal sacrifices, as water was used for ablutions in this instance.[1389] Additionally three cisterns were situated roughly on the northern and western outskirt of the clusters of buildings at Saḥr. The largest one was roughly 180–200 m away, in the north-west of the sanctuary (320 m^3 capacity). The medium-sized cistern was around 120 m distant in the north-east of the sanctuary (190 m^3 capacity). The smallest was located some 200 m further away in the north-east of the sanctuary (60 m^3 capacity) (Figure 39). These features were part of an elaborate hydraulic system, with stone channels directing rain water.[1390] Therefore, their function as a main water supply for visitors using the buildings around the sanctuary is out of the question.

[1379] Sartre-Fauriat 2004, 241.
[1380] Freyberger 1998: 62.
[1381] *PPUAES* II: 315–22.
[1382] Kalos 1999: 778 fig.1.
[1383] Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 226, 229.
[1384] Kalos 2001: 256.
[1385] Turcan 1993: 76 ff.; Kalos 2001: 256.
[1386] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 155.
[1387] Kalos 1999
[1388] Kalos 2003: 159; *Hauran* IV I: 173.
[1389] Dentzer 1989: 314; Sartre 1991: 496.
[1390] *Hauran* IV I: 189–91.

However, apart from their practical use, these three cisterns could also have featured in the ritual activities of lustration of cult statues, followed by a procession of cult statues between the various structures around the sanctuary complex (see below for a detailed discussion of cult practices at the site). There is almost a linear path from the largest cistern towards the sanctuary, whereas the processional path from the nearest and smallest cisterns would not have followed a linear path to get to the cult centre, but a more arbitrary route with space between the different structures. Their different locations within the cluster of buildings suggests that the first path could have been a processional one, whereas it is unclear if there would have been a processional path from the other two cisterns. Additionally, a wide oval depression (40 m x 30 m) is noticeable at the south-western border of the clusters of buildings (in particular, buildings Saḥr 9 and 10). The depression is circumscribed with a well-built wall, with its opening to the north. Because its proximity to the sanctuary, one of its uses could have been as an enclosure for animals for sacrifice during religious festivals. It could also have been a large reservoir for rain water;[1391] we cannot necessarily exclude the possibility of ritual activities associated with water in this instance.

With the exception of the cistern in the sanctuary at Saḥr, there is no overall, accurate dating evidence to verify the use of these cisterns during the lifespan of the temples (in the pre-provincial and provincial periods). However, their close proximity in several instances cannot be accidental. It would be peculiar if the addition of a cistern near a pre-existing religious building was a practice developed after the Roman period. This common arrangement, together with the tradition of rituals associated with water in the Near East,[1392] leads us to suggest that these cisterns had a ritual purpose associated with the idea of purification. They would have been most likely used for washing cult idols during festivals, or for people to immerse themselves in the cistern in fulfilment of a vow,[1393] for water-pouring rituals, or votive depositions.[1394] At the same time, cisterns and springs must not have been exclusively used for rituals, being the main water sources used in the pre-provincial and provincial periods[1395] and required for everyday life, temple visitors and cultivation,[1396] especially considering the climate and the terrain of the region (§ Ch.2).

In their analysis, Steinsapir and Freyberger overlooked other ritual activities in sanctuaries at Saḥr, Sūr al-Lejā, Shā'rah, al-Mushennef, 'Atīl and Breikeh. Only in a footnote did Steinsapir generically mention the presence of theatres in the sanctuary at Saḥr and Sūr al-Lejā, together with other examples in the Near East.[1397] It is also unclear what she means by 'theatres', as there are various types of structures used for theatres. She could be referring to theatre-like structures, such as the example at Saḥr, or courtyards with steps around the inner walls, i.e. the example at Sī' (§ Ch.4.5). Prior to her work, Dentzer offered a more precise view than Steinsapir's, mentioning the sanctuaries at Saḥr and Sūr al-Lejā as comparative examples for the layout of the *theatron* at Sī' (i.e. two steps around the courtyard). He listed examples of religious centres with actual theatres, including Saḥr.[1398] Later, Nielsen reaffirmed the presence of a theatre at Saḥr and a 'theatre of a local style' at Sī' that is mentioned in an inscription.[1399]

Saḥr has two courtyards: a smaller one (roughly 80 m^2) facing the god's statue in the adyton, and one larger (roughly 300 m^2) that preceded the smaller one. On the basis of excavation and recovery of rubble of architectural blocks of an altar, it has been argued that a horned altar, with steps to reach its top, would have been placed at the centre of the smaller courtyard. It would have been used for making offerings, sacrifices and burning incense.[1400] This is supported by burnt bone remains with a high quantity of talons. The rest of the animal bones with butchering and gnawing marks in the buildings surrounding the sanctuary indicate feasting taking place outside the sanctuary, as will be discussed in due course.[1401] The elevated terrain (0.40m high at the sides of the courtyard, covered by a colonnaded portico) could have been used for seating by worshippers during rituals.[1402] In a small room adjacent to the large central niche part of the adyton, a cistern would have been used for rituals, as mentioned above when referring to the use of water in cult activities. The second courtyard has two steps with a colonnaded portico on the two sides,[1403] as at Sī'. It could have had a capacity for more than 250 persons,[1404] whereas we can estimate the smaller courtyard could accommodate roughly more than 60 people standing.[1405]

[1391] *Hauran* IV I: 192.
[1392] Kamash 2010.
[1393] *DDS* 46–7; Kamash 2010.
[1394] Kamash 2010.
[1395] Braemer *et al.* 2009.
[1396] Gentelle 1985: 56; Villeneuve 1985: 121.
[1397] Steinsapir 2005: footnote 49. The examples that she mentions in the Near East are from Dura Europos (Downey 1988: 79–86, 89–92, 102–5 fig. 33, 35, 40). However there are other cases presenting two stairs in the inner wall of the courtyard, such as the sanctuary at Khirbet et-Tannur (Jordan) (McKenzie *et al.* 2002: 73).
[1398] Dentzer 1989: 314–5.
[1399] Nielsen 2002: 246.
[1400] *Hauran* IV I: 137–8, 173. For references of the use of altars as the focus of cult activities, see Dentzer 1989: 316; Rüpke 2007: 141, and for making offerings to gods, mainly animal sacrifices, foods and burning incense, see *DDS* 30, 44, 49, 59; Dentzer 1989: 331; René 1998: 48; Lightfoot 2003: 432–3,
[1401] *Hauran* IV I: 258; Lepetz 2017: 434.
[1402] *Hauran* IV I: 173.
[1403] *PPUAES* II: 429–36; Kalos 2003: 157–68 fig.1.
[1404] *Hauran* IV I: 151.
[1405] It is a rough estimation based on the numbers provided by the French team for the larger courtyard at Saḥr.

The differences between the two courtyards at Saḥr may imply a social division between the devotees, who were permitted to access the smaller and more intimate site for sacrifices, and those who were only allowed to access the larger courtyard, as it could have been at Sī', i.e. between the *theatron* and the other forecourts. The smaller courtyard in front of the adyton could have been only for the privileged few who were allowed to view animal sacrifice rituals directly to the god on the horned altar. The idea that this area was for a few privileged devotees is reinforced by the presence of a cella that is reduced in size (an adyton roughly 10 m x 2 m) facing the small courtyard, so the few attendants who participated in the rituals undertaken in this courtyard could have had a more intimate dialogue with the deity of the sanctuary, as at Sī' 8. In the temple of Artemis-Nanaia at Dura Europos there are steps assigned to specific women in the courtyard facing the cella, indicating that these steps and these courtyards facing the cella were accessible only to privileged worshippers.[1406] As to who could attend sacrifices in the small courtyard at Saḥr, the identities of the elite of Leja and the major benefactors of this sanctuary remain unknown, because of the fragmentary nature of the inscriptions found. On the basis of the inscribed pedestals, two statues of possibly deities in the courtyard of the sanctuary are considered to have been dedicated by a *hierodoulos*, a wealthy individual, who could have helped with the organisation of the sanctuary's activities (§ Ch.6.3 for a complete explanation). He was only an individual, not a group of people, who would have been in charge of this major religious centre and participated in sacrifices and offerings in the courtyard used by the few select individuals.

Despite the differences between the two courtyards at Saḥr, the devotees in the wider courtyard could have still made offerings directly to the deity, as a statue of Athena was placed on the platform almost in the middle of the main courtyard. She was a different deity from the one represented in the adyton (Zeus) (§ Ch.4.3).

The French team correctly pointed out that overall there would not have been many visitors here compared to the sanctuary at Sī'.[1407] It is a clear indication that Saḥr was not as important a religious centre as Sī' was. However, at the same time, Saḥr has additionally a theatre next to the sanctuary[1408] that could have accommodated roughly 600 people[1409] and where major ritual performances would have most likely taken place (Figure 3).

According to the French team, due to the lack of a proper *frons scenae* where actors would perform, it is very unlikely that there were any non-sacred theatrical performances put on for the entertainment of worshippers during religious festivals.[1410] Due to its location in relation to the sanctuary, the theatre must have been used for rituals associated with the temple.[1411] It could have held processions of idols, or cult statues, from the sanctuary to the theatre,[1412] where a much higher number of worshippers could properly have viewed such representations. However, there would have been enough space to use the wide *orchestra* for ritual performances. The French team does not exclude the possibility that the theatre could also have been used for assembly rooms for important groups,[1413] considering its resemblance to the *bouleterion* of the sanctuary of Artemis at Dura-Europos, which has a horse-shoe shape (§ Ch.4.5).[1414] A procession from the theatre to the cult centre at Saḥr would have been expected if considering other religious centres presenting both structures, such as in ancient Greece and Sicily in pre-Roman times.[1415] In other Hellenistic and Roman examples, for example the sanctuary of Thea Suria at Apollonia,[1416] the locations of the theatre and sanctuary seem to have been planned – the theatre was situated either at the back or at the front of the temple.[1417] So religious dramas could also have been performed directly in front of the deity and dedicated to him or her in the theatre, while ritual processions carrying cult statues could have taken place between the two buildings.[1418] Even at Delos, where the theatre is on the eastern side of the sanctuary, a long hall from the sanctuary leading to various structures of the religious complex, including the sanctuary itself, would have guided devotees and pilgrims between the two buildings during processions.[1419] At Saḥr there are no architectural structures and no clear processional path from the sanctuary to the theatre, since the former is next to the latter. The access to the theatre was from three vaulted corridors in the *cavea*; therefore circulation between the theatre and sanctuary was not fixed by using only one path:[1420] not even the main procession into the theatre was regulated by the use of one single entrance.

Despite its small capacity compared with other theatres, the presence of a theatre next to the sanctuary complex at Saḥr indicates the importance of this sanctuary, as

[1406] *Hauran* IV I: 167.
[1407] *Hauran* IV I: 151.
[1408] *PPUAES* II: 442 fig.387; Kalos 1997: 967–8.
[1409] *Hauran* IV I: 162–3.
[1410] *Hauran* IV I: 169.
[1411] Frézouls 1989: 200; Kalos 1997: 976.
[1412] *Hauran* IV I: 169.
[1413] Kalos 1997: 976; *Hauran* IV I: 169.
[1414] *Hauran* IV I: 162–3.
[1415] Nielsen 2002: 116–7, 146 ff.
[1416] Nielsen 2002: 254 ff.
[1417] Nielsen 2002: 101,118, 136, 146, 223, 235, 237 ff., 254 ff.
[1418] Nielsen 2002: 101,118, 136, 146, 223, 235, 237 ff., 254 ff.
[1419] Will 1951; Nielsen 2002: 250 ff.
[1420] *Hauran* IV I: 166.

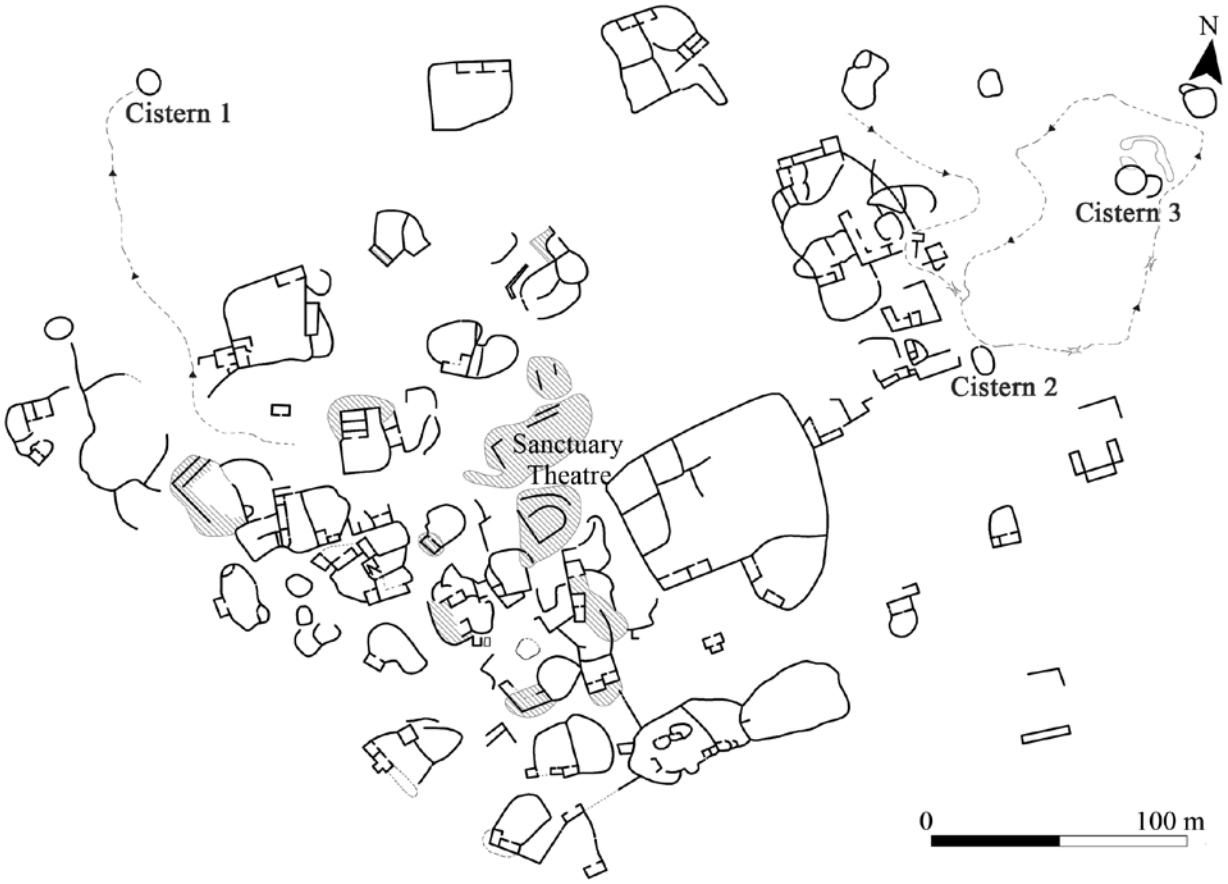


Figure 39: Plan of the sanctuary at Saḥr with its surrounding buildings (the author, after Kalos 1997: fig. 1).

it is the only religious centre in the Hauran that had the needs and funds to build a designed structure, specifically constructed for spectators to watch ritual activities associated with the sanctuary, apart from the two different-sized courtyards used for cult activities. The significance of this cult centre for pilgrimages in the religious landscape of the Hauran has been overshadowed by the multi-phase religious centre at Sī' and various inscriptions, contrasted with only extremely fragmentary inscriptions at Saḥr (Appendix). Although a large number of people would have gathered at Saḥr, it is not near the main Roman road crossing Leja. This may be because its role as a major religious centre decreased in the provincial period, however it was in use until the end of 3rd century AD.[1421] It is most likely that there was no need to build a Roman road as the pilgrims would have known where to go, as they had used the existing path since pre-provincial times. According to the French team there is no evidence of a pathway leading to the sanctuary complex.[1422]

However, a high number of visitors would have still known how to get to this sanctuary and gathered together for major rituals during religious festivals on the basis of the capacity of the theatre. In that respect, of particular interest are roughly 50 groups of multiple structures, covering an area of 400 m (north-south) and 450 m (west-east), surrounding the sanctuary and theatre. Their layouts vary from a room with an oblong plan, to a more complex one with a T-, L- or U-shaped plan (see Table 1 in Appendix). They have either an archway or an open-plan entrance, which consists of porticos with columns (Figures 39–40).[1423] The pottery recovered in these buildings was from the second half of the 1st century BC up to the 4th–5th century AD.[1424] Therefore these buildings were in use at the time when the cult centre started to arrange rituals in the early 1st century BC. This earliest phase of the cult centre consists of a paved area with a *stela* or a *betyl* from the mid 1st century BC (Appendix). This cult place became thus a monumental sanctuary in the second half of the 1st century AD, in use until the end of the 3rd century AD.[1425]

These buildings are not permanent habitations, as they lack flooring, cowsheds, storage space, and doorways to close up the structures; as such they cannot be

[1421] Kalos 1997; 2003; *Hauran* IV I: 175; Renel 2017: 371.
[1422] *Hauran* IV I: 189.
[1423] Kalos 1997: 974–5.
[1424] Kalos 1997: 974–5.
[1425] Kalos 2003: 160, 162, 164–5 fig.2–3.

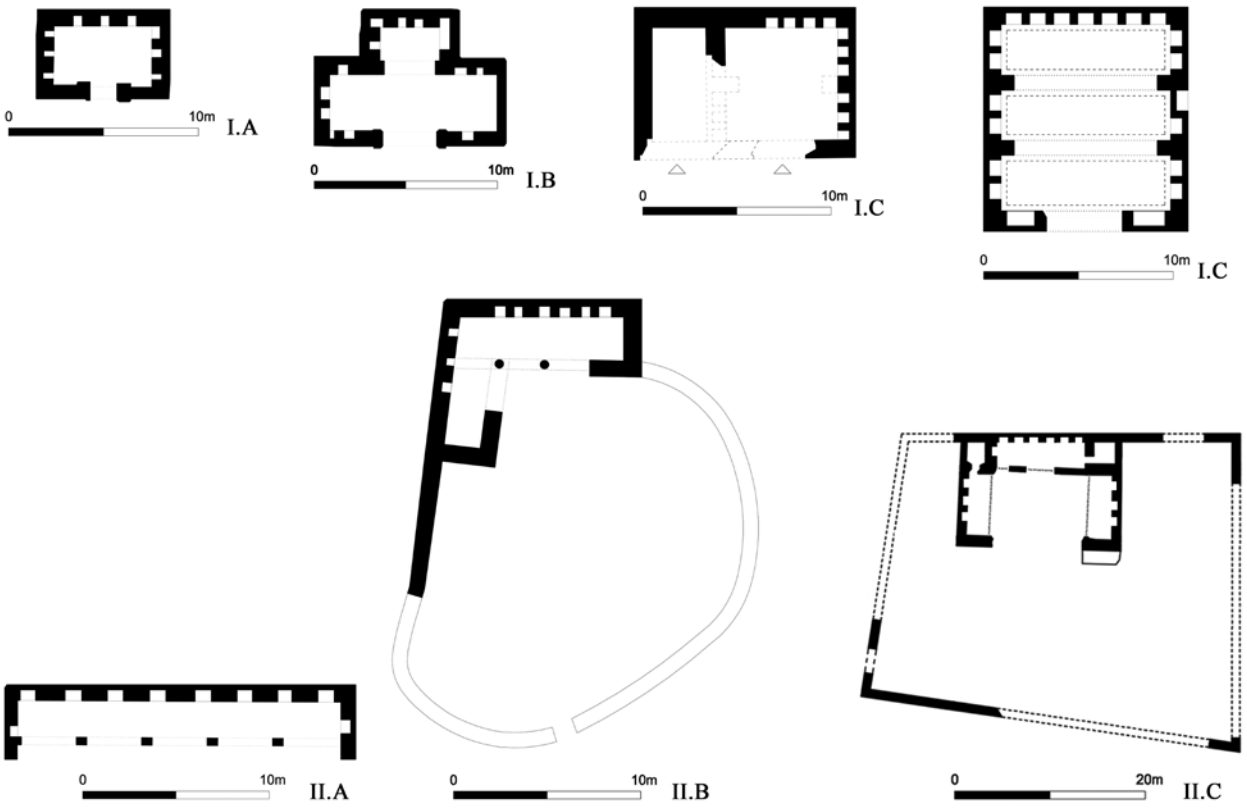


Figure 40: Plans of buildings surrounding the sanctuary at Saḥr
(the author, after Kalos 1997: fig. 5.7, with Dentzer 1999: fig. 12–3).

considered as permanent dwellings,[1426] with the exception of a couple of examples (e.g. Saḥr building 47).[1427] They usually have niches into the interior walls. Furthermore, they do not seem to belong to a city or village, as can de deduced by the absence of grid plans, roads, a systematic building programme, or a *necropolis*.

Their function in relation to the sanctuary and theatre is reasonable, on account of the central location of the latter within the cluster of buildings, their monumentality, decoration and statues. This sanctuary complex within the building cluster indicates an important religious centre, as well as a social and political landmark in the lava desert landscape of Leja. This would explain, therefore, the stone-made construction of roughly 50 buildings. The French team calculated that they could have accommodated roughly 600–700 people,[1428] a capacity similar to the theatre. On the north and west of the cluster of buildings three cisterns (320 m^3, 190 m^3 and 60 m^3) were part of an elaborate hydraulic system where stone channels directed rain water. They would have contained roughly 600 m^3 of water, enough for the animals of numerous visitors but not enough for a large quantity of people throughout the year.[1429] Kalos proposed that these buildings were used as resting places for pilgrims during religious festivals[1430] as they resemble Bedouins' temporary campsites: both have open-plan layouts with no sophisticated structures.[1431]

The major hypothesis approved by the French scholarly community, including Kalos, is their use as banquet rooms for feasting during religious festivals. At first, Kalos and Dentzer mostly interpreted them as such for feasting during religious festivals, and, occasionally, as small chapels, by comparing them to those with similar structures in the sanctuaries at Khirbet et-Tannur (Jordan), Dura Europos (Syria) and at Hatra (Iraq).[1432] However, a re-evaluation of this comparison casts some doubt on the similarity between the comparative examples and the buildings at Saḥr, and, consequently, on the scholarly interpretations of the function of the latter. Sanctuaries at Khirbet et-Tannur and Dura Europos have two to three banquet rooms with benches facing the courtyard area within the temenos,[1433] whereas at Saḥr there is a large number of open-plan buildings detached from the sanctuary

[1426] Kalos 1997: 974–5; *Hauran* IV I: 247 ff.
[1427] *Hauran* IV I: 248.
[1428] *Hauran* IV I: 248.
[1429] *Hauran* IV I: 189–92.
[1430] Kalos 1997: 977–8.
[1431] Kalos 1997: 977–8.
[1432] Kalos 1997: 973–8; Dentzer 1999: 257, 260.
[1433] Tarrier 1995; McKenzie *et al.* 2002; 2013; Downey 1988.

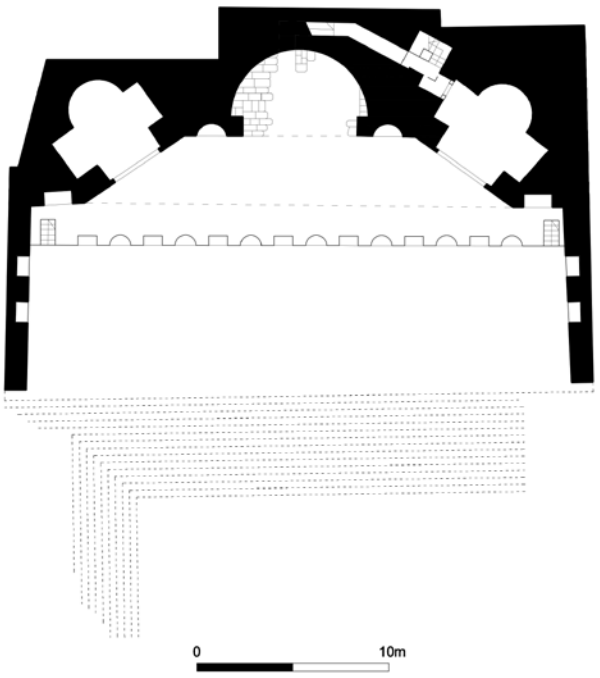


Figure 41: Plan of *kalibé* at Philippopolis
(the author, after Segal 2008: pl. 43).

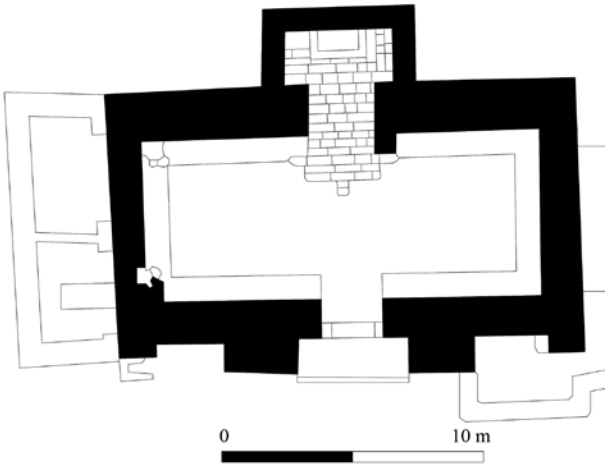


Figure 42: Plan of the small temple III at Hatra
(the author, after Kalos 1997: fig. 10).

without evidence of benches. Small structures at Saḥr, consisting of single-rooms or with a T-shaped plan with an arch in the façade and niches in the internal walls, have been identified as small chapels as their layouts are similar to the *kalibé*[1434] and small temples III and IV at Hatra (Figures 39–42).[1435] Unlike the buildings at Saḥr, a *kalibé* has niches used to contain life-sized statues at the back wall of the structure, with a flight of steps at the entrance. It is also a monumental building, larger in size than those structures of T-shaped plan at Saḥr (Figures 39, 41).[1436] Unlike the shrines at Hatra, the structures from Saḥr do not display an altar, a statue, or an inscription that indicates their religious function. They have niches, but they were not necessarily used to hold ritual objects or the statues of gods – they could have been used simply as cupboards.[1437] Additionally, the *kalibé* (2nd–3rd century AD) and the shrines at Hatra (1st–2nd century AD) are dated to a later period than the structures at Saḥr; their earliest phase there was dated to the 1st century BC on the basis of pottery.[1438]

More recently, the French team have taken into account more examples from Greece and the Near East from the Hellenistic to the Roman periods,[1439] as banqueting was part of cult activities in the sanctuary. However, the French team admitted differences between the structures at Saḥr and those similar examples already pointed out above: the former are detached from the sanctuary and do not have benches, whereas banquet rooms have benches at least on two or three sides and are part of the sanctuary complex at sites in Greece and the Near East.[1440] Kalos justified the fact that these structures are outside the temenos, saying we should consider the whole site, including the clusters of buildings, as part of the sanctuary.[1441] The French team explained the lack of stone-made benches at Saḥr, observing that the rooms of these structures were usually 3 m deep, so there would not been enough space to insert from two to four benches. Excavations of some structures have revealed that some of the larger and more complex structures have elevated platforms (0.40 m – 50 m high) which could have functioned as benches, as at Saḥr 9, 21 and 33, for instance.

Of interest is the location of the elevated platform in the T-shaped structures: it is usually in the central room, suggesting a planned practical design with a social meaning attributed to it. This type of disposition would have let people easily see each other and communicate, and at the same time the platform would have been used by people with a major role in the group and could have joined and heard conversations from the lateral rooms. Additionally, elevated platforms at the centre of the room could have been created for a practical reason, to avoid the dust from outside; this is common practice for reception rooms of urban and rural houses in Syria for that reason.[1442]

As verified in written and iconographic sources in the Classical and Near Eastern world, wooden benches and cushions could also have been used instead of stone-made benches. Instead of holding cult images, niches

[1434] For further information on the structure and its function, see Ball 2000: 292 ff.; Segal 2001; Clauss-Balty 2008a; footnote 4 in Ch.1.1.
[1435] Kalos 1997: 974–5.
[1436] Clauss-Balty 2008a; Segal 2001.
[1437] Kalos 1997: 974.
[1438] Kalos 1997: 975.
[1439] *Hauran* IV I: 235–46.
[1440] *Hauran* IV I: 246.
[1441] *Hauran* IV I: 258.
[1442] *Hauran* IV I: 251.

in the structures at Saḥr would most likely have had a utilitarian purpose, i.e. to hold vessels and food for meals, and occasionally to prepare food – as is the case elsewhere in banquet rooms at Dura Europos and inscriptions mentioning the use of this type of room.[1443]

Of interest in understanding the function of these buildings is the recovery of animal bones in these structures at Saḥr, and which differ from those found in the small courtyard with the horned altar and the cella. Burnt talons were mostly found in the small courtyard and there is evidence of grilling meat in the north-western angle of the cella. Instead, in the structures that surround the sanctuary the remains of animal bones with butchering and gnawing marks, and with hardly any talons, suggest that these were sites where grilled meat would have been eaten.[1444] This demonstrates that these structures were used as banquet rooms for eating the sacrifices taking place in the heart of the sanctuary.[1445] This is partially supported by ceramic materials. The majority of cooking pots were found in the cella, whereas jars and storage vessels were mostly recovered in structures.[1446] This suggests the preparation of meals for feasting within the temenos walls. However, hardly any of the dishes or jugs that would have been used for dining were found at the time when the sanctuary was in use.[1447]

Feasting seems to be a communal activity taking place jointly by few people in a circumscribed place, as these buildings could host from 6 to 18 people and a higher number in fewer cases (Table 1 in Appendix). The number of people could vary in banquet rooms in the Near East, but in these examples it seems to be a convivial activity for small groups in rooms within the temenos of the sanctuary. The multiplicity of the buildings (roughly 50) that could host from 6 to 18 people suggest that the participants of banqueting rooms were divided into small groups that could correspond to families.[1448] There is no further evidence to differentiate the buildings or to provide us with an insight into the families. On the basis of fragmentary epigraphic evidence, the dedicators were mostly local individuals as their names often appear in the Hauran.[1449]

Extra rooms with doors were attached to some of the open-plan structures at Saḥr. This additional component suggests that there was a specific area that could have functioned for the storing of dishes and objects used during religious festivals at the end of the festivity period. As the French team pointed out, doorways at the entrance of a certain structures (e.g. Saḥr 47) suggest that they could have been permanent houses, possibly for those who managed the sanctuary.

Although Leja was historically identified as a zone for lawless elements, outcasts from the society and political power of the region (§ Ch.2.2), Kalos correctly rejected the possibility of using these structures as hiding place for refugees, because they were open-planned without doors, so they would have been unsuitable for protection or hiding.[1450] Furthermore, Saḥr was not in central Leja, but only a short distance from the eastern and northern borders of the region, which was more densely occupied and 15 km from the Roman road. By the time the monumental sanctuary was built, it seems that the Herodian army had established peace and stability (§ Ch.2).

These structures, instead, were ideal for gathering family groups dispersed in Leja, including shepherds who could have been mobile for part of the year for religious events and where they could have expressed and reinforced their connections, solved possible conflicts between families or tribes, since there would have been enough space for hosting a large number of people and it would have been neutral territory within the sacred limits of a sanctuary where religious festivals would have been the main impetus for gathering together large numbers of individuals.

As a result, the theatre can be seen as an ideal place for 600 people to congregate, discuss, and make decisions about common problems. Mecca, of course, is a similar sacred space in the desert consecrated to deities where different tribes congregate.[1451]

The exact number who attended religious festivals cannot be fully determined. Although the number that the theatre, like the structures around it, can accommodate is roughly 600, we do not know the frequency of these ritual performances and religious festivals, or if there were different visitors every day. According to written sources, religious festivals usually lasted more than a day, although their frequency and duration varied from case to case.[1452] Seasonal festivals seemed the most likely option,[1453] considering the location of Saḥr was not close to a village in the desert of Leja, but at the same time not too far from other settlements and Roman roads. They could have taken place during the hot seasons, as most of the buildings seem to have been protected from the sun because of their orientation[1454] – most frequently, the openings of

[1443] *Hauran* IV I: 246.
[1444] Lepetz 2017.
[1445] *Hauran* IV I: 257; Lepetz 2017.
[1446] Renel 2017
[1447] Renel 2017.
[1448] *Hauran* IV I: 258.
[1449] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 348.
[1450] *Hauran* IV I: 247.
[1451] *Hauran* IV I: 260.
[1452] Fritz 2015.
[1453] *Hauran* IV I: 175.
[1454] *Hauran* IV I: 197.

the buildings face either north, north-east or north-west; west-facing openings are almost excluded.[1455]

Based on evidence of cult activities in other rural cult centres in the Hauran, steps on the sides of the courtyard, like those discussed at Sī' and Saḥr, are also found in the sanctuary at Sūr al-Lejā,[1456] as briefly mentioned by Denzter and Steinsapir,[1457] and in the cult centre at al-Mushennef, as briefly mentioned by Freyberger.[1458] These indicate the occurrence of rituals, including possibly cult dramas, not only in the main cult centres in the Hauran (Sī' and Saḥr), identified by scholars on account of the preservation of the site and its complexity, but also at other cult centres. Sūr al-Lejā could have accommodated more than 500 individuals in the courtyard of 600 m^2, which would have been double the capacity of the wider courtyard at Saḥr.[1459]

The frequency of large courtyards with portico and steps in cult centres in the Hauran may suggest a common pattern in the region, and their discovery in only four sites may be due to the frequent lack of preservation of the buildings and structures that surround the temples in the Hauran (§ Ch.1.1).

The Mithraeum at Shā'rah and cult centres at Sūr al-Lejā, al-Mushennef, 'Atīl and Breikeh, yield evidence to suggest rituals in front of the deity, as discussed in the case of the sanctuaries at Sī'.

The Mithraeum at Shā'rah displays two small areas for rituals; the cult of Mithras was, in fact, usually restricted to a select few who could take part.[1460] One of the ritual areas is arbitrarily called the 'eastern building' and the other is a cave (Figure 23).[1461] The eastern building consists of a small courtyard, whose wall displayed nine niches, all facing an apse that would have been allocated for the cult's statue. The entrance of the apse is decorated with an archway displaying reliefs of Mithras and the zodiacal signs. The courtyard is preceded by a colonnaded *pronaos* with the same axis as the possible main entrance of the temenos.[1462] Because the cave has been mostly destroyed by looters, its interior cannot be fully described, apart from the niches carved into the rock.[1463] The main entrance of the cave, with its steps onto the large courtyard, has the same orientation as 'the eastern building', suggesting the use of both cult areas at the same time:[1464] this is not uncommon, as it occurs in other Mithraea, i.e. at Dolichè in Commagene.[1465] This implies that the example at Shā'rah would have had a major Mithraeum. The eastern building seems the focus and, most likely, the main ritual place because of its monumental entrance with divine representations and its location aligned with the entrance of the precinct of the Mithraeum, unlike the cave. Kalos argued that the eastern building was a banquet room[1466] because it includes benches on both sides of the courtyard and small niches that were near the benches and were probably used to deposit personal objects during the banquets.[1467] Nevertheless, the cave would have still been in use for rituals considering the natural spring mentioned above when discussing the use of water in cult practices. In addition, apart from their use in depositing vestments, treasure and sacred objects, for instance,[1468] niches carved into the rock of the cave and in the eastern building[1469] would have been used to hold cult statues.[1470] Their presence would reinforce the occurrence of rituals in both areas of the Mithraeum, as

Figure 43: A niche on the North Gate of the sanctuary at Baetocaece (northern Syria) (the author 2010).

[1455] Kalos 1997: 970.
[1456] *PPUAES* II: 441–6.
[1457] Dentzer 1989: 314; Steinsapir 2005: footnote 49.
[1458] Freyberger 1998: 62.
[1459] I estimate this based on the figure provided for the wider courtyard at Saḥr by the French team (*Hauran* IV I: 151).
[1460] Kalos 2001.
[1461] Kalos 2001.
[1462] Kalos 2001: 256.
[1463] Kalos 2001: 235–7.
[1464] Kalos 2001: 256.
[1465] Schütte-Maischatz and Winter 2001.
[1466] Kalos 2001: 245.
[1467] Kalos 2001: 241.
[1468] Kalos 2001: 243.
[1469] Kalos 2001: 256.
[1470] Collart and Coupel 1977: 72–4; Will 1991: 198.

cult activities would have been undertaken directly in front of the god. The use of niches as a location for cult statues is verified by the presence of small holes found in two external niches in the north gate of the sanctuary at Baetocaece in northern Syria: these could have been used for small votive offerings to the sanctuary's god (Figure 43). The fact that these holes were not equally distributed over the façade rules out their usage for the erection of scaffolding.

The practice of making offerings and sacrifices directly to the god seems a common practice in the Hauran in the pre-provincial and provincial periods. The temples at Sūr al-Lejā, al-Mushennef, 'Atīl and Breikeh also display two niches as locations for cult statues, at either side of the doorway of the façade (§ Ch.5.5 for further information regarding the diffusion of this structure). This display made the statues clearly visible to everyone and easy to venerate. Therefore, the architecture of pre-provincial and provincial temples indicates the practice of making offerings and sacrifices directly to the god, suggesting continuity of this aspect of ritual activities from the pre-provincial to the provincial period. The custom of dining with the gods (in front of cult statues) is part of the Greek and Roman traditions and is introduced in the Near East in the first three centuries of the Roman period.[1471] At the same time, there is a change of where rituals would have been taken place, suggested by the variations in temple layout. Sanctuaries built in the provincial period, or some built towards the end of the pre-provincial period, do not have a courtyard with steps or benches outside the adyton (§ Ch.5.5). The temple, having acquired a Graeco-Roman layout, shows a rather long empty space (15–20 m long) between the house of the cult image (the adyton) and the actual entrance of the temple. The façades of the temples at al-Mushennef, 'Atīl and Breikeh have niches to hold cult statues. Being on podia, these examples are preceded by stairs. This change in the temple layout implies that the area for communal cult activities may have been moved outside the actual temple. This is confirmed in the case of al-Mushennef, where the wide courtyard with lateral steps and a colonnade faces the Graeco-Roman temple. Cultic dramas could have taken place in front of temples at 'Atīl and Breikeh, similar to how they were performed in front of the temple – where people could sit on the stairs in the sanctuary of the Magna Mater on the Palatine in Rome, for instance.[1472] This indicates a possible change of use of the sacred place for ritual activities in temples built in the provincial period. The lack of courtyards with benches for ritual and cult dramas in provincial temples may have also other explanations. It may be that they were not preserved in these provincial examples. Monumental structures like temples are more likely to survive than secondary, less decorative monumental structures, such as courtyards in front of temples. This may point to cult practices on a smaller scale that did not require permanent monumental structures. This type of setting for rituals (courtyards with benches) is not an essential element for carrying out rituals, but it would have facilitated the accommodation of ritual attendants and it appears in pre-provincial sanctuaries at Saḥr, Sī' and al-Mushennef.

At 'Atīl, there are two highly preserved distyle *in antis* temples, 250 m apart, that are almost identical in terms of their layout and dimensions; one stands at the northern border of the town, the other in the southern part.[1473] Freyberger argued that the southern temple was originally built in the pre-provincial period but then the antae and façade were modified later to mirror the northern temple built in provincial times. The earlier temple would have been dedicated to a local deity and the later one to the imperial cult or representatives of Roman rule, according to Freyberger. The later modification of the earlier temple was in order to match the later temple and to intentionally establish a connection between the traditional local cult and the imperial one, so as to mark the unity of the two cults and the loyalty of the local elite to the imperial house.[1474] The commissioner of the façade of the southern temple was a local individual named Waddelos, son of Matheios, son of Waddelos, according to the inscription.[1475] Freyberger's argument still does not explain the functionality of having two similar temples in the same village. If what Freyberger suggests were correct, the benefactor from the provincial period could have simply altered the pre-existing temple – building a new religious public building would not have been necessary. Furthermore, there is no clear evidence that the southern temple was constructed before the temple of Baalshamin at Sī'. The early date of the building suggested by Freyberger is based on the similarity of the masonry of the platform, the crypt and the above-ground walls of the main room of the southern temple to the terrace walls of Sī'. According to him, in both cases the ashlars are of different size, not arranged by alternating headers and stretchers, and with rough surfaces.[1476] The last ones would be dated before the erection of the temple of Baalshamin, according to Freyberger. However, there is no evidence to date the terrace walls at Sī and they could have been modified and rebuilt over time, nor is there accurate evidence to date the temples to the pre-provincial period. There is no evidence either to support the worship of an imperial cult. Additionally, there are two inscriptions from this site that mention

[1471] Dirven 2015: 266–7.
[1472] Nielsen 2002: 172–3 fig.79.
[1473] Freyberger 2015: 290.
[1474] Freyberger 2015: 292–3.
[1475] *Wadd.* no.2372; *PAAES* III no.427a.
[1476] Freyberger 2015: 291.

the cult of Theandrios in AD 211,[1477] a local god that is also worshipped at Canatha,[1478] and Olympian Zeus by an individual from Gerasa (§ Ch.4.3).[1479] None of these inscriptions are dated before the erection of the temple of Baalshamin or from the pre-provincial period. The presence of two similar temples may have alternatively involved a procession of cult statues from one temple to another, especially those cult statues that were placed in the niches of the façade. Furthermore, the presence of two temples in the village could have been a consequence of a large population and the necessity to have two temples in two different locations. It is difficult to be certain of this suggestion, or to argue for other hypotheses due to the lack of evidence about the village plan at the time of the temple and detailed information about the statues, or the gods worshipped in these two temples.

This study has been a first overview attempting to discuss rituals in rural cult centres across the Hauran. Undoubtedly, the identification of significant cult practices depends on the preservation of the cult centre. The analysis has reassessed current research into the rituals taking place in rural temples, which has so far mostly focused on case studies, particularly Sī', and rituals associated with water at al-Mushennef and Ṣanamein, whereas cult activities have been only briefly mentioned for other rural cult centres (e.g. Saḥr and Sūr al-Lejā). In addition to the previous work, this present analysis has included Khirbet Massakeb, Shā'rah (cult activities in the cave and courtyard of the eastern building), 'Atīl and Breikeh in the discussion of ritual practices in the Hauran.

Two common practices have been highlighted during this analysis. One is the metaphorical participation of the gods in ritual activities and, thus, the direct connection between devotees and the relevant god. The second is the possible extent of rituals associated with water from the pre-provincial to the provincial period, despite a lack of accurate dating evidence to verify the use of these cisterns during the lifespan of the temples. The first element is demonstrated by the area for ritual performances placed in a courtyard, often with steps or benches on the sides in front of cult statues. These images were placed in the adyton in the pre-provincial period (Sī' and Saḥr), in the apse depicted on the archway (Shā'rah), or in niches of temple façades in the provincial period (al-Mushennef, 'Atīl and Breikeh). In the case of 'Atīl and Breikeh, the area of rituals does not appear delineated or circumscribed by a colonnade with steps; it would have most likely been in the open space in front of the temple with a staircase or few steps preceding the temple. Despite the change of location for rituals, these two common practices took place from the pre-provincial to the provincial period, indicating continuity of common elements for rituals in the Hauran. A similar argument can be proposed for rituals associated with water, which seem to be a common practice in pre-provincial and provincial times on the basis of the frequent presence of a cistern near a cult centre. Examples from the pre-provincial period include Sī', Khirbet Massakeb, Sūr al-Lejā, a 1st-century sanctuary outside of the village Shā'rah, and Saḥr. In the last case, the small cistern is inserted in the sanctuary for ablutions during animal sacrifices. Examples from the provincial period are the Mithraeum at Shā'rah, al-Mushennef and Ṣanamein. The entablature and layout of the last two temples is from the provincial period, but inscriptions inform us of the presence of a temple from the pre-provincial period (Appendix).

6.2. Economic activities

Economic activities run by sanctuaries have been identified mostly when written evidence explicitly mentions the role of these sanctuaries as land-owners,[1480] or in charge of markets[1481] or treasuries.[1482] This type of evidence mainly comes from the Hellenistic period and occasionally from Roman times from Greece, Anatolia, and only in a few instances from Syria. In Syria inscriptions explicitly state the existence of commerce associated with a rural cult centre has been argued in only one example, at Baetocaece.[1483] Syrian sanctuaries in the Hellenistic and Roman periods possessed a treasury, owned substantial amounts of valuable goods and had specific personnel in charge of temple treasuries, as suggested by *DDS* and in further documented evidence.[1484] Industrial activities associated with sanctuaries on the other hand have been suggested in three instances in Syria in the provincial period, by Dentzer and occasionally by Millar, although the evidence in all three cases may be debatable.[1485] As the title of his book *Die*

[1477] *CIG* 4609; *Wadd*. no.2374a; *IGRR* III 1238; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 105, 322.
[1478] Donceel and Sartre 1997: no.11.
[1479] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 302.

[1480] Virgilio 1985: 228–9; Ampolo 2000: 14–6.
[1481] MacMullen 1970: 335–7.
[1482] Debord 1982: 215–25; Dignas 2002: 16–8, 20–1.
[1483] *IGLS* VII no.4028 A–E.
[1484] *DDS* 10; Rostovtzeff *et al.* 1936: no.6, no.30; Schürer 1979: 272–4; Boffo 1985: 22–3; Denzter 1989: 317.
[1485] Millar (1993: 254) associated oil production at Kafr Nabo with a sanctuary on the basis of a 2nd-century inscription dedicated to a deity at the late Roman/Byzantine olive press there (northern Syria) (Tchalenko 1953–58: 14). However, the absence of a religious structure in the vicinity of the olive press, together with the dating of the inscription earlier than the late Roman/Byzantine press, suggests that the inscribed flagstone might have been recycled for building purposes, a common phenomenon in the late Roman/Byzantine period (Brenk 1987: 103). The second example is the production of objects that were made in the sanctuaries and used for offerings or souvenirs for the devotees, as pointed out by Dentzer (1989: 317). The recovery of a plaster mould of the image of a goddess, used on a lead cup, in the sanctuary of Artemis at Dura Europos, suggests that the temple produced statuettes that were possibly made of terracotta and sold to visitors (Dentzer 1989: 317). This does not, however, explain the presence of an industrial process because neither industrial

frühkaiserzeitlichen Heiligtümer der Karawanenstationen im hellenisierten Osten hinted, Freyberger looked at the sanctuaries of caravan stations in the Near East that had mercantile and religious functions. However, he does not discuss at length about their economic role and markets, while describing each sanctuary on main caravan routes in the Near East. Only in the first pages of his book does he state that wide courtyards in sanctuaries, which are a common pattern in the Near East, were used for markets. This is maintained by an inscription in the sanctuary of Jupiter at Damascus, with a wide courtyard, that says the temenos was used as a market and the building was financed by temple money. Freyberger also provides as further examples the sanctuary of Qasr al-Bint at Petra and the Herodian temple of Jerusalem, both having wide courtyards. In addition he uses Josephus' narrations mentioning the largest courtyard of the temple of Jerusalem as a market place accessible to all people and also strangers.[1486] When discussing rural sanctuaries in the Hauran (Sī', el-Mushannef and Sleim) in his book, the only reference to commercial activities is that Sī' intersected three trade routes and that the houses from the settlement that extended from the extreme south-eastern side of the sanctuary were used as accommodations for traders,[1487] whereas Dentzer suggested that they were for pilgrims[1488] (§ Ch.6.3 for the discussion of *Seenoi* and further information related to the use of these houses).

In the Hauran, and Steinsapir and Dentzer generically reference the sanctuary at Sī', people were able to trade goods at the same time as exchanging information and meeting different groups and ethnicities. Steinsapir also suggested the possibility of the sale of religious objects, such as votive lamps or other cult necessities, considering the small pottery shop located east of Sī' 8.[1489] As no further information is provided, I will try to reconstruct the types of economic activities, the goods that were sold or produced by the sanctuary and the location of such activities, starting with questioning if there were economic activities associated with the cult centre in the first place. This in-depth analysis will be undertaken only for the case studies of Sī' and Saḥr, as it is difficult to identify such activities for other cult centres due to insufficient evidence.

The undertaking of major ritual performances and processions at Sī' (§ Ch.6.1) involved the gathering of a large number of people for religious festivals, which would have been perfect occasions to hold markets. Merchants would have profited from the large numbers of people attending the event and in some cases would have benefited from a tax reduction on their sales, as markets were associated with sanctuaries according to written sources,[1490] as in the case of the cult centre at Baetocaece in northern Syria.[1491]

Furthermore, the location of the sanctuary at Sī', aside from implying significance of it as a religious centre, would have facilitated the sale of goods in these periodic and temporary markets. The site was located on top of a hill and visible from a distance. Roads from the cities of Canatha to the north, Dionysias to the west, and the village of Nela, in present-day al-Mushennef, to the east, converge at Sī'. This means that it was easily and widely accessible by viable roads. The fact that Dionysias was on a main road connecting Bosra and Damascus implies that people from long distances could have easily visited the sanctuary. The fact that Canatha and Nela were only connected to the sanctuary and not to the Bosra–Damascus road (Map 2) suggests that these settlements evolved around, and thanks to, the sanctuary. The latter was, in fact, not commissioned and managed by the nearby city of Canatha, nor by the other settlements in its proximity (Dionysias and Nela).[1492]

Steinsapir suggested that religious objects produced in the small pottery shop located east of Sī' 8 would have been sold in markets during religious festivals.[1493] We can attempt to be more specific than Steinsapir's generic but most likely truthful suggestion. Six areas of local pottery waste are concentrated roughly 50 m to the north/north-west of Sī' 8 (Figure 37),[1494] and a pottery workshop is situated 350 m west of Sī' 8. The latter comprises a ruin of a multi-room structure (*c.* 25 m x 40 m) and pottery waste.[1495] The pottery workshop is situated next to a main reservoir and a smaller cistern, which would have been needed for pottery manufacture (Figure 37). The proximity of this pottery workshop and pottery waste to the sanctuary indicates that the cult centre was producing this pottery for its subsistence, local use and possibly regional export. This is confirmed by the fact that the majority of pottery

remains nor statuettes were found. The mould could have been a votive offering that was made and/or belonged to a person working in this production process. Similarly, the names of two deities, Aglibol and Malakbel, inscribed on an oil lamp from Palmyra (Michalowski 1963: 176 no.72 fig.230, 237 no.4), do not provide enough evidence to suggest that the sanctuaries were in charge of oil lamp production (Dentzer 1989: 317). This inscribed oil lamp could have been a dedication to these deities or it could have been used in the sanctuary where they were worshipped. It could indicate that whoever produced or used this lamp worshipped these deities.

[1486] Freyberger 1998: 13.

[1487] Freyberger 1998: 53.

[1488] Dentzer 1985: 79.

[1489] Dentzer 1989: 317; Steinsapir 2005: 23.

[1490] MacMullen 1970: 335 ff.

[1491] *IGLS* VII no.4028 A–E.

[1492] There is no evidence suggesting that benefactors of the sanctuary Sī' came from these settlements. A city councillor, possibly of Canatha, considering its proximity to the sanctuary, together with a Roman centurion of the *Cohort I* (or *II*) *Augusta*, only commissioned an altar in the sanctuary (*PPUAES* II no.769).

[1493] Dentzer 1989: 317; Steinsapir 2005: 23.

[1494] Orssaud 2003: 216 fig.11.

[1495] Orssaud 2003: 216 fig.11.

recovered at Sī' was of local production.[1496] Moreover, various forms (e.g. amphorae, bottles, jars, pitchers and cooking wares) of the predominant type of pottery produced at Sī' (named Type A) are also found at Bosra from the 1st century AD to the Byzantine period.[1497] This indicates pottery export activities from Sī' to Bosra and not vice versa, as there is hardly any pottery from Bosra recorded at Sī' (only two fragments of body sherds).[1498]

As often occurred in periodic markets in the Roman Empire,[1499] non-local goods would have been also sold by non-local merchants together with local goods. At Sī', we can hypothesise that Nabataean merchants sold incense and aromatics, such as frankincense,[1500] on the basis of the following factors. Nabataean coins predominated in the coin assemblage recovered at Sī' (60%) (Figure 8), which further reveals the major impact of the Nabataeans on the economy local to this site (§ Ch.3.1). Nabataeans were well known as important traders in incense and aromatics (§ Ch.3.1). Incense would have been needed in religious centres such as Sī' as it was commonly used in ritual activities.[1501] Respect for the Nabataeans, possibly because of the sale of their goods, by the elite of Sī' could be seen in the discovery of a statue that may represent a Nabataean king (§ Ch.3.1). The cult centre was almost on a crossroads from Bosra to Damascus, where historical sources documented Nabataean merchants (§ Ch.2).[1502]

These periodic and temporary markets would not have needed permanent stone-made buildings. On the basis of Freyberger's argument discussed above (based on an inscription at the sanctuary of Jupiter at Damascus and Josephus' narration about the temple of Jerusalem),[1503] markets would have been undertaken in wide courtyards. Sī' had four wide forecourts (*theatron*, forecourts 2, 3 and Sī' 8). In addition to his argument, an optimal location of these activities especially would have been under the colonnaded porticos on the sides of the *theatron*, forecourt 2 and courtyard Sī' 8 (Figure 4). Porticos were, in fact, commonly associated with the presence of markets because they were of great help in protecting both merchants and their wares from the weather. Market halls situated near sanctuaries also had colonnaded porticos that preceded a row of small *tabernae* in ancient Greece and Asia Minor, such as those from Pergamon, Corinth and Athens.[1504] It is important to stress that *tabernae* often functioned as workshops to produce the goods that were sold there, and also for storage.[1505] Their absence at Sī', where periodic markets took place, can be explained by the fact that there were other areas used for the production of local goods, such as the pottery workshop. Colonnaded porticoes have also been used for commercial activities in present-day settlements in Syria. For instance in Damascus there are stands under the porticos that surround the courtyard of the small mosque of Tekkiye Suleymaniye. Mosques, like any public religious buildings, are gathering places for devotees. This also suggests that they attract people and provide a good opportunity for merchants to carry out their business, especially during public religious festivities and celebrations.

We can, moreover, speculate that viniculture in the surroundings of Sī' was possibly associated with, and managed by the sanctuary itself. The fields that surround the sanctuary at Sī' have been continuously highly cultivated as vineyards from the Bronze Age to the present day[1506] and viniculture in Djebel al'Arab, as in neighbouring Palestine, is historically documented by Pliny[1507] and by inscriptions,[1508] including an edict by the Emperor Probus (AD 276–82) against the theft of vines from an unknown site in Djebel al'Arab in the 3rd century AD.[1509] Archaeological evidence confirms the widespread cultivation of grape vines in the Djebel al-Arab from the Bronze Age onwards[1510] and French military aerial photographs taken in the 1930s show that terraced fields were rebuilt over time in the valley of the wadi aṣ-Ṣaayyigh, to the east of Sī', which indicates the continuity of the same type of exploitation of the same land for centuries.[1511] This is further proved by the presence of fossilised terraces identified during the investigation of this terrain in the 1970s.[1512] Burnt remains of vines from environmental samples from the Hellenistic and Roman strata (1st–2nd century AD) of temple 2, of a house (no.101) in the settlement attached to the sanctuary, and from the northern slope of the hill of Sī', indicate the occurrence of viniculture from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD.[1513] Furthermore, there were enough water supplies to undertake this type of cultivation: a main reservoir (*c.* 40 m x 35 m) and a smaller one (15 m x 25 m) in the valley in the surroundings of Sī' 8, as well as two smaller cisterns some 350 m west of Sī' 8 (one extended 10 m x 8m and the other 30 m by 20 m) (Figure 37).[1514] Although the reservoirs mentioned above are currently in use, we

[1496] Barret *et al.* 1986; Orssaud 1986: 200; Orssaud *et al.* 2003.
[1497] Wilson and Sa'd 1984: 61, 66, 72–3.
[1498] Barret *et al.* 1986: 228–9.
[1499] MacMullen 1970; de Ligt 1993.
[1500] Young 2001: 91.
[1501] Young 2001: 90.
[1502] Strab. *Geog.* 16. 2, 20.
[1503] Freyberger 1998: 13.
[1504] Dinsmoor 1975: 241, 292–3.
[1505] Frayn 1993: 101.
[1506] Villeneuve 1985; Braemer 1990; Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 165 ff.
[1507] Pliny *NH* 17. 35, 184–5.
[1508] Dussaud and Macler 1901: no.84; 1903, 470 no.46.
[1509] *IGR* III 1341.
[1510] Braemer 1990.
[1511] Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 165.
[1512] Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 165.
[1513] Willcox 2003: 184, table 2, fig.10.
[1514] Denzter 1985 fig.1; Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 216 fig.11.

may not be able to reconstruct the irrigation system for the lands of Sī' in the Roman period as Freyberger did, but we can presume, but not argue confidently, that they were also in use in the past on the basis of the available evidence.[1515] Apart from the environmental remains of viniculture, a water channel, directed towards houses on the eastern end of the cluster of houses attached to the sanctuary, used in the 1st to 3rd centuries AD, indicates an aqueduct adopted for this settlement and one that most likely extended to the sanctuary (Figure 37).[1516] A fountain in courtyard 3 at Sī',[1517] in fact, implies that the land of Sī' had enough water to be able to use some for aesthetic display, apart from potential ritual activity. The importance attributed to the land and vines by the people of the Hauran and the sanctuary at Sī' is attested by the use of vines and grapes as the main floral decoration in pre-provincial and provincial temples and houses in southern Syria, including Sī' (§ Ch.4.5, Ch.5.5).[1518] The importance is endorsed by the naming of the local goddess of the land and the vines, Seeia, after the place of sanctuary[1519] (§ Ch.3.1, Ch.4.4).

The above is sufficient to suggest that exploitation of the surrounding land of the sanctuary took place in the pre-provincial and provincial periods. Who owned and ran the vineyards is unknown. Sī' was not commissioned by any civic members of the nearby Canatha.[1520] Even if these fields belonged to Canatha,[1521] religious festivals at Sī' could have been an ideal opportunity to sell the products of these fields in the sanctuary or its immediate proximity.

Viniculture would inevitably imply the production of wine and, potentially, its sale in markets during religious festivals. The archaeological data available do not provide information that this type of production was not contemporaneous with the religious festivals at Sī'; only two wine presses (one at Sī' 8 and another in the surroundings of Sī') have been dated (5th to the first half of the 8th century AD).[1522] The lack of wine presses dated to the pre-provincial and provincial periods seems anomalous considering the evidence of vineyards dated to this period. Perhaps such a lack might be due to their replacement at a later period. We also need to bear in mind that only two out of 20 wine presses were dated. For these reasons, then, we cannot confidently infer the production of wine and its sale during religious festivals.

Moving on to Saḥr, the French team has pointed out that markets would have benefitted from religious festivals, where a high number of people from different parts of the region would have gathered. However, they have also raised some practical constraints for undertaking economic activities at Saḥr. It was a difficult place to reach: it was not on routes in Leja. There would also have been limited exchange of products because of the nature of the territory.[1523] However, we cannot ignore that the gathering of such large numbers of visitors (at least 600 people at the time) may lead us to suggest the need to sell goods to visitors during such big events. Furthermore, this hypothesis can be supported by the landscape analysis of the site and its surroundings, including by the limitations of the territory brought up by the French team. The territory of Saḥr and its surrounding area comprise lava terrain (§ Ch.2) and therefore could not produce any subsistence resources. Furthermore, there is no evidence of any industrial production at this site. It was also isolated: there are no known settlements in its immediate proximity dating to the time that the cult site existed (from the mid 1st century BC) and continued in the centuries following (3rd century AD). Only in the late 2nd century–3rd century AD (roughly the last century of the sanctuary's life)[1524] were there nearby settlements. In particular, the closest settlement, roughly 5 km away, is the *metrokomia* (mother-village) at Mismiyyeh, which is dated to AD 183–7 (Map 2).[1525] The other settlements that are relatively close by are Dhakīr to the east (*c.* 12–15 km away), Manāra Henū to the south-west (*c.*15–20 km), Shā'rah to the west (*c.* 10–12 km) and Buraq to the north (*c.* 8–9 km) (Map 2). These also dated from the late 2nd century AD onwards. Amongst these settlements, only Shā'rah is known to have been occupied from the Bronze Age to the Ottoman period, including at the time the actual sanctuary was built.[1526] However, the subsistence of this settlement is unknown. Therefore, the poor nature of the land in the surroundings at Saḥr and the near absence of settlements in the vicinity, apart from Shā'rah, suggest the necessity of periodic markets during the major religious festivals at Saḥr. They would have provided a great opportunity for non-local merchants, as attested by written sources in the Republic and Imperial periods in Italy, when itinerant merchants would have gone from one temporary market to another.[1527] Only a small number of itinerant merchants would have joined periodic markets at Saḥr, as a small quantity of imported (Eastern Terra Sigillata B) and regional basaltic and calcareous pottery found, or produced,

[1515] Freyberger 2009.
[1516] Dentzer 1985: 75–6, 78.
[1517] Dentzer-Feydy 2010.
[1518] Dentzer 1989: 463; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 95–7.
[1519] *PPUAES* II ill.337; *PPUAES* III no.767; Dentzer-Feydy 1979.
[1520] Millar 1993: 251–4.
[1521] According to few inscriptions the surroundings of Canatha, therefore including Sī', belonged to the *khôra* (territory) of the city in the provincial period (Sartre 1981, 353, 355–57; Millar 1993: 419).
[1522] Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 139, 145; Blanc 2003: 35.
[1523] *Hauran* IV I: 258, 260.
[1524] Kalos 2003: 160, 162, 164–5 fig.2–3.
[1525] *Wadd.* no.2524.
[1526] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 104.
[1527] MacMullen 1970: 341.

in Leja and Djebel al'Arab was recovered both in the buildings and in the sanctuary at Saḥr. The majority of pottery, instead, must have been locally made as it has not been found elsewhere, although its place of production is unknown. The forms of local and regional groups were mainly jars and storage vessels, including pithoi and local amphorae, which were mostly recovered in the buildings, with the exception of some examples in the cella.[1528] The predominance of recovering pottery that functioned as storing or serving liquids, and possibly food, can be considered evidence of selling goods and exchange of products on a local level. Furthermore, a considerable quantity of containers could have held perishable materials (wood, basketry, or leather), which could have been equally used to transport, sell and use goods on site, as was common practice still at the beginning of the 20th century in southern Syria.[1529]

As the northern Djebel al'Arab (*c.* 50 km from Saḥr) and Sacaea (*c.* 45 km from Saḥr) cultivated grapes,[1530] the merchants at Saḥr could have come from these areas: grapes and wine could well be two of the main types of goods needed during celebrations and religious festivals. Nabataean merchants may also have featured at the markets if one takes into account their major role as traders (§ Ch.3.1) and the fact that they were historically known to cross the Hauran to get to the surroundings of Damascus.[1531] In addition, a donor of one of the statues on the platform at Saḥr bears a Nabataean name (Zaidos).[1532]

These goods could have been transported in perishable containers. Furthermore, local goods could also have come from the small areas along the western border of Leja, where agriculture could have taken place only on a small scale. For instance, a pithos from the room with a cistern in the cella was only found on the western borders of Leja, as at Shaara.[1533]

Evidence of the possibility of movements of goods and people in the region can be verified by the wide diffusion of names of individuals making dedications at Saḥr across the Hauran.[1534]

We should not forget that markets at Saḥr would have been on a small scale, considering that they would have functioned only during seasonal religious festivals. Small-scale markets could have been undertaken in the porticos that surround the large courtyard of the sanctuary, as suggested for Sī' earlier on. Due to the large number of visitors that would have been at Saḥr, the building surrounding the sanctuary and the theatre could have been used also to hold markets, as well as banqueting and providing rest areas for pilgrims. These buildings could have been multi-functional. They have colonnaded porticos that seem ideal also for housing the temporary markets that would have taken place during religious festivals. As discussed earlier, they would have provided much-needed shade at Saḥr, situated as it was in a dry and deserted lava area (§ Ch.2). They resemble present-day locations with stands under the porticos, such as those that surround the courtyard of the small mosque of Tekkiye Suleymaniye in Damascus and market halls in Asia Minor and Greece (mentioned above in the discussion of Sī'). In that regard, most of the buildings seem to be protected from the sun,[1535] wind and rain, because the most frequent openings of theses structures face either north, north-east or north-west, with west-facing openings being very rare.[1536] Apart from niches that cover the internal walls of these buildings, occasional elevated platforms in the central room would also have been ideal for displaying goods, as their elevated position would have prevented them from sand and dust. Some of these buildings at Saḥr have an additional small room that is not usually accessible from the area with porticos and archways, and that has its own independent door. Apart from storing objects and utensils for banquets, these could have been used as private rooms for merchants to rest overnight or as a temporary storage places, as Vitruvius himself pointed out when focusing on the function of this type of structure during periodic markets.[1537]

This first in-depth analysis of economic activities in rural cult centres in the Hauran has attempted to widen the previous scholarly understanding of the subject by providing a more complete picture of the markets during religious festivals at Sī' and the pottery production of this sanctuary; by offering, for the first time, a picture of markets during religious festivals, also at Saḥr.

The suggestion of this type of economic activities and their reconstruction only in these two major cult centres has been possible thanks to the preserved archaeological evidence, supported by landscape analysis.

[1528] Renel 2017.
[1529] Renel 2017: 368.
[1530] Dentzer *et al.* 2003: 128 pl.95.1.
[1531] Strab. *Geog.* 16. 2, 20.
[1532] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: no.49a.
[1533] Renel 2017.
[1534] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 73–90; Sartre-Fauriat 2017; Appendix.
[1535] *Hauran* IV I: 197.
[1536] Kalos 1997: 970.
[1537] Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.5.2.

6.3. Personnel

In order to have a comprehensive picture of the religious and non-religious functions of these centres, and how cult centres were organised, a discussion now follows of the different types of personnel at such rural cult centres in the Hauran, as mentioned in inscriptions, including priests, *hierodouloi*, *Seenoi*, temple-treasurers, and a *neokoros*.

What is of interest in the priesthood in the Hauran is that female and male children or adolescents were included, with the inscriptions at Ṣanamein mentioning that they were offered and consecrated to the deity Tyche as priestesses and priests by their parents or grandparents.[1538] This was common practice in the Levant in the pre-provincial period.[1539] The presence of both sexes in the priesthood is because they belong to the deity of Destiny, the Semitic male Gad assimilated to the female deity Tyche.

According to Sourdel, the young priests were simply servants dedicated to the deity on behalf of their family, such as the *hierodoulos* (temple slave).[1540] In the inscription at Ṣanamein, a grandfather offered four torch-bearers together with his granddaughter.[1541] The offering indicates the use of fire during cult practices, as verified by sculptures that represent the *lampadophoros* (torch-bearer) at Mismiyyeh[1542] and also in the adyton at Saḥr. They are depicted as naked young figures. However the statue fragment at Saḥr is a naked waist and there is no evidence of a lamp.[1543] Thus, these adolescents consecrated to Tyche, mentioned in the inscriptions, could have played the role of torch-bearers or fire-bearers in the cult centre. According to *DDS* the priesthood was organised in an hierarchical system from the high priests to fire-bearers and altar-attendants.[1544] It would make sense that children and adolescents would have been at the bottom of the hierachy of priesthood.

Amongst different members of the priesthood at Sī', there was a *neokoros* in charge 'of finishing a construction' on the basis of an inscription.[1545] *Neokoros* (νεωκόρος) is a compound term from *naos* (ναός) and *koros* (κόρος), the boy who maintains,[1546] so it would mean the keeper who looks after the temple.[1547] However, his role seems to vary slightly depending on the written sources. According to Greek literature,[1548] *neokoroi* performed and received sacrifices on behalf of gods. They were responsible for the money or valuable items in many Hellenistic sanctuaries, such as the Amphiareion of Oropos, near a harbour in Greece (late 5th century BC). In this case, the *neokoroi* also collected fees and issued 'tickets' to pilgrims and set up inventories of offerings.[1549] According to an inscription from the sanctuary of Zeus Keraunios at Seleucia of Pieria (the ancient port at Antioch, Turkey, on the border with Syria), the role of the *neokoros* was to look after the sanctuary by supervising the decoration and cleanliness of the holy places by throwing holy water on those who entered the temple. In this case the *neokoros*, Pompeius Zenon, was a Roman citizen and appointed to this title for life;[1550] these two elements could suggest the prestige of the title *neokoros*. In the 1st century AD, *neokoros* was an official title conferred on Greek cities when they had a temple for the cult of the emperor. In a different context, in Egypt, especially in Alexandria, *neokoroi* were priests of the deity Serapis.[1551]

The inscription block from Sī' was reused in an 8th-century wine press that was built on top of the ruins of Sī' 8. The fact that we do not know its original placement causes difficulties for our attempt to integrate the inscriptions within their original contexts, which could offer some information related to the building that the *neokoros* was in charge of finishing, for instance.

Sartre dated the inscription to the 3rd century AD,[1552] so it could be that the building that the *neokoros* supervised was the provincial structure, which is the only provincial addition to the sanctuary apart from the Roman Gate. When investigating the role of the *neokoros* at Sī', we cannot argue that he was in charge of an imperial cult as there is no archaeological evidence of imperial cults at Sī', nor in the nearby city of Canatha. In the case of Sī', the *neokoros* was a major figure in the sanctuary, looking after the cult centre and finishing

[1538] *Wadd*. no.2413 g and i; *PPUAES* III no.653 no.653 A, B, C1–C2, D1–D2 no.655 4; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.6; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 1–4 no.1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 534–8 542–4 no.549–52, no.556. no.556 a.
[1539] Schürer 1979: 273.
[1540] Sourdel 1957: 51–2.
[1541] *Wadd*. no.2413 g; *PPUAES* III no.653 no.653 A, B, C1–C2, D1–D2; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 534–8 no.549–52.
[1542] *Hauran* IV I: 111 fig.225.
[1543] *Hauran* IV I: 218–9 fig. 723–5.
[1544] *DDS* 42.
[1545] Dentzer 1981: 92 no.9; Sartre 2003.
[1546] The meaning of koros is more complicated, although the one provided here is the most established. For further information, see Burrell 2004: 4 notes 10–3.
[1547] Burrell 2004: 4.
[1548] The 1st-century BC poet Automedon ridicules a *neokoros*, who after the sacrificial procession carries off all the sacrifice for himself leaving nothing for the god (Greek anthology 11, 324). Philip of Thessalonike, a poet in the Neronian period (AD 50–68), narrates that *neokoroi* pick a sacrificial animal for Artemis (Greek Anthology 9, 22). Plutarch (AD 46–120) (on Isis and Osiris 351E, Romulus 5.1, Roman questions 264D, 267D) classifies the work of *neokoroi* as a way of pleasing a god. A 2nd-century orator, Aelius Aristides, knew two *neokoroi* of the temple of Asklepios; as well as carrying out the therapy to heal him and other patients, they held keys to the temple and were responsible for the crowns and other valuable that were dedicated to Asklepios (Oration 47–50, Sacred Tales 1.11, 44, 58, 76, 2.30, 35, 46-49, 3.14, 22-23, 4.46). See Savelkoul 1988 for further information.
[1549] Burrell 2004: 4–5 footnote 20.
[1550] *IGLS* III no.1185.
[1551] Burrell 2004: 4–5.
[1552] Sartre 2003.

a construction according to the inscription. The significance of this character, and his high social status, can be assumed because his father's name, the only one that is preserved, Aelius Dio, was used by Roman citizens in the Hadrianic period.[1553]

Inscriptions record the presence of a *hierodoulos* at Sī' and at Saḥr. *Hierodoulos* (ἱεροδούλος) is a Greek compound term, from *ieros* (ἱερός), meaning sacred, and *doulos* (δούλος), meaning slave. *Hierodouloi* were sacred slaves, as they offered their service to the deity and were subordinate to high priests, according to historical sources and inscriptions.[1554] Examples of their presence included the sanctuary of the ancient Pontus[1555] and Nimurd Dagˇ, Antioch and Commagene, both in Asia Minor (Turkey).[1556] According to Strabo, *hierodouloi* worked on lands owned by sanctuaries in central and southern Asia Minor, such as in the temples at ancient Zela (modern day Zile) (east-central Turkey),[1557] at Pontus and in Cappadocia.[1558] *Hierodouloi* were also musicians and singers for processions and rituals;[1559] an inscription from Commagene states that *hierodouloi* were recruited from a young age so that they could learn singing and music.[1560]

In the case of Sī' and Saḥr, the inscriptions refer to the work of an individual, not a collective effort. At Sī', a *hierodoulos* is mentioned in a fragmented inscribed pedestal found in courtyard 2 (AD 29–30). According to the inscription, a statue, which has not been recovered, was 'the work of *hierodoulos* Zaid-'ēl' of unknown provenance. The subordinate role of *hierodouloi* expressed elsewhere in the Near East can, potentially, be seen in this example. The side of the statue pedestal that mentions the *hierodoulos* Zaid-'ēl is undecorated, whereas the front decorated side of the pedestal bears a local Aramaic inscription naming the people who commissioned it.[1561] At the same time, the decision to sign his work in Greek may be because he wanted his work to be understood by an audience wider than the local community, or also because he could not identify himself with the local Aramaic script, as he may not have been local. As Sartre argued, the use of Greek, an official language, in inscriptions was an external manifestation of prestige (§ Ch.4.3).[1562] Although the location of the signature of the *hierodoulos* suggests a subordinate role in this case, his inferiority and his position in the sanctuary can still be ambiguous. Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre proposed a different role for an individual called *hierodoulos* in two inscriptions at Saḥr.[1563] They suggested that the *hierodoulos* was a wealthy individual associated with the sanctuary, as the verb referring to the action of *hierodoulos* is 'to make', *hierodoulos*, together with his name, is placed in front of the statue pedestal and there is no mention of another name on the pedestal. This may lead us to suggest that *hierodoulos* commissioned two statues (possibly of an unknown male deity and potentially of Athena/Allat).[1564] It might be a third inscription from Saḥr that mentions an *hierodoulos,* but its reading is still under discussion.[1565] Whether or not the *hierodoulos* was a wealthy individual, his contribution in the sanctuaries at Sī' and Saḥr is undeniable. The inscriptions in these two sanctuaries re-evaluate the role of *hierodouloi* in the sanctuaries: they cannot only be considered subordinate and slaves of a sanctuary. It is not possible to identify the involvement of this figure in the sanctuaries of the Hauran with clarity.

The scale of the ritual activities taking place at Sī' and Saḥr implies the necessity for competent management by of a group of individuals. It is problematic, if not impossible, to identify who the people looking after the religious and economic activities of the sanctuary at Saḥr were, and where they lived, bearing in mind that the buildings around the sanctuary have not been considered long-term dwellings. In the case of Sī', instead, there is a group of people associated with the sanctuary and the place where the sanctuary was situated: the community of *Seenoi*.[1566] These were associated with the term 'sacred open spaces' or 'broad streets' (ἱερὰ πλατεῖα) in an inscription in honour of Petronius Secundus, one of the main officers of *IIII Scythica*.[1567] The exact role of the *Seenoi* and their association with the sacred open spaces or streets is unclear as there is a missing word between the two terms in the inscription. At Apamea, open spaces or broad streets (πλατεῖα) are associated with craftsmen and, in particular, cobblers.[1568] Therefore, it has been suggested that the *Seenoi* were members of a guild.[1569] In an inscription at Suris, similar to the one at Apamea, the term πλατεῖα refers to the officer of the sacred open spaces or broad streets, without explicitly mentioning craftsmen or cobblers.[1570] We could presume that the *Seenoi* administered and controlled the sacred open spaces in the courtyards of the sanctuary, or the sacred way to the sanctuary, and, consequently, all the activities taking place in these sacred spaces

[1553] Sartre 2003.
[1554] Debord 1982: 83; Boffo 1985: 19–20; Virgilio 1985: 230.
[1555] Strab. *Geog.* 12. 2, 3.
[1556] *IGLS* I no.1, 1.171 ff.
[1557] Strab. *Geog.* 11. 8, 4, 12. 3, 37; Boffo 1985: 31.
[1558] Strab. *Geog.* 12. 3, 36; Zawadzki 1952–53: 83 ff. 91.
[1559] Debord 1982: 96.
[1560] *IGLS* I no.1; Dörrie 1964.
[1561] *PPUAES* II no.768.
[1562] Sartre 1985: 201–2.
[1563] *PPUAES* III no.805 1; Weber 2003a: 354–5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 76–8 no.40–1.
[1564] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 77–8.
[1565] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 333–4 n.10.
[1566] *Wadd* no.2367; *IGRR* III no.1230; *PAAES* III no.428b; Speidel 1998: 185–7 no.35.
[1567] *IGR* III no.1230; Speidel 1998: 185–7 no.35.
[1568] *IGR* III no.712–13; Waltzing 1899: 106 no.1.
[1569] *IGR* III no.1230; Speidel 1998, 185–7 no.35.
[1570] *IGR* III no.711; Waltzing 1899: 106 no.2.

(processional ways, rituals and markets). This strong tie of the *Seenoi* with the sanctuary can be construed from the two inscriptions commissioned by the *Seenoi*. One expresses gratitude from the *Seenoi* towards the patron of temple 1 and the *theatron*.[1571] In the second inscription, the *Seenoi* made a dedication in honour of Petronius Secundus,[1572] one of the main officers of *IIII Scythica*, who, most likely, protected and controlled the area, including the sanctuary (§ Ch.5.1). This implies that his protection of the area may also have affected religious and economic activities of the sanctuary, hence, supposedly, the *Seenoi*'s work.

At the same time, because they commissioned two inscriptions in the sanctuary, they were wealthy enough to commission and direct dedicatory inscriptions to the patron of the temple and a member of a Roman legion. In the inscriptions, there are no names of individuals from the community of *Seenoi*. They considered themselves, and wanted to be remembered as, a social entity associated with this territory, the land protected by the goddess Seeia, thus they did not need to state their name – they were under the protection of the sanctuary. Because of this strong connection of the *Seenoi* with the sanctuary, we can assume that they were inhabitants of the settlement, consisting of various houses, that extended from the extreme south-eastern side of the sanctuary, since this was in essence an extension of the religious complex itself (Figure 37). It was built and in use at the same time as the cult centre.[1573] Therefore the people who lived there probably worked for the sanctuary. Located to the east of the settlement, its central road, terminating with a gate, was aligned with the Roman Gate of the sanctuary.[1574] This direct access of the settlement to the cult centre suggests that it functioned for the cult centre. The settlement would have been large enough to accommodate priests associated with the cult centre, pilgrims,[1575] as well as people working in the fields and in pottery production as well. The houses appear to be simple structures consisting of one or two rooms.[1576] These houses could have also been used as inns for pilgrims, since they did not need to be lavish if functioning as temporary accommodation. The simplicity of the houses can imply that their inhabitants were not wealthy and, therefore, that *Seenoi* were not wealthy as such, if it is correct that they lived there. It is unlikely that this settlement was a simple village, as it had a rampart, unlike ordinary villages in the region.[1577] The necessity of a fortification stresses the significance of the settlement, namely that it required protection, being part of the cult centre. Similar to the date of this complex of houses and the sanctuary itself, the *Seenoi* existed from the pre-provincial period (early 1st century AD) and they carried on into the provincial period, on the basis of the dating of the two inscriptions dedicated by *Seenoi*. This implies that *Seenoi* could have lived there.

Other individuals among the personnel of rural cult centres include temple treasurers, according to dedicatory and commemorative inscriptions in rural temples at Hebrān, Lubbên and Inkhil (Appendix). Having people that had only this specific duty (looking after the treasury of the rural temples) implies that the temples owned such large amounts of goods and possessions that the priests could not have dealt with them on their own, and it was necessary to appoint an officer to oversee them. Furthermore, the inscriptions mention two or more temple treasurers from the three sites mentioned above. This indicates the complexity of the finances of these temples, more than one person apparently being required to manage the finances of the sanctuaries. At Hebrān, there were five temple treasurers, implying that the possessions of the temple were more extensive than those in the other two cult centres.

This differences between the inscriptions from the three temples cannot be verified archaeologically. At Inkhil and Lubbên, there is no archaeological evidence of a sanctuary, whereas at Hebrān only fragments of architectural features and inscriptions of the temple are preserved and its plan is based on an early 20th-century reconstruction.[1578]

We can suggest that the cult centre at Hebrān was important because of the recovery of eight inscriptions addressed to different deities (such as Zeus, Allat/Athena and Lycurgus) and different dedicators (individuals of Safaitic origin, Roman soldiers and possibly Nabataean merchants) (Appendix). The high number of dedications from this site is not matched at Lubbên, where only three inscriptions have been found. On the basis of this scarce evidence we know that village community commissioned the cult centre (Appendix).

For Inkhil, two temple treasurers were mentioned, but we cannot be certain of their exact number as the inscription is incomplete.[1579]

Despite the lack of archaeological evidence, through the numbers of appointed temple treasurers we can identify how distinct and more complex the temple at Hebrān was than at Lubbên and Inkhil. Furthermore, from the inscriptions that mention the temple treasurers at Hebrān and Lubbên, we can gain additional information

[1571] *Wadd* no.2367; *PAAES* III no.428b.
[1572] *IGRR* III no.1230; Speidel 1998: 185–7 no.35.
[1573] Dentzer 1985: 79.
[1574] Dentzer 1985: 79.
[1575] Dentzer 1985: 78–9.
[1576] Dentzer 1985: 79.
[1577] Dentzer 1985: 79.
[1578] *PPUAES* II: 323–5, pl.20.
[1579] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 447–9 no.461a.

about the role of these personnel.[1580] At Hebrān, temple treasurers commissioned the erection of the temple by using sacred funds. This means that the temple owned sufficient assets to financially support its own building and, therefore, was financially independent: it did not need a wealthy individual or group to commission and support the temple. The location of the site also suggests its significance, being near the Damascus to Bosra road (Map 2), at the border between the Herodian and the Nabataean kingdoms and between the two Roman provinces (Syria to the north and Arabia to the south) before their unification under the province of Arabia (§ Ch.2).

According to the inscription referring to temple treasurers from Lubbên, the role of these personnel was to help the village community build a temple. This means that there was a direct relationship between the temple and the local community: this was probably because the cult centre was funded by its community[1581] and the sanctuary would have been the focal point of the community in the village.

The three sites under examination seem to be cult centres of different levels of significance. Therefore, it seems that temple treasurer was a key role that may have been present at all times at rural cult centres, regardless of its significance. The number of individuals holding this position may vary depending on the importance of the sanctuary. We have been able to identify the presence of personnel responsible for the temple possessions in the cult centres at Hebrān, Lubbên and Inkhil only thanks to the fortuitous recovery of inscriptions that mention the help of these individuals in the building of these cult centres.

Therefore, this picture of the organisation and possessions of rural temples opens a small window onto the potentially complex organisation of other rural sanctuaries and their finances. Individuals charged with the role of temple treasurer were also most likely present at all the other rural cult centres, especially, and at least, at Sī' and Saḥr, as they were centres of major ritual practices and economic activities.

From the scarce evidence available, it is difficult to identify where temple possessions came from. These assets would have included money and precious objects coming from offerings and banquets, on the basis of inventories of sanctuaries in Greece from the 4th century BC, and in Anatolia, mainly from the 2nd century BC and, in some cases, from the 1st century AD.[1582] Financial deposits of sanctuaries varied according to the details in written records. They included public treasuries from the city, or confederations, such as the temple of Apollo at Delos, and special deposits from the city to be used for regular celebrations of sacrifices and festivals, for example at the temple of Athena Lindia at Lindos.[1583] There were also assets placed in and owned by sanctuaries, like those recorded in Mesopotamian and Hellenistic Egyptian archives.[1584] Populations usually donated money annually to temples in Judaea in the Maccabean period (2nd century BC).[1585]

Therefore, from this set of examples, we can suggest that the main source of wealth for a temple in the Hauran would have been devotees' offerings. An additional element that might support this hypothesis is the role of these temples within the rural communities: they were the main and often only public buildings in the countryside and villages identified by archaeological and written evidence, where people would have gathered. In some instances, like at Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah[1586] and Lubbên,[1587] inscriptions record that village communities commissioned rural temples. The temple's financial support would have come especially from the elites. Their privileged position in rural cult centres can be suggested by a reserved area assigned to a small group of people to attend rituals in the *theatron* at Sī' and in the small courtyard at Saḥr. These areas would have been too big to be used only by priests, as the estimated maximum number of seats at Saḥr would be 60, for instance (§ Ch.6.1). In the case of Sī', which provides us with more detailed information about the sanctuary and its activities, its possessions could have also resulted from the profits of markets and their economic activities, such as pottery production, and potentially viticulture, most likely run by the sanctuary itself. In the case of Saḥr, the sale of 'tickets' for ritual performances taking place in the theatre connected with the sanctuary (§ Ch.6.1) would have supposedly gone to the religious centre.

Thanks to the dedicatory and commemorative inscriptions, it has been possible to reconstruct the complex structured system behind the cult centre where people had different roles. The priesthood included young adolescents as possible torch-bearers; *hierodoulos* and *neokoroi* would have both helped in

[1580] *Wadd*. no.2455–6; Ewing 1895: 69; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324–25; *PPUAES* III no.793, no.793 1.
[1581] *Wadd*. no.2455; Ewing 1895: 70; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324; *PPUAES* III no.793.
[1582] Debord 1982: 215–5. An example is the sanctuary of Artemision in the Hellenistic Perge (Perga, south-western Mediterranean coast of Anatolia.
[1583] Bogaert 1968: 282–3.
[1584] Bogaert 1968: 284.
[1585] Schürer 1979: 272–4, Boffo 1982: 22–3. It is difficult and often impossible to identify where sacred belongings were deposited in the sanctuary; it could have been in a separate room or in various parts of the sanctuary, especially where offerings were numerous (Bogaert 1968: 287).
[1586] *PPUAES* III no.800 2, 8.
[1587] *Wadd*. no.2045–6; Ewing 1895: 69–70, Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324–5; *PPUAES* III no.793.

the activities and the maintenance of the cult centre, and temple treasurers managed the temple funds. At Sī', the community of *Seenoi* could have overseen the sacred open spaces in the courtyards of the sanctuary or the sacred way to the sanctuary, and thus most likely all the activities taking place there.

The fact that these individuals associated with the cult centres are recorded in dedicatory and commemorative inscriptions also marks their significance in the religious community and their society, by either contributing financially to the cult centre or helping the members of the community to build the temple, or the village families who offered their children to the deity.

6.4. Concluding remarks

Whereas Steinsapir, Freyberger and Dentzer have mainly been concerned with rituals at Sī', with a brief consideration of al-Mushennef, Ṣanamein, Sūr al-Lejā and Saḥr, this chapter has widened our understanding of religious and non-religious activities that also occurred in other rural cult centres in the Hauran.

This study has been a first overview to discuss cult and economic activities in rural cult centres across the Hauran. It has been based on the preservation of the cult centres and the fortuitous recovery of dedicatory inscriptions, together with landscape analysis. Therefore, when different members of the personnel of cult centres are not recorded, or there is no evidence showing the complexity of a cult centre and their rituals, or economic activities, we should not argue that the cult centre did not have an organised system of priests, or such activities, but accept that there is no evidence to reconstruct those.

The study in this chapter has attested in detail several cult practices involving the gatherings of people from the pre-provincial to the provincial periods, not just in the 'centre of pilgrimage' of Sī', but also in other rural centres (Saḥr, Shā'rah, al-Mushennef, Ṣanamein, Sūr al-Lejā, 'Atīl, Breikeh and Khirbet Massakeb). In these examples from the pre-provincial to the provincial periods, it has been possible to suggest the metaphorical participation of the gods in ritual activities, and the possibility of rituals associated with water. This implies the continuity of common ritual practices in rural cult centres in the Hauran from the pre-provincial to provincial times.

Furthermore, this study had as one of its objectives the investigation of non-religious activities that took place in rural cult centres, and which scholars have paid little attention to because of the lack of explicit written evidence on the matter. This chapter has revealed that even rural cult centres not previously discussed by scholars at great length, due to the non-existent or poor preservation of their ruins (Hebrān, Lubbên and Inkhil), certainly owned possessions and received some sort of substantial income. This finding is based on inscriptions that mention more than one temple treasurer in major and minor rural temples (their number varied from two to four). This prompts us to assume that a great proportion of cult centres, if not every sanctuary, received a substantial income and owned generic possessions, and so needed to have more than one individual, who was not a member of the priesthood, being responsible for temple funds. This leads us in turn to propose that our partial understanding of the ritual practices and non-religious functions of rural cult centres is a consequence of the limited evidence that survived.

Although temple funds would have derived from devotees' offerings, other sorts of income for cult centres may have originated from religious festivals (e.g. the possibility of tolls during processions at Sī', and the sale of 'tickets' at Saḥr), profits from periodic markets during religious festivals (at least in the case of Sī' and Saḥr), including the sale of products most likely produced by the sanctuary (e.g. pottery and, potentially, viticulture at Sī').

This chapter has provided a glimpse of the complex structured network of people who maintained and regulated the cult centres on the basis of dedicatory inscriptions: *hierodouloi*, *neokoroi*, the priesthood, including young members of the priesthood who were possibly torch-bearers, temple treasurers and, in the case of Sī', the *Seenoi*.

This first joint analysis of religious and non-religious activities in rural cult centres has broken new ground: no longer is it based on perceiving rural cult centres as isolated local temples but on them being understood as major, complex, multi-functional, organised and structured meeting places, where different members of the religious and secular communities had a specific role in the sanctuary. So this analysis has re-evaluated the role of sanctuaries as centres of aggregation of individuals with their own funds. They can be considered as a resource and means of investigation beyond their religious symbolism, but most importantly, as centres affected by movements of people as a result of religious activities in these centres, as well as economic activities also triggered by, and associated with, major cult practices.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This monograph has endeavoured to contribute the first interdisciplinary comprehensive analysis of 57 rural cult centres in the Hauran. It has encompassed their layout, architectural and decorative elements, statues, gods, benefactors, religious and non-religious activities, all placed within their natural, socio-political and economic landscape. No previous study has specifically focused on rural cult centres across the Hauran using a multi-level approach.

Previous work has, instead, often discussed only the main sanctuaries of the Hauran (Sī' and Saḥr), with only the occasional couple of additional examples. Alternatively, it has considered one aspect of the religious or social life of the Hauran (for instance, deities mentioned in inscriptions, architectural or sculptural styles, including, but not exclusively, examples from rural cult centres). Previous work has provided a discordant and partial picture of the Hauran that makes a comprehensive analysis essential. In particular, the common scholarly argument (including that of French team, Freyberger, Kropp, Alpass and Wenning) mostly centred on the local identity of this territory when looking at one aspect of its religious life (deities, architectural or sculptural styles, for instance) (§ Ch.4). Villeneuve, Sartre and Alpass argued that the people of the Hauran came originally from Safaitic nomadic tribes, or at least, a group of them, who became sedentary in this region (§ Ch.4.1–2).

At the same time, some specialists identified singular foreign elements in the religious life of the Hauran on a small scale. Scholars for over a century, until the 1980s, considered the sanctuary at Sī' (in particular, temples 1 and 2), together with the rural temples at Saḥr and at Sūr al-Lejā, to be Nabataean, and a few recent scholars (Patrich, Ball, Netzer, Bowersock and Segal) still uphold this view. Dentzer-Feydy, instead, only pointed out the presence of Nabataean capitals at Sī', which Dentzer considered a prestigious gift made from the last Nabataean king, Rabbel II. Starcky, Dentzer and Wenning argued for a Nabataean presence in the south of the Hauran on the basis of the concentration of Nabataean inscriptions (§ Ch.3.1). Weber interpreted the statuary complex at Saḥr as representing the Herodian army led by Agrippa. Dentzer-Feydy explained the resemblances of decoration at Sī' with Herodian architecture because of the Herodian authority in the territory, as emphasised by the statue of Herod at Sī' (§ Ch.3.2). Dentzer-Feydy and Bolelli recognised the occasional architectural resemblances between the Hauran and the hinterland of the Near East (§ Ch.4.6). Segal and Freyberger identified Graeco-Roman elements in the religious architecture in the Hauran, whereas Dentzer-Feydy argued that the architecture of the Hauran overall belonged to a common style developed in the province of Syria, which partially integrated some Graeco-Roman elements (§ Ch.5.5). Sartre-Fauriat indicated the worship of new gods (Isis, Pax and Nemesis at Mismiyyeh, Apollo at Rimet Hazim, the Twelve Gods at Ṣanamein and Ares at Deir as-Smeij) that were introduced into the Hauran by the Roman army (§ Ch.5.3). Sartre, Goldon and Sartre-Fauriat argued the major role of veterans in the society of the Hauran (§ Ch.5.1).

All these foreign aspects, including the presence of people who made Safaitic graffiti, have frequently been questioned by other scholars. However, the introduction of new gods in the provincial period and the significant presence of veterans in the Hauran are generally accepted.

Steinsapir reconstructed cult activities in detail only in the sanctuary at Sī', while Freyberger focused on ritual processions at Sī', particularly in relation to the nearby city of Canatha and rituals associated with water at Sī', Ṣanamein and al-Mushennef (§ Ch.6.1).

This picture of the Hauran provided by scholars has neither included all the inscriptions, architectural fragments and statues derived from cult centres, nor all the different aspects of cult centres. It has led in this monograph to a reassessment of previous work, comprehensively integrating new data, new aspects, and new comparative examples. These are: the relationship and resemblances of rural cult centres in the Hauran, with the hinterland of the Near East; the cult of Mithras; the worship of major deities in rural cult centres across the Hauran on the basis of inscriptions and depictions; the benefactors of rural cult centres; the use of Roman names in inscriptions from cult centres; the style of sculptures exclusively from rural cult centres; cult and economic activities in all the cult centres in the Hauran; and the personnel in rural cult centres.

This comprehensive study has offered a more complex and distinct picture of rural cult centres and of the society of the Hauran, and the meaning and potential of these centres. This research has demonstrated that we can no longer perceive rural cult centres as isolated, vacant, local buildings, and the Hauran as a region consisting of a local and rural population. The monograph has argued that these rural cult centres were complex and multi-functional meeting centres

that were influenced by, and evolved within, the contexts where they were situated, as these contexts, in turn, changed and were shaped by interactions of the society of the Hauran (the elite who built these centres and devotees who used them) with the wider world.

Undoubtedly what we can perceive from the fragmentary elements of rural cult centres (e.g. architectural features, gods) recovered in the Hauran, compared with fragmentary evidence elsewhere in the Near East, is a glimpse of what social interactions between people adopting similar religious and architectural elements could have been in the past.

Based on the study of benefactors of major cult centres, this monograph has argued that the elite of the Hauran in the pre-provincial period had strong ties with the people who made Safaitic graffiti (§ Ch.4.1–2). The elite of the Hauran in the provincial period was constituted by Roman soldiers from military bases across the Near East to a great extent (e.g. Ṣanamein, Breikeh, Dhakīr, Hebrān, Sleim, Mismiyyeh, Manāra Henū, Rimet Hazim, Sī and Sūr al-Lejā) (§ Ch.5.1). They only occasionally worshipped foreign gods (Mithras at Sī' and Shā'rah, Zeus Ammon at al-Mushennef, Isis, Pax and Nemesis at Mismiyyeh, Apollo at Rimet Hazim and the Twelve Gods at Ṣanamein) but also showed devotion to certain deities (Zeus and Tyche) widely worshipped across the Hauran (as at Sī' and Ṣanamein, for instance) (§ Ch.5.1–3).

The people of the rural landscape of the Hauran were integrated within the broader network of the Near East on the basis of various elements on multiple levels. These include: particular resemblances of some elements of religious architecture and sculptural styles from the hinterland of the Near East in the pre-provincial and provincial periods[1588] (§ Ch.4.5, 5.5), and, to a lesser degree, from the Nabataeans and Herodian territories; the presence of a statue of Herod at Sī', the statues of Nabataeans (possibly a Nabataean king at Sī' and merchants at Sleim, Sī' and al-Mushennef) and possibly of Herodian soldiers at Saḥr (§ Ch.3); the adoption of Roman names by dedicators[1589] (§ Ch.5.4); and the occasional worship of foreign gods in the pre-provincial[1590] (§ Ch.3.1, Ch.4.3) and in provincial periods[1591] (§ Ch.5.1–3). Furthermore, the major deities worshipped in rural cult centres in the Hauran (Baalshamin, Zeus, Allat, Athena and Tyche) in the pre-provincial and provincial periods were worshipped elsewhere in the Near East (§ Ch.4.2–4).

Moreover, the presence of a statue of an Herodian king at Sī' (commissioned by the local elite), and the possibility of statues of Herodian soldiers and Agrippa II (commissioned by the local elite), statues at Saḥr and a Nabataean ruler at Sī', can be interpreted on two levels, with one explanation not excluding the other. First, they are symbols of political power, and, second, they indicate the local elite's gratitude to their rulers – as the Hauran was part of both kingdoms (§ Ch.3). Consequently, they show the power and wealth of the local elite associated with these cultures. In either case, these symbols of power and wealth were displayed in strategic locations, as many worshippers and pilgrims gathered together in these rural sanctuaries, which seemed to be the centres of rural society within the Hauran.

The use of Greek names of deities, and of Greek script, and the adoption of architectural elements used in the Near East in the provincial period, and of Roman names by dedicators of rural cult centres, all indicate that the elite of the Hauran wanted to align themselves with higher social classes, to be associated with the elite from the Roman provinces, and to incorporate themselves into the Roman Empire and the broader network of the Near East (§ Ch.4.3–4, Ch.5.4–5). The use of Greek names of deities cannot be associated with the presence of Roman soldiers, as it started in the 1st century AD and was widely used in dedications by individuals who were not part of the Roman army.

Finally, this monograph has re-evaluated cult centres as major, complex, multi-functioning, organised and structured centres of aggregations of people with their own funds, where different members of the religious and secular communities had specific roles in the sanctuary (§ Ch.6). Major cult practices (including sacrifices, banqueting, religious performances, rituals with water and processions) that involved the gathering of many people have been identified at al-Mushennef, Khirbet Massakeb, Sī', Saḥr, Shā'rah, Ṣanamein and Sūr al-Lejā. In these cases, and at 'Atīl and Breikeh, it has been possible to suggest the metaphorical participation of the gods in ritual activities (§ Ch.6.1). The identification of at least two temple treasurers also in possible minor cult centres according to surviving evidence (Lubbên and Inkhil) has perhaps indicated that, in spite of their complexity, rural cult centres owned goods and received some sort of a substantial income. These could derive from devotees' offerings, religious festivals (for instance the possibility of collection tolls during processions at Sī', and the sale of 'tickets' at Saḥr), but also possible profits from markets during religious festivals (at least in the case of Sī' and Saḥr), including the sale of products most likely produced by

[1588] This is the case at al-Mushennef, 'Atīl, Breikeh, Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah, Deir as-Smeij, Dhakīr Hebrān, Inkhil, Khirbet Massakeb, Mayāmas, Muṭa'iyyeh, Rimet Hazim, Saḥr, Ṣalkhad, Ṣanamein and Sleim.

[1589] This is the case at 'Atīl, el-Mushennef, Saḥr, Ṣalkhad, Shā'rah, Sī' and Ṣmeid.

[1590] Foreign gods worshipped in rural cult centres in the pre-provincial period are: Dushara at Sleim, Qrayya and Deir al-Meshqūq, Atagartis at Bu'aḍān and Sī' and Isis at Sī' and Hadad at Khabab.

[1591] Foreign gods worshipped in rural cult centres in the provincial period are: Mithras at Sī' and Shā'rah, Zeus Ammon at Isis, Pax and Nemesis at Mismiyyeh, Apollo at Rimet Hazim and the Twelve Gods at Ṣanamein.

the sanctuary (pottery and, potentially, wine at Sī'). Consideration of the economic role of Sī' and Saḥr has been limited to these two instances because of the better preservation of their archaeological evidence than at other sites (§ Ch.6.2).

The complexity of rural cult centres and of the society in the Hauran has been established by investigating the social meaning of rural cult centres, together with the empirical key concepts of networks in archaeology and the concept of globalisation, recent scholarly focus on contextualising the sacred, religion and religious identities as dynamic entities, and Alcock's idea of considering single regions as active parts of the empire and comparable to many other examples within the Roman Empire (§ Ch.1.2). The social meaning of rural cult centres includes their function (cult and economic activities); the people who visited them; the elites who contributed financially to their building, or who commissioned dedications; and the contacts of the local elite and their dedicators with other cultures of the Near East.

Therefore, I have put forward a systematic study of the different aspects of rural cult centres, comparing them with those from other cultures in the Near East. It is a still a valid, widely used method to contextualise cult centres and local societies, in order to have a comprehensive understanding of them. This study and its search for the implications of common patterns between different centres and areas have been key drivers towards establishing the new findings.

This study has offered a distinct perspective and approach to religion in the Roman Empire. Specifically, it has attempted to untangle the complexity of the religious cultural identity, or identities, of the populations of the Hauran, consisting of accumulations of layers of different cultures that the people of the Hauran interacted with, and also those who became active participants of the society of the Hauran, such as the Roman soldiers serving there. It has been accomplished by seeking connections between different cultures in the Near East, when possible, and by fully reconstructing the lives of these centres (not only their religious functions but also their non-religious activities, their benefactors and their visitors).

This study has, furthermore, explored rural communities and rural sanctuaries in the Hauran in relation to other cultures, with the expectation that more scholars will now more often reconsider the investigation of rural communities on a macro level. The findings of this research are only possible because of the comprehensive analysis of various types of data (statues, architecture, gods, benefactors, functions) within the socio-economic landscape. This study has, therefore, also intended to nudge the scholarly world towards a more systematic and interdisciplinary study of religion and architecture within their natural, socio-political and economic landscapes, so as to gain a more complete picture of the ancient past.

Because of recent studies focusing on contextualising the sacred, religion and religious identities as dynamic entities, networks in archaeology and the concept of globalisation, the social meaning of buildings, and Alcock's earlier work, and because we now live in a globalised and interconnected world, this study has taken up the challenge and been driven to analyse systematically the different types of evidence of rural cult centres in relation to examples in the Near East that are integrated within the broader socio-political and economic network. This study has demonstrated how religious buildings are resources that do not onlyprovide the means to understand local identity, or Roman impact, but also to understand the complexity and multi-layered nature of the identities of the pre-Roman and Roman worlds, as well as their connection with other cultures.

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Abbreviations

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Appendix

Gazetteer

This gazetteer is a catalogue of the 57 rural cult centres discussed in the monograph. A concise description is provided for each. Although far from being exhaustive, it offers an outline of the remains of rural cult centres, coinage and pottery assemblages, when available, and inscriptions and statues associated with them, or recovered in the village, where the presence of a temple is known on the basis of the architectural ruins and/or inscriptions. The information included derives from published materials; it can therefore appear patchy depending on when and what kind of investigations took place and how much of the latter has been published. The data provided in this gazetteer is based almost entirely on the five monographs exclusively focusing on the Hauran,[1592] recent catalogues of statues[1593] or inscriptions,[1594] and recent articles that provide a few new inscriptions.[1595] It does not include information from the catalogue of inscriptions in Djebel al'Arab (*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie XV–XVI*), because this is still in preparation. It will be a key publication in the understanding of the Hauran as whole. In addition, a concise bibliography of the architecture, statues and inscriptions for each site is included; it also covers major references, especially from the Princeton University expeditions onwards, with a focus on the collection of recently published materials, from the 1970s onwards.

Spellings favoured by scholars vary in their identifications of the sites featured in this gazetteer over time: I have opted for those mentioned in the latest publications. I have used the latest published transcriptions for Greek and Latin inscriptions, when available;[1596] Laila Nehmé kindly helped me with the transcriptions of the Aramaic inscriptions.

[1592] *Hauran* I, II, III, IV I and II, V.
[1593] *Suw.* 1991; Weber 2006; *Hauran* IV II.
[1594] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014; 2016; Sartre-Fauriat 2015.
[1595] Sartre-Fauriat 2007; 2015.
[1596] I have not used Sourdel (1957) when his work is the most recent for the inscriptions, as he does not always provide the full text of the inscriptions.

al–Mushennef

The sanctuary is in a prominent location in relation to the ancient ruins of the Roman village of Nela, being situated at the top of a slope, whereas the ancient ruins are to the south and the east of the temple, and on the slope to the south-east that descends toward the wadi. The temple is located beside a pool which was partly natural and partly artificial. According to the Princeton University team, the sides of the pool adjoin the temple precinct and the wall of the pool is made of coursed masonry in symmetrical lines. This connection is not visible in the present day and the wall of the pool has been reconstructed over time, judging by the use of modern plaster in its masonry.

The temple is placed at one end of a paved courtyard which is surrounded by two lateral steps, a colonnade and the precinct wall. A simple gateway is situated on the north side of the precinct wall; it is surrounded by a plain lintel. In its vicinity, two fragments of what could be the lintel of the gateway, bearing the inscription mentioned below, lie outside the precinct wall. Waddington said that the inscription, broken into two pieces, was, instead, found in front of the temple.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κυρίου βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα καὶ ἐπανόδου, κατ› εὐχήν, Διὸς καὶ πατρ(ῴ)ου Ἀθνᾶ[ς] σύ(ν)οδος ὁμονο[ί]ας τὸν οἶκον ᾠκοδόμ[ησεν][1597]

On the basis of this inscription, we know that the shrine of Zeus and Athena was built in the 1st century AD during Agrippa's reign and as a result of direct Herodian royal intervention. According to Waddington, Agrippa mentioned in the inscription is Agrippa I; if so, the inscription would probably be dated to AD 41. However, if it refers to Agrippa II, the inscription can be dated from the mid 1st century AD to the second half of the 1st century AD.

As large parts of the superstructure of the temple on the podium still stand in situ, we can describe the decoration of the temple to a great extent. The capitals of the columns and the pilasters of the Corinthian caps from the four corners of the cella are composite Corinthian. The architrave of the temple consists of a broad band featuring meanders and rosettes, above which there is a narrow bead-and-reel moulding, beneath a row of egg-and-dart capped with a cavetto carved with a running foliate design. The drip of the cornice of the temple presents a fascia alternating between swastika meanders and realistic and sinuous rosettes. The frieze was adorned with a scroll design of acanthus leaves and flowers surmounted by a heavy egg-and-dart moulding.

It is more difficult to identify the façade of the temple, as when it was destroyed and built up again its architectural features and blocks were jumbled together. However, remains of the doorway of the temple show that it has plain Ionic door frames. At the time of the Princeton University expedition, two columns of the *pronaos* were still partially standing between crudely reconstructed walls, which suggests that the temple was distyle *in antis* in plan. Additionally, the following decorative stone blocks re-inserted in the badly reconstructed wall of the façade of the temple provide some information about the temple and its decoration.

Blocks ornamented with realistic sinuous stems of vine branches with grapes and fruit may be evidence of a pre-provincial phase of the temple, as these decorative motifs are dated to that period. Blocks of entablature and niche frame decorated with swastika meander fascia suggest the presence of niches from the provincial period, which could have been on the façade of the temple, and that the entablature of the temple was from the provincial period. Additional decorative architectural fragments are re-inserted in the reconstructed wall of the façade; they are fragments of the door frame of the façade and of the frieze, both decorated with wreath-like motifs.

On the basis of the architectural remains we can distinguish two phases of the temple. One is pre-provincial and 1st century AD, as also supported by the inscription mentioned above. The second phase is the provincial period, more precisely the first half of the 2nd century, according to Dentzer-Feydy, as also confirmed by the majority of the inscriptions from the site, which are outlined below.

The following two inscriptions commissioned by centurions date the temple to the second half of the 2nd century AD. In particular, the inscription below was found in the front of the temple according to Waddington.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ κυριόυ Αὐτοκράτος Καίσαρος Μ. Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ καὶ τοῦ σύνπαντος οἴκου καὶ νείκης, ἔτους ἑνδεκάτου, ἐ[πὶ Ἀουιδίου Κασσίου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ὑπατικοῦ] καὶ Κυριναλίου Γεμέλλον ἑκατοντάρχου (AD 171)[1598]

The next inscription was on a stone found near the north-western corner of the temple, at the edge of the pool.

Ὑπὲ[ρ σωτηρίας τοῦ κυριόυ Αὐτοκράτος Καίσαρος Μ. Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ], ἐπὶ Ἀουειδ[ίου Κασσίου, περσβ. Σεβ. ἀν]τιστρα[τ](ήγ)ου, ἐφεστῶτος

[1597] *Wadd*. no.2211; *PAAES* II no.380; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308; *IGRR* III no.1260; Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6.

[1598] *Wadd*. no.2212; *PAAES* II no.380a.

[Κυριναλίου Γεμέλλου, ἐκ] (α)(τον)τ(ά)ρ(χο) [υ] γ› Γαλλικῆ[ς] (second half of the 2nd century AD)[1599]

The following inscription was placed in a rebuilt wall derived from different architectural blocks scattered in the front of the portico of the temple. It could have belonged to the entablature of the temple or the colonnade inside the temenos wall, as the inscription mentions the erection of a colonnade in AD 225–35.

[Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ κυρίου Αὐτοκράτορος, Καίσαρος, Μάρκου Σεο]υήροο[υ] Ἀ[λ]ε[ξάνδρ]ου, Εὐτυχοῦς, Σεβα[στοῦ, ὁ δεῖνα τοῦ δεῖνος (or τὸ κοινὸν τῆς πόλεως) ἔκτισεν τό περίστυλον (?)· οἰκ]οδόμησεν δὲ διὰ Αὐρ<ηλίου> Μάρκ[ο]υ (Χ)α[αμ]μωνος Ἀλεξάν[δρου] (AD 225–35)[1600]

The following inscription was found in the eastern part of the village. It states that Proclus, councillor of Canatha, and his brothers commissioned the doorway in honour of Athena at their own expense.

Πρόκλος ὁ καὶ Μάσπ[ος? Γάδ]ου Καναθηνὸς Βουλετὴς καὶ Ὀαῖχος ὁ καὶ Τειμόθεος καὶ Ἀντίοχος ὁ καί Σάμεθος ἀδελφοὶ τῇ κυρίᾳ Ἀθηνᾷ τὸ πρόπυλον σύν παντὶ κόσμῳ ἐκ τῶν ιδίων ᾠκοδόμησαν[1601]

Although inscriptions are dedicated only to Zeus and Athena, two reliefs of a divine bearded man with horns, representing Zeus Ammon, were recovered from this site. Another statue recovered represents a male figure wearing a loincloth. We do not know exactly where these statues were found.

Bibliography for architecture
PAAES III: 346–51; *PPUAES* II: 340; Denzter-Feydy 1986: 286–97; 1990b: 651–2 fig.14–7; 1993: 110; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 97 footnote 237 and 239; Freyberger 1989; 1998: 59–62; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 241; Segal 2013: 213–6.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2211–2, no.2216; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 308, 324; *PAAES* III no.380, no.381a, no.381, no.382; *IGRR* III no.1260; Sourdel 1957: 71 no.6.

Bibliography for statues
Suw. 1934 no.55; Bolelli 1986: 322, 332, 342, 348 no.7 pl.2; Weber 2006: 117–8.

Amra

An inscription mentions the erection of the *propylaea* with a column to the ancestral god in AD 165. The place of its recovery is not mentioned.

Κομόδου Ζευῆρος Εμμεγανης (I) Μασαδαθος Γερμανός Αμερος Μαξιμος υἱοὶ Αζειζου Σαββαροθ τὸ πρό[π]υλον σὺ τῇ στρώσει ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ὠκοδόμησαν τῷ πατρῴῳ θεῷ εὐσεβείας χαρ(ὶ)ν, ἔτους ε’ Κομόδου καὶ ΕΛΡC (AD 165)[1602]

Bibliography for inscription
Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298–9 footnote 18.

‘Arīqah

Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre suggested that there was a sanctuary at ‘Arīqah because an inscription commemorates the construction of a building dedicated to an ancestral god by a veteran in AD 182, and this inscription was on a large lintel (1.53 m wide) that would have been most likely placed on a façade of a monumental structure. This lintel was found inserted above a door of a modern building in the southern part of the village.

Ἔτους ς′ α/ὐτοκράτορος Κο<μ>όδο[υ] Ἀντωνείνου | κυρίου Καίσαρος, Κλ(αύδιος) Πρεῖσ[κο]ς οὐειρ<ρ>ανὸς ΠΖ|ΑΘΥ φ<υ>λ(ῆς) Οταινηνῶν <θ>ε[ῷ] πατρῴῳ ἐκ τ|ῶν ἰδίων εὐσεβῶν ἔ[κτι]σεν (AD 182)[1603]

The ancestral god could have been the god of Aumos on the basis of another inscription on a lintel dedicated to him recovered in the same location as the previous inscription.

θεῷ Αυ<μ>ου <Μ>οαει[ρ]ος ΑΤΝΟΥ ἀγέ[θ]ηκεν[1604]

Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre suggested the inscription inserted in the wall of the mosque in the village that mentions the erection of a building could also refer to a religious building, possibly a sanctuary, considering the previous inscriptions dedicated to the ancestral god and to the god of Aumos.

Ἔτους γ′ Ἀντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ Αννηλος Κελλεβανου τοῦ ΝαεΒαθου ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέθηκεν εὐσεβείας χάριν (AD 139–40)[1605]

A fragmentary statue representing Allat/Athena with an inscribed base indicates the devotion of another deity apart from the ancestral god in the village; it remains unknown whether she was worshipped in the sanctuary that Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre put forward. The sculpture is now in the museum of as-Suweidā’. Allat/Athena was depicted wearing a peplos with an apoptygma and holding an oval shield decorated with a

[1599] *PAAES* III no.381.
[1600] *PAAES* III no.382; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324.
[1601] *Wadd.* no.2216.
[1602] Sartre-Fauriat 2015, 298–9 footnote 18.
[1603] *Wadd.* no.2439; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 395–6 no.331.
[1604] *Wadd.* no.2442; Sourdel 1957: 55 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 395 no.330.
[1605] *Wadd.* no.2437; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 313; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 397–8 no.333.

gorgon against her with her left hand. The inscription on the statue's base only mentions the name of the dedicator.

Θαιμος Σάμου ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων[1606]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2437, no.2439, no.2442; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 313, 318; *Suw.* 1934, 42 no.56; Sourdel 1957: 55 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 395–9 no.330–1 no.333–4.

Bibliography for statues
Suw. 1934, 42 no.56; *Hauran* IV II: 120–1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 398–9 no.334.

'Atīl

There are two distyle *in antis* temples that are almost identical in terms of their layout and dimensions; one stands at the northern border of the town, the other in the southern part; they are 250 m apart. A great amount of their superstructure is preserved in situ, and architectural blocks are found in the immediate vicinity.

The southern temple stands on a podium where there is a crypt vaulted by several transverse arches. A transverse arch divides a square core room into a cella and a vestibule. It has normal Corinthian capitals that, together with the antae with pilasters also bearing normal Corinthian capitals, support the architrave. The latter is decorated with meanders alternated with realistic and sinuous rosettes. The rear and side walls of the temple were plain. The entrance hall of the vestibule has two columns *in antis*. The façade of the temple comprises a broad doorway and two sets of two superposed niches. The door frame of the façade is Ionic and flanked by tall panels adorned with rich rinceaux of grapevines and wreath-like motifs. The niche frames are decorated with a wreath-like motif and swastika meanders. The wreath-like motif is also used on the frieze; swastika meanders also appear to decorate the entablature. The upper niches are semi-circular in section and crowned by a conch. Attic bases were recovered in the debris. The following inscription found in the southern temple dates the structure to AD 151.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κυρίου Καίσαρος Ἀντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ Εὐσεβοῦ(ς), Οὐάδδηλος Μαθείου τοῦ Οὐα(δ)δήλου τὰς παραστάδας καὶ κιόν(ι)α καὶ τ[ὰ] ἐπάνω αὐτῶν ἐπιστύλια καὶ καλί(α) ἐκ τῶν(ν) ἰδίων ἐπόησεν, ἔτους ιδ' Ἀντωνείνου Κ(αίσαρο)ς (AD 151)[1607]

Waddington found the inscription on the left anta of the temple and stated that the same inscription is repeated on the other anta. During the Princeton University expedition, the inscription was hidden by walls built against the ancient façade of the temple and only a few letters were visible. It commemorates the erection of the niches, the portico and its entablature. Freyberger pointed out that the inscription only dates the upper structure of the temple and that the masonry of the platform with the crypt and the above-ground walls of the core room of the southern temple differ from the façade of the temple. The former consists of ashlars of different sizes, not arranged by alternating headers and stretchers, with a rough surface. It resembles the masonry of the terrace walls of Sī', dated before the erection of the temple of Baalshamin according to Freyberger. The façade of the temple has, instead, a smooth levelled surface and almost a unitary size of ashlars. According to Freyberger, the antae were a later addition attached to the older masonry, as supported by the joints at the longitudinal sides of the temple. The northern temple was turned into a private building, therefore, a large part of the portico disappeared, but it is possible to reconstruct it thanks to Baron von Oppenheim's photograph and Rey's drawing before its alteration. It has similar stonework, including the antae, to the the southern temple.

There are other inscriptions from Atīl. One is dedicated to Theandrios, the god of Ouaseathos, and it is dated to AD 211. It was found inside a modern house according to Waddington.

[Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τῶν] Αὐτο[κρ]α<τόρων> Μ. Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνίνου καὶ Π. Σεπτι[μί]ου [Γέτα Καισάρων] Σεββ. Εὐσεβ<β>. θεῷ Οὐ[α]σεάθου πατρῴῳ Θεανδρίῳ Ἰούλιος Προκ[---] ἐτε[λ]ίωσε [τ]ὴ[ν] πύλην [---] (AD 211)[1608]

Another inscription is most likely dedicated to Olympian Zeus on the basis of the reconstruction of the inscription, where there is the first letter 'O' that follows the name Zeus. The place of its original recovery is not specified.

[Τ]ίμαρχος ὁ καὶ Αυδιδος Χρησ[ί]μου Γερασηνὸς τῷ Διί Ὀ[λυμπίῳ] ἀνέ[θηκεν][1609]

Bibliography for architecture
Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 102–6; *PAAES* II: 343–46, fig.120; *PPUAES* II: 355–6; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 286–97, pl.15a; 2003: 81–2 pl.78; Freyberger 1991: 21; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 39, 106–9, 169–71; Segal 2008: 103–05; 2013: 200–5; Freyberger 2015: 290–2.

[1606] *Suw.* 1934, 42 no.56; *Hauran* IV: 120–1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 398–9 no.334.
[1607] *Wadd.* no.2372; *PAAES* III no.427a.
[1608] *CIG* 4609; *Wadd.* no.2374a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 105, 322; *IGRR* III no.1238.
[1609] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 302.

Bibliography for inscriptions
CIG 4609; *Wadd.* no.2374a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 105, 322; *PAAES* III no.427a; *IGRR* III no.1238; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 302.

Breikeh

Remains of the back wall of the cella have been found in the north-east part of the village. Although the building was converted into a mosque, a conch niche and small Ionic columns randomly displaced in the rebuilt plain façade may suggest that small niches framed by small Ionic columns were originally part of the façade of the temple. There are two truncated flute columns inside the cella that would have been most likely originally situated at the entrance of the podium. The Princeton University team reconstructed the temple on the basis of the Bankes' archives of 1817. It is described as a tetrastyle prostyle temple on a podium with an adyton that is not raised, and has a semicircular niche at the centre of the back wall. Still visible on the floor of the temple are fragments of a conch that would have been part of the niche of the adyton. The niches in the façade and the niche-like adyton date the temple to the provincial period. Only a non-dated inscribed altar dedicated to Heracles by a centurion of the *Legio III Cyrenaica* has been recovered at Breikeh. The inscription was on one side of the altar; the other three sides are plain. The altar is displayed in the museum of as-Suweidā' but its specific recovery place is not specified.

Ἡρακλε[ῖ] Καλλιν[ε]ικῶι [Σ]έξτος (ἑκατόντάρχης) λεγ<γ>(εῶνος) γ′ Κυ[ρ(ηναικῆς)][1610]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 409–12 fig.352 pl.29 ill.371; Denzter-Feydy 2003: 107, pl.88.1; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 139–41; Segal 2008: 109; 2013: 184–6.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Suw. 1934 no.20 pl. 8; 1991 INV20 [12] (5, 31); Mascle 1944: no.20; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 458–9 no.405.

Bteineh

The following inscription, which was re-inserted in a wall against a large courtyard in the village according to Waddington, mentions that a *Tychaion* was built with the funds of the village.

Αὖσος Γαύτου, Θεό[δω]ρος Πασιφείλου, Ὄνενος Ἀβίβου, Ἄναμος Γαύτου, Ζόβεδος Ναταμέλου πιστοὶ ἀνέγειραν τὸ τυχῖον ἐκ τὸ τῆς κώ[μ]η[ς][1611]

Another inscription was recovered in the village, although its place of recovery is not specified. We only know that it was dedicated to Zeus Kyrios.

[---] Διῒ τῷ Κυρίῳ [---][1612]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2127; Dussaud and Macler 1901: no.1; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 8.

Bu'aḍān

The following inscription, originally recovered in the courtyard of a small mosque of the village, refers to a dedication by a high-priest of Atagartis.

Σοαδος Ουρου ἀρ[χι]ηρεὺς γάτης ἀνάθηκαν[1613]

According to Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre, this inscription implies that the cult of this deity was established in the village, almost as if there were a dedicated sanctuary. There is an inscription from the Hauran in the Damascus museum that mentions the sanctuary of Atargatis and Hadad, but it is not known where the inscription comes from.[1614] This sanctuary could have been at Bu'aḍān and the high-priest mentioned in the inscription at Bu'aḍān could be a high-priest of this sanctuary.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 605–6 no.611.

Būsān

The Princeton University team recorded fragments of classical architecture, namely a temple, with later domestic architecture, probably from Islamic times. It was suggested that the fragments could have been taken from a large building near the centre of the plateau, where the only remains that survive are lower courses of a section of wall of finely dressed stone, with mouldings in its base, incorporated with modern buildings whose plan it is not possible to trace. Dentzer-Feydy verified these ruins as a temple and she dated it to the mid 2nd century AD, presumably on the basis of architectural fragments.

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 386–7; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297.

[1610] *Suw.* 1934 no.20 pl.8; 1991 INV20 [12] (5, 31); Mascle 1944: no.20; Sourdel 1957: 34 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 458–9 no.405.

[1611] *Wadd.* no.2127.
[1612] Dussaud and Macler 1901: no.1.
[1613] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 605–6 no.611.
[1614] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 297; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 607–8 no.612.

Dā'il

As Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre pointed out, the following inscription on a long lintel refers to the erection of a cult centre dedicated to the ancestral god Akeiras in AD 274–5.

Ἔτους θξρ΄, Σαβδας Δαμᾶ οἰκοδομήσατο τῶν ἰδίων θεῶι Ακειρᾳ (ου Ακειρᾶ) Πατρώω εὐσε[β]ε<ί>ας <χ>[άρ]ι[ν---] (AD 274–5)[1615]

Another inscription from this village mentions that two individuals commissioned a pavement and columns, which were most likely those of the cult centre dedicated to the ancestral deity mentioned in the previous inscription.

Αζιζος καὶ Ζαβδας υἱοὶ Ἀντᾶ Κασειιου ἐξ ἰδίων ἐπλάκωσαν καὶ τοὺς στύλους ἔστεσαν[1616]

The place of recovery of both inscriptions is unknown.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 130, 191; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 33–40 no.349–50.

Dāmā-Dāmit al-'Aliyyah

Roughly 100 m south-east from a stepped pyramid tower in the north of the village, named Damatha in Roman times, there are remains of a precinct wall of a cult centre. They comprise a plain wall, about 10 m long, having a right-lined cornice and an adorned doorway, in the middle. According to the Princeton University team, the enclosure extended as far as the south-east angle of the wall that surrounded the stepped pyramid, but its full extent was not visible because of the houses and stables belonging to a Druze family in the neighbourhood. The door frame in the enclosure was decorated with a realistic sinuous stem with grapes and fruits. Denzter-Feydy dated it to the pre-provincial period on the basis of the decorative motifs that resemble those in the temple of Baalshamin at Sī'. The following inscription may be the one that originally surmounted this portal, as Waddington reported, roughly in 1862, that it was situated above the door of a small temple. The inscription mentions that an individual dedicated a *vestibulum* to Athena. The inscription was later found re-inserted in a façade made of ancient blocks, north of the sheikh's house.

Ἀθηνᾷ τῇ Κυρίᾳ Τανηλος Μοαιερου τὸ πρόπυλον ἀνέθηκεν[1617]

Another inscription, found in a house in the south-eastern part of the village, states that *pistoi* also commissioned two ἀψῖδας. They could be part of the cult centre, as according to Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre, ἀψῖδας could refer to niches situated in a building or arches that support the ceiling or parts of arcades used for community meeting rooms.

Αὐρ(ήλιοι) Μιλιχο<ς> κὲ Σαγαδεος κὲ Εὐτρόπις πιστοὶ ἐτελίοσαν τάς δύο ἀψῖδας[1618]

The following inscription could refer to six individuals as *pistoi*. If its reconstruction is correct, *pistoi* also helped the community of the village of Damatha to construct a building consecrated to the god of Aumos. This inscription was found in a house in the south-western corner of the village.

[Θεῷ Ανικέτῳ Αυ]μου οἰκοδόμη[σεν τὸ κοινὸν κώμ(ης) Δ]αμάθων δι<ά> Αβχο[ρου] [Ομαθ κὲ Αὐρήλιο]ς Μιλιχος κὲ Αβ[γα] [ρου Χασετου κὲ Χ]ασετου Ουαβέλου] [κὲ Φιλίππου Σ]ααρου Μαθιο[υ---] [---τῶ]ν εὐκοδόμω[ν---] [---] τι<σ>[τῶ]ν [---][1619]

A similar inscription (the one below) was found in the sheikh's house and also commemorates the erection of a building dedicated to the god of Aumos and commissioned by the community of the village of Damatha with the help of the individuals mentioned in the previous inscription, apart from Aurelios Milichos.

Θεῷ ἀνικήτῳ Αυμου οἰκοδόμησεν τὸ κοινὸν κώ(μης) Δαμαθων διὰ Αβχορου Ομαθ κὲ Αβγαρο Χασετου [Ο] υαβηλου κέ Φίλιππος Σααρο[υ] [---]σε τος[1620]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 433–4 ill.377; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 266; 2003: 98, 100; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 360.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2453; Ewing 1895: 76; Dussaud and Macler 1903: 242 no.10; *PPUAES* III no.800 5, no.800 7; Sourdel 1957: 55 no.2, 72 no.4; Sartre 1993: 121; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 359–61, 313–4 no.297–299 no.302.

Deir (South)

The Princeton University team suggested the presence of a Roman temple on the basis of a large Corinthian capital in the apse of a church, numerous scattered moulded architectural fragments and an ancient door frame reused for the west door of a monastery in the

[1615] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 338–9 no.349.
[1616] Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 130, 191; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 339–40 no.350.
[1617] *Wadd.* no.2453; Ewing 1895: 76; Dussaud and Macler 1903: 242 no.10; Sourdel 1957: 72 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 359–60 no.297.
[1618] *PPUAES* III no.800 5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 363–4 no.302.
[1619] *PPUAES* III no.800 7; Sourdel 1957: 55 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 360–1 no.299.
[1620] *PPUAES* III no.800 2; Sourdel 1957: 55 no.2; Sartre 1993: 121; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 360 no.298.

village. An inscription, most likely on an altar, recovered in the northern wall of the enclosure of the monastery, mentions Tyche.

Τύχῃ Σαμεθου[1621]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 101–5; Sartre 2011: 93.

Bibliography for inscriptions
PPUAES III no.58; Sartre 2011: 94 no.9571.

Deir al-Meshqūq

The Princeton University team identified as a temple the remains of a building with finished stonework to the east of a cluster of ruins of ancient houses, and a tower dated to the 4th century AD. They suggested that it was most likely a tetrastyle prostyle temple from the provincial period, converted into a church, as the *pronaos* of the temple was walled up and the columns removed. It does not present decorative motifs or architectural elements dated to the pre-provincial period. This late dating is also supported by the following inscription dedicated to the god Dushara dated to AD 207.

Ἐποίησαν τῷ τεῷ Δουσάρει οἱ ἐκ κοιν[οῦ] αὐτῶν ἱερε<ύ>σ<ο>ντες ἔτους δεκάτου Ἀντωνείνου Καίσαρος, Αὖθο[ος Μ]ασάχου, Αὖθος Ἀνέμου, Αὖθος Θαίμου, Ἄνναμος Κάδου [οἱ] κοδόμο[ι] (AD 207)[1622]

The place of its recovery is not specified. The Princeton University team believed that it was recovered at ʻAnz, about 4 km away from Deir al-Meshqūq. At the time of the Princeton University expedition, it was common knowledge by local people from Deir al-Meshqūq and its surroundings that a great deal of architectural fragments and inscriptions from its vicinity, including and especially from Deir al-Meshqūq, were brought and reused as building materials at ʻAnz. In support of this argument, apart from architectural fragments, neither substantial remains of classic buildings nor evidence of their foundations survive at ʻAnz.

There is also a local Aramaic/Nabataean inscription on a stone upside down in the western wall of the Christian monastery. It commemorates the erection of a temple or an altar dedicated to the god of Mughnī dated to AD 124. The name of the god cannot be read with certainty.

dnh ḥmnʾ dy ʿbd mʿyrw br ʿqrb
bt ʾšrw ʾlhʾ ʾlh mʿynw šnt šbʿ l-hdryns qysr[1623]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 129–31 ill.106.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Dussaud and Macler 1903: 277 no.109; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 321; *IGRR* III no.1335, *PPUAES* IV no.27; Milik 1972: 341.

Deir as-Smeij

The Princeton University team found evidence of a temenos in the valley 15 minutes' walk to the north-eastward of Qanawat (Canatha). They consist of three carved portals in the east side, a Doric order colonnade extending all around the interior, a square tower at the north-east angle, a preserved pavement at the south-east corner and a long arched wall. A later building, most likely a church, was built against the north wall of the colonnade. Denzter-Feydy also mentioned the presence of a temenos and Doric capitals. On the basis of these architectural remains, she dated the temple to the middle of the 2nd century AD. Illustrations of the temple published by the Princeton University team shows fragments of a lintel decorated with swastika meanders alternated with simple rosettes, which are used in the religious architecture in the Hauran in the provincial period (§ Ch.5.5).

An inscribed altar from this sanctuary is dedicated to an unnamed god with the epithet Megistos, which is usually associated with Zeus, together with Nike.

Θεῷ Μεγιστῳ εὐεργέτῃ εἰς ἀναίγερσιν Βώμου Πολύβιος Κουαρτεῖνος [ἔδ]ωκεν [δηνάρια] διακ›[σι]α (κ)α[ὶτὸν---] ANON Νεί[κης---]ΚΑ[---][1624]

It is believed that an inscription dedicated to the god Ares recovered at ʻAtīl came originally from Deir as-Smeij.

ʻΟ δεῖνα] Ἄμου τοῦ Κασίου οἰκοδόμησεν θεῷ Ἄρε[ι] ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων[1625]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 352–54 ill.317; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297; 2003: 85, pl.79 no.7; Segal 2013: 191.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Dussaud and Macler 1903: 648 no.20; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 299 footnote 20.

Dhakīr

Although scholars have acknowledged the presence of a temple, no clear standing remains of a temple have

[1621] *PPAES* III, no.58; Sartre 2011: 94 no.9571.
[1622] Dussaud and Macler 1903: 277 no.109; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 321; *IGRR* III 1335.
[1623] This is the reading suggested in Milik 1972: 341. It is also recorded in *PPUAES* IV no.27.
[1624] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 299 footnote 20.
[1625] Dussaud and Macler 1903: 648 no.20.

been described. Although Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre mentioned an excavation of the temple converted into a church that had taken place at Dhakīr, there is no further published record that I could find. Dentzer-Feydy only talked about various remains of a temple re-employed in modern houses across the village, including fragments of a cornice decorated with vine branches with S-shaped stems (i.e. wreath-like motif). These appear to be similar to those used in other rural cult centres in the Hauran. These decorated architectural fragments have been dated to the 2nd–3rd century AD according to Bounni. Fragments of statues of a female character wearing the aegis, a symbol of Athena, a horse and an eagle have been recovered in the area of the temple. Together with this group of statues, an armoured torso that wears a muscled cuirass with pteryges and a male statue head that shows imperfections and wrinkles were found. The armoured torso represents a Roman soldier. The Roman military presence in the village, and possible involvement in the life of the sanctuary, can be confirmed by a fragment of an architectural block with a swastika-meander fascia that bears a fragmentary inscription interpreted by Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre as being dedicated by a centurion. It was recovered in the eastern part of the village during the excavation of the temple.

[---]ων (ἑκατόνταρχος) εὐσεβῶν ἀν[έθηκεν][1626]

An additional inscription refers to an unnamed god with the epithet 'saint'.

θεῷ ἁγίῳ Μαζιμος[1627]

Bibliography for architecture
Bounni 1991; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 297; 2008: 87.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 576 no.498; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306 footnote 89.

Bibliography for statues
Bolelli 1991: 75, 77; *Suw*. 1991 INV566 [343], (8, 36), INV608 [341] (7, 22), INV568 [346] (7, 28) pl.18–9; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 73, 76; *Hauran* IV II: 124–5.

Dneibeh (ancient name Danaba)

Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre's publication mentioned that Kalos identified ancient ruins of a small sanctuary situated in the south-west of the village. He only mentioned reused architectural blocks and standing door jambs still *in situ*, near a water tower. He suggested the dating of the sanctuary to the 1st century AD on the basis of the decoration. No further information about the sanctuary is provided.

Bibliography for architecture
Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 289.

Harrān

According to an inscription, there was a sanctuary dedicated to the god Aumos in the village of Harrān. The inscription was found in the ruins of a house in the southern part of the village.

Διὰ Τι(βερίου) <Ἀ>φι<αν>οῦ Αιανου καὶ Οὐεττίου Ἰούστου ἐ[γ]<έν>ετο τὸ εἰερὸν θεοῦ Αυμου ΠΛΕΝΘΟΥ Πρίσκου Μεν[ε]ου καὶ Ἐμε<λ>ιανοῦ καὶ Μέωρ Μαλχίωνευς Οὐετιανο[ῦ] εἱερεύς[1628]

In addition, there is a fragmentary inscription that is dedicated to Athena. It was part of a fragmentary cornice. It was first found in a church in the modern village of Harrān and appears to be reused in a house at Duweirī, on the basis of findings by the recent French–Syrian expedition in 2004.

Κυρίᾳ Ἀθηνᾷ, Αὐρήλιοι Τερεντιανὸς καὶ Ε[---][1629]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2461; *PPUAES* III no.794; Sourdel 1957: 56, 72 no.3–4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 321–3 no.258–9.

Hayat

The following inscription, on a reused lintel in the inner wall of a barn of the village, mentions that a *Tychaion* was built.

[---------- Σί]μονος καὶ Ἰου|[λιανὸς καὶ Σ]ίμων υἱοὶ αὐ[τοῦ καὶ Σίμω]ν Ἰουλιανοῦ |[καὶ --------]ου καὶ σύνο|[δος τῆς κώμης ? ---- εὐσ]εβοῦντες |[ἔκτισαν τὸ] Τυχαῖον θεο|[----- ἐκ θ]εμελίων μέ|[χρι ὕψους -------] δημόσιον[1630]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 5–7 no.3.

Hebrān

In the early 20th century, the Princeton University team recorded remains of a temple on the promontory of the village. It was hard to identify its plan as a consequence of the heavy plundering of the ruins to be reused for building materials. During the expedition, the Princeton

[1626] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 576 no.498.
[1627] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306 footnote 89.
[1628] *PPUAES* III no.794; Sourdel 1957: 56 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 322–3 no.259.
[1629] *Wadd*. no.2461; Sourdel 1957: 72 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 321–2 no.258.
[1630] Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 5–7 no.3.

University team recorded the northeast anta as having an Ionic cap, and a fine Ionical capital was the only fragment *in situ*. As drums and bases of columns, a fragment of architrave and three conches that would have been part of niches were found nearby, the Princeton University team suggested that the temple was a distyle *in antis* and had a niche-like adyton structure and niches on the façade of the temple. Today, the only visible remains are architectural fragments and inscriptions laid out in the rear courtyard of the sheikh's house. Amongst the scattered architectural blocks, there are conches that would have been the upper part of niches, Ionic, Doric and normal Corinthian capitals, and fragments of an Ionic door frame. Amongst some fragmented decorated blocks, often re-employed in modern buildings, there is a fragment of a lintel decorated with grapes with a bird on the stem. According to an inscription, the temple was built in AD 155, which is supported by the architectural fragments recovered which date to the mid 2nd century AD, as Dentzer-Feydy pointed out. The temple was commissioned by five individuals who referred to themselves as temple treasurers according to an inscription. It was found in the ruins of the temple by the Princeton University expedition. In the inscription the god to whom the temple was dedicated is not mentioned.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κυρίου Καίσαρος Τίτου Αἰλίου Ἀδριανοῦ Αντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ Εὐσεβοῦς ὁ ναὸς ἐκ τῶν ἱερατικῶν ἐκτίσθη, ἔτους ὀκτωκαιδεκάτου Ἀντωνείνου Καίσαρος, προνοησαμένων Ἀριστείδου Θαιμου, Οαιθελου Εμμεγνου, Εμμεγανη Χαμενου, ἐγδ(ί)κον, Θαιμ[ο]υ Αβχορου, Ενου Μασεχου, Εμμεγανη Ναρου, ἱεροταμιῶν (AD 155)[1631]

However, altars were dedicated to different gods. The following inscription was inscribed on fragments of an altar dedicated to Zeus Kyrios recovered near the sheikh's house.

Διῒ Κυρίῳ [ε]ὐχήν ἱλ[ασίας χάριν Δέκ]μος Ἰ[ούλ]ιος Φα[βι]ανὸς [στρ]ατιώτη[ς] [λεγε]ῶνο<ς> [---][1632]

The following inscriptions are on altars, respectively dedicated to Athena, Zeus Kyrios, Zeus Keranious, and Zeus Megistos. We only know that they are from Hebrān and they are now in the museum of as-Suweidā'.

Σαλέμος Ζαύσους καὶ Μάζιμος γενώμενος ἐνθάδε πράκτ<ω>ρ Καναθηνὸς ἀναθηκεν τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ. Μνησθῇ[1633]

Διεί κυρίῳ Βοναῖος, Μόκειμος, Σάδηλος ἔθηκ<ε>ν[1634]

Ἄλαος Οὐιθρου ἱερεὺς [Διὸς] Κεραυ[νί]ο[υ] ἀνέθηκεν τοῦ αὐτοῦ Διός ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων εὐσεβίας χάριν[1635]

Διῒ μεγίστῳ, ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κ[υ]ρίου Καισα<ρος> [---] Μ. Βοδριος [---] Κωνστᾶς <ἑκατόνταρχος> εὐξάμ[ε]νος ἀνέθηκεν[1636]

In addition to the temple, the Princeton University team recognised that a number of capitals and other carved fragments recovered on the site formed a colonnade within the precinct wall. The Princeton University team dated this structure before the temple, to the provincial period, as they identified these capitals and the carved fragments to be Nabataean. They could be remains of a Nabataean high place that only consists of an altar surrounded by the precinct wall. However, these capitals drawn in the the Princeton University publication differ from Nabataean capitals, including those found in Sī'. They seem more likely to be complex Doric capitals. The blocks identified as following a Nabataean style at Hebrān consist of vine branches with S-shaped stems (i.e. wreath-like motif); they are not Nabataean but are a typical decoration of rural temples in the Hauran in the pre-provincial period (§ Ch.3.1, Ch.4.5). Moreover, recent scholars do not mention the presence of a precinct structure at Hebrān and such a structure is not currently visible on the site. An inscription from this site dated to AD 47 inclines us to imagine an earlier phase of the cult centre. It mentions the erection of a door, of most likely a temple, by a priest of Allat.

b-yrḥ tšry šnt šbʿ l-qldys

qysr

dnh trʿ dy ʿbd mlkw br

[qṣyw] kmr ʾlt šlm qry (AD 47)[1637]

Additionally an inscription is dedicated to the god Lycugus by a veteran; it is on a fragment of a lintel found on the roof of a modern house in the western part of the village.

[Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Αὐτοκ]ράτορος Ἀντω[νείνου Σεβαστοῦ θ]ε̣ῷ Λυκούργῳ [--------] οὐετρανὸς ἀπὸ [λεγ<εῶνος>(?) [---] [ἐκ τ]ῶν ἰδίων ἀνέ[θηκεν εὐσεβείας χάριν, ἔτους ιθ΄] (AD 156)[1638]

A statue of an eagle, following Nabataean representations of this bird (§ Ch.3.1), is also from this site, but the place of its original recovery is not specified.

Bibliography for architecture

PPUAES II: 323–5, fig.294–6 pl.20; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 319–20, 351 no.51, 365 pl.12; 1990b, 653 fig.25; 2003: 85, 98, 96 footnote 219, 100; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 116–7, 186–90, 203–6; Segal 2008: 102–3; 2013: 218–9.

[1631] *PPUAES* III no.659.
[1632] *PPUAES* II no.665.
[1633] *Suw.* 1934 no.172.
[1634] *Suw.* 1934 no.178.
[1635] *Suw.* 1934 no.176 pl.35.
[1636] *Wadd.* no.2289; *Suw.* 1934 no.179 pl.3.
[1637] This is the reading in *CIS* II 170.
[1638] *PPUAES* III no.663.

Bibliography for inscriptions
CIS II 170; *PPUAES* III no.659, no.663, no.665; *Suw.* 1934 no.172, no.176, no.178–9 pl.3, pl.35.

Bibliography for statues
Suw. 1934 no.95 pl.28 no.196; 1991 INV564 [340] (4, 32); Macle 1944: no.196.

Hit

An inscription mentions the erection of a vestibule with a door dedicated to an unnamed god, suggesting the presence of a cult centre. The place of the original recovery of the inscription is not specified.

Μοαιερος Μοαιελου ἐπόησεν πρό(να)ναιον σὺν θύρᾳ τῶι θεοῦ[1639]

According to Dentzer-Feydy architectural blocks decorated with grape vines were also recovered from this site.

Bibliography for architecture
Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 100.

Bibliography for inscription
Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 15.

Inkhil (ancient Neeila)

The following inscription commemorates the erection of a temple thanks to the temple treasurers Ailius Torquatus and Sados in AD 161–3. We cannot be certain how many temple treasurers there were because the inscription is not complete; it is on fragments of lintels decorated with swastika meander motifs in an abandoned house to the south-west of the ancient palace.

[Ὑπὲρ σωτη]ρίας τῶν κυ[ρίων ἡ]μῶν αὐτο[κρα]τόρων Ἀντων[ίνου καὶ Οὐήρου Σεβ(αστῶν) ἐκτ]ίσθη ὁ ναὸ[ς δι]ὰ Αἰλίου Τορκοάτου κ]αὶ Σαδου Εὐνό[μο]υ καὶ [---]ε[---] ου ἱεροτα[μίων ἔ]τους ιζ΄ ἐκ τ[---] (AD 161–3)[1640]

Bibliography for inscription
Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 447–9 no.461a.

Is-Ṣâfiyeh

The French team hypothesised the remains of a precinct wall. It is in the proximity of rectangular building masonry generically referred to be from the Roman period by the French team.

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 124; Braemer *et al.* 1999: 164, 165, 159 fig.6, fig.12a.

Kafr Shams

The French expedition in 2002 and 2004 recorded a small sanctuary, dated to the provincial period, in the western old part of the village. It consists of a podium within a sacred enclosure and resembles the sanctuary at Sahr. Two torsos of Nike and a lion's head, dated to the end of the 1st century–mid 2nd century AD, were found. Weber suggested that these would have been placed on the podium.

Bibliography for architecture
Hauran IV II: 138–9; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 511–2.

Bibliography for sculpture
Hauran IV II: 133–9.

Kharaba

A fragmentary inscription, found over a door opening into a courtyard in the south-eastern part of the town, mentions the presence of a temenos.

[---]τούς τοῦ τεμ]ένους ἐπισκόπους [---]Ζεδος (καὶ) Βανιος[1641]

Another inscription dated to AD 241–2 is dedicated to Zeus. The place of its original recovery is not specified.

[Ὑπέρ σωτηρίας αὐτοκράτορος Μ. Ἀντωνίου Γο]διανο[ῦ Ζεβ---] καὶ ἐπίσκοποι τῷ Διὶ τιμῆς χάριν, ἔτιπλ' (AD 241–2)[1642]

Bibliography for inscriptions
PPUAES III no.220; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 300 footnote 24.

Khabab (ancient name Habiba)

The following inscription, integrated within a modern barn of the village, mentions that a councillor from the city (*βουλευτής*) commissioned a *Tychaion* in AD 303.

΄Υπατίας Διοκλητιανοῦ τὸ ζ› Σεβ(αστῶν) Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ουρος Αουιδου, Βου(λευτὴς) τὸ τυχῖον ἐξ εἰδίων ἐποίησεν (AD 303)[1643]

Moreover, from this village an inscription is dedicated to Zeus and an altar to Hadad. The inscription dedicated to Zeus was built into a modern village house.

Αρεσος Θανμαλου ἀνέθηκεν Διί[1644]

[1639] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 15.
[1640] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 447–9 no.461a.
[1641] *PPUAES* III no.220.
[1642] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 300 footnote 24.
[1643] *Wadd.* no.2514; Sourdel 1957: 51; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 131 no.76.
[1644] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 130 no.75; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 300 footnote 25.

The altar to Hadad was integrated within a modern village house. It is decorated with an Ionic capital on the top and a small moulded base. Its sides have reliefs of a bust and flowers, but as these reliefs are highly damaged by hammering, it is not possible to describe the figure and, therefore, it is impossible to identify the subject of the bust.

On one side of the altar:
Σαεδ[ος] [Ο]τασο[υ]
[Space]
[A damaged bust]
Αιηλος Αννηλου, τεχνήτης

On another side of the altar:
ἐπ]όσεν [ῷ]θεῷ Ἀδατῳ
[Space]
[A relief of a flower]
μνησθῇ[1645]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2514; Sourdel 1957: 41, 51; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 8, 11; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 129–32 no.74–6; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 300 footnote 25.

Khārayib

An inscription refers to a consecrated place, possibly a temple. The inscription dates the possible religious building to AD 100/1.

dnh mḥrmtʾ dy ʿbd ʿylmw br ʿmrw
br ʿmrw l-dwšrʾ ʾlh mrʾ-nʾ rbʾl mlkʾ
b-šnt XXXI l-rbʾl mlkʾ mlk nbṭw (AD 100/1)[1646]

Bibliography for inscription
Starcky 1985: 181; Nehmé 2010: 479.

Khirbet Massakeb

Archaeological remains situated near a pool indicate two phases of the sanctuary. Its earliest phase consists of a rectangular enclosure with massive orthostatic walls, where a door in the façade opens towards the east and is on an axis with a monolithic altar at the centre of a courtyard. The façade is decorated with a bovine depiction and solar motifs. The altar is 0.40 m high and has a cup at the centre connected with a channel that would have been used for sacrificial offerings and libations during rituals. The courtyard is not paved; it has a dry clay surface. A platform stands almost at the eastern back wall of the temenos, where four roughly-made anthromorphic stones, sorts of *betyls* (aniconic stones), and a *naiskos* (a monolithic niche that would have been inserted into a wall, in this case, but it can also be carved into the rock and its size can vary) were found. This phase can be dated to the second half of the 2nd century–1st century BC on the basis of lamps imported from Ephesus recovered in deposited layers.

The later phase consists of a small cella situated in the east of the back of the enclosure. As the small cella opens onto the courtyard, it resembles the small adyton facing the courtyard in the sanctuaries at Sīʾ and Saḥr. This later phase also includes a large rectangular structure comprising a tower and small rooms annexed to the north of the site. The later phase comprises rough masonry consisting of large stones with irregular cuts, and simplified symbolic representations, such as simplified human busts and bovines. From the debris, the following furniture elements from this phase were recovered: a stele depicting a pilaster with a heterodox Corinthian capital (similar to the one found in the temple of Baalshamin and temple 2 at Sīʾ), a *naiskos* (consisting of an arched monumental niche with rinceaux and winged eagle on the top of the niche frame), and an altar with reliefs of eagles. These features are known at Sīʾ and the region of Jebel al'Arab in the 1st century BC–1st century AD. Apart from the architecture, a wide set of material culture may date this later phase to the 1st century BC–1st century AD, including: fibulae and earrings known in Palestinian sites until the 1st century BC; some local pottery sherds, resembling the Persian style, in the 1st century BC; Eastern sigillata C; glass from the 2nd century–1st century BC to the 1st–2nd century AD; Herodian lamps from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD; phallic local lamps and lamps from Ephesus, both from the second half of the 1st century BC; and Nabataean and Seleucid coins. Two coins from Canatha from the end of the Domitian period (the end of the 1st century AD) were recovered in the northern part of the enclosure and date the abandonment of the sanctuary. Pottery indicates that the tower was the only building in use on site until the 3rd century AD.

It remains unknown which deity or deities the sanctuary was dedicated to. No inscriptions are recorded.

Bibliography for architecture
Kalos 1999; Dentzer 1999: 244–51; Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 230–2, 236.

Khurāyeb

The Princeton University team identified an octagonal building with Ionic capitals, situated on the northern bank of the wadi, as a small temple. It has also a platform on a side of the building. No further information, including its dating, is provided.

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES III: 105–6; Sartre 2011: 95.

[1645] Sourdel 1957: 41; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 129–30 no.74.
[1646] This is the reading suggested in Starcky 1985: 181.

Lubbên (ancient village of Agraina)

According to an inscription on an architrave, which lies among debris near a church, the community of Agraina, with the help of temple treasurers, commissioned a building, most likely a temple, dedicated to the god of Aumos in AD 213.

Ἔτους κα′ κυρίου [Μ(άρκου) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Ἀντ[ωνείνου Σεβ(αστοῦ)] τὸ κοινὸν Αγραινης ἐποίησεν Θ<ε>ῷ Αυμου, διὰ Αὐρ(ηλίων) Πλάτωνος Βαρβάρου καὶ Αβουνου Χαιρανο<υ> ἱερατομεῶν (possibly AD 213)[1647]

Two other inscriptions commissioned by the community of Agraina are dedicated to the same god of Aumos. The location of the inscription below is uncertain – according to Waddington it was incorporated in a church, whereas according to Magie it was in a house near a church in the centre of the village.

Ἔτους ιβ′ κυρίου Καίσαρος [[Ἀ]λεξάν[δρου]] τὸ κυνὸν Αγραινης [ἐπόη]σεν Θεῷ Αυμου, δι<ὰ> Πλάτωνος καὶ Αβουνου (AD 232–3)[1648]

The other inscription is reused in the highest house of the old village, according to the recent French–Syrian expedition in 2004, whereas late 19th–early 20th scholars recorded its recovery in the church in the centre of the village.

Τὸ κοινὸν κώμης Αγραινης ἐποίησεν ἐπιμέλιᾳ Φιλίπτου Γαφαλου καὶ Τιβερίνου Ἀγρίππα[1649]

There is no clear archaeological evidence of a sanctuary; only generic scattered fragments of ancient stone blocks and cornices have been found in the village.

Bibliography for architecture
Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 121; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 338.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2455, no.2457 a; Ewing 1895: 69–70; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324–5; *PPUAES* II no.793, no.793 1; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 121; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 337–52.

Manāra Henū

In the 1930s, Dunand described the site as consisting of heaps of stones, including fragments of sculptures and inscriptions. Amongst the ruins, he recognised two conches that would have been part of niches, and a large paved area almost forming a square enclosed by a wall with a small square structure on a podium that looked like a chapel. The fragments of statues found on site represent a lion's mane, an eagle, horses, what looks like the wheels of a chariot, a nude statue and a male acephalous nude torso with a drape, who seems to be reclining, possibly on a seat or a rock. It is difficult to be more precise in terms of the last statue due to its fragmentary nature. The following five inscriptions were recovered amongst these ruins and are dated to the second half of the 2nd century. The first two reveal the presence and financial contribution of Roman soldiers towards the cult centre (§ Ch.5.1).

[---] [---] Γ(άιος) Ἀντίσ[τι]ος Κων[σταντ---] (ἑκατόνταρχον) λεγ(εῶνος) δ' Σκυτ[υκῆς---] (AD 161)[1650]

[Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας αὐτοκ]κράτορο[ς Μ(άρκου) Αὐρηλίου] [Ἀντωνείνου καὶ Λ(ουκίου) Αὐρ]ηλίου Οὐ[ήρου Σεβαστῶν] [ἐπὶ Λ(ουκίου) Ἀττιδίου Κορνηλ]ιανοῦ πρ[εσβ(ευτοῦ)/ Σεβ(αστῶν) ἀντιστρ(ατήγου)] [---λε] γ(εῶνος) δ› Σκ[υ(θικῆς)---] (AD 161–2)[1651]

[---] [---]A [---]AP[---] [---]ος Β(ενε)φ(ικιάριος) Ἀυ ι δίου Κασσίου ὑπατ[ι]κοῦ, τὸ ξόανον σὺν [νεικαδίοις (?)] [ἀνέθηκεν] (AD 166–75)[1652]

[Ἀγαθῇ Τ]ύχῃ [---] [ἐκ τῶ]ν εἰδί[ων---] [---]ρος [---] (AD 166–75)[1653]

M. Aurelius An]tonin[us---] vaca [---B]ritta[nnicus---] [---]TVAI[---](AD 184 onwards)[1654]

Bibliography for architecture
Dunand 1933: 521–7; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 97 ff.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Speidel 1998: no.32–3; Stoll 2001: 468–70 no.87–8; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 97–102.

Bibliography for statues
Hauran IV II: 99–105.

Mashāra

Dentzer-Feydy generically mentioned that decorative blocks at Mashāra, including conches that would have

[1647] *Wadd*. no.2055; Ewing 1895: 69; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324; *PPUAES* III no.793; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 338–40 no.275.
[1648] *Wadd*. no.2456; Ewing 1895: 70; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 324; *PPUAES* III no.793 1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 340–1 no.276.
[1649] *Wadd*. no.2457 a; *PPUAES* III no.793 2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 341–2 no.277.
[1650] Speidel 1998: no.32; Stoll 2001: 468–70 no.87; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 100 no.53d.
[1651] Speidel 1998: no.33; Stoll 2001: 468–70 no.88; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 99 no.53c.
[1652] Dunand 1930: 539–40 no.5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 98 no.53a.
[1653] Dunand 1930: 538 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 98–9 no.53b.
[1654] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 100–1 no.53f.

been part of niches, resemble those in the temples at Sī', Sūr al-Lejā and Hebrān from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD; their recovery place is not specified. An example is a lintel decorated with grape vine having a bird on the stem. Moreover, a typical representation of the triad Baalshamin or Bel with the lunar god Aglibol and the solar god Makabel is on a relief from Mashāra. These three characters wear military garments. Baalshamin or Bel is represented bearded and he is placed between the lunar god, who has a crescent moon pendant and a crescent moon on his head, and the solar god, who bears a radiant crown and has a crescent moon behind his back. The recovery place of the relief is not specified. This representation and, therefore, the cult of this triad at Mashāra can be dated to the provincial period, as the top of the relief has a wide-egg motif used in the Near Eastern architecture in the mid 2nd century AD.

Bibliography for architecture
Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80; 2003: 96 footnote 129; 2008: 87, 96 footnote 219–20.

Bibliography for statues
Seyrig 1949: 31; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 79–80 fig.20; Weber 2006: 62–63.

Mayāmas

The Princeton University team suggested that there were remains of two temples (west and east temples) where there was a church high up on the slope in the small village of Mayāmas. According to the team, they consist of two squared buildings 8 m apart, connected by two parallel walls. In reality, it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct their layout as the east wall of the structure identified as the east temple and the west wall of the other are not visible, as a basilica was built across to cover the full extent of the so-identified east and west temples. The Christian building was, then, turned into a house by a sheik. Only architectural fragments of a wall base are visible and blocks decorated with meander swastikas and a realistic sinuous stem with grapes and fruits appear to be re-inserted into the basilica. These decorative fragments are similar to those used in other rural temples in the mid 2nd century AD, such as 'Atīl and Ṣanamein.

In addition, a relief recovered at Mayāmas, or possibly at Sahwet al-Khodor, in 1980–2, depicts a representation of the triad of Baalshamin or Bel with the lunar god Aglibol and the solar god Makabel. These three characters wear military garments; Baalshamin or Bel is represented bearded and he is situated between two figures bearing a radiant nimbus (the solar god) and a crescent moon at the lower part of the radiant nimbus (the lunar deity) on their heads. The recovery place of this relief is not specified; it is displayed in the garden of the prefecture at as-Suweidā'.

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 326–29; Denzter-Feydy 1986: 297; Segal 2013: 218.

Bibliography for statues
Seyrig 1949: 28–32 pl.2; 1971, 94–7; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2629 ff. pl.8 fig.20; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 83–6 fig.27 a–c.

Mismiyyeh (ancient name Phaina)

Early 20th-century explorers recorded architectural blocks of a temple already reused in an Ottoman barrack in the western part of the village and scattered along the road and in modern houses, about 200 m north-east of the barracks. Inevitably, modern scholars still refer to the descriptions of the temple recorded by scholars and explorers prior to 1900. According to their record, the temple appeared to be a hexastyle prostyle, meaning that there was a portico with six columns in front of the temple. It was on a podium. The façade would have consisted of a monumental door flanked by a fronton and two lateral doors that were surmounted by conch niches with small columns. The layout of the cella seemed to be rectangular or almost square; it had two lateral naves that terminated with an adyton having a conch niche at the centre of the back wall. The temple building was altered and became a church. The main monumental door of the temple was walled-up and the opening of the building was reduced to a small door with two windows. At the centre of the *cella,* there were four Corinthian columns on high pedestals that could have come from the façade or the naves, and they were adorned with a wreath that decorated a dome at the centre of the building. An isolated architectural block presents the egg-and-dart motif widely used in the second half of the 1st century AD and in the provincial period in the Hauran and Roman province Syria.

A group of fragmentary statues was found in front of the main temple; it comprised a torso of a Nike, the top of the torso of a Nike, a male bearded head and a statue fragment of a drapery, most likely a long tunic. In his catalogue of statues recovered in the Hauran, Weber also identified other fragmentary statues from this site, but their place of recovery is not specified. They are: a torso of Athena/Allat, having an aegis (the goat skin) and a gorgon at the centre of the breast; a statue fragment of the breast of Athena/Allat displaying the same attributes of the torso (the aegis and a gorgon); fragments of an eagle; a horse; a horseman on horseback; a chariot; and *lampadophoros* (a naked male figure holding a torch). The statuary group resembles the one from the sanctuary at Saḥr.

The inscriptions recovered in the temple and in the village are dated to the 2nd century AD. An inscription inserted into the Ottoman barracks explicitly mentions that Titus Helvius Marianus, a centurion of the *Legio III Gallica*, commissioned a cella roughly in AD 180.

[Ὑ]πὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νείκ(η)ς αὐτοκράτορος καίσαρος Μ(άρκου) Αὐρηλ(ίου) [Κομμόδου] Ἀντωνείνου Σεβ(αστοῦ) Εὐτυχοῦς [---] Τ(ίτος) Ἑλούιος Μαριανὸς [(ἑκατόνταρχος)] λεγ(εῶνος) γ' [Γαλλ(ικῆς)] τὸν ναὸν [---] καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέθηκεν (*c.* 180 AD)[1655]

The significant role and constant presence of the *Legio III Gallica* in the temple is also suggested by the following inscription, also dedicated by a centurion of this legion, as the inscription was originally placed below the cornice of the façade of the temple, according to the early explorer Wetzstein, or on a stone of the architrave of the temple, according to Waddington.

[Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νίκης αὐτοκρατόρος, Μ(άρκου) Αὐρηλίου Ἀντω]νείνου Σεβ(αστοῦ) Ἀρμευιακοῦ Παρθικοῦ Μη[δικοῦ μεγίστου, --- ἐπὶ Ἀουιδίου Κασσίου πρεσβ(ευτοῦ) ἀντιστρ(ατήγου), ἐφεστῶτος Αὐρηλιου] Κυριναλίου (ἑκατοντάρχου) λεγ(εῶνος) γ' Γαλλ[ικῆς] (AD 169–70)[1656]

A centurion of *XVI Flavia Firma* commissioned a statue of Pax, whereas a centurion consecrated a statue to Isis; both statues would have been placed in the lateral niches of the main door of the façade of the temple, on the basis of the inscriptions placed on lintels at the bottom of the niches.

[Ὑπὲρ σω]τηρ[ίας καὶ νί]κης τῶν κυρίων αὐτοκρατόρων, Λ(ούκιος) Αὐρήλιος Μάξιμος (ἑκατόνταρχος) λεγ(εῶνος) ις' [Φλ(αουίας) Φίρ(μης)] τὴν Εἶσιν ἀνέθηκεν[1657]

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νείκης τῶν κυρίων αὐτοκ[ρατόρων], Λ(ούκιος) Αὐρήλιος Μάξιμος (ἑκατόνταρχος) λεγ(εῶνος) ις› Φλ(αουίας) Φίρ(μης) τὴν Εἰρήνην ἀνέθηκεν (AD 161–9)[1658]

Various dedications by soldiers were recovered in the temple as follows. The three following inscriptions are on a console from the temple.

Γ(άιον) Ἐγνάτιον Φοῦσκον (ἑκατόνταρχον) λεγ(εῶνος) γ› Γαλλικ[ῆς] Φαινήσι[οι] ἀγνείας χάρ[ιν] (AD 161–9)[1659]

Πετούσιον Εὔδημον (ἑκατόνταρχον) λεγ(εῶνος) (ις›) Φλ(αουίας) Φίρ(μης), Φαινήσιοι[1660]

Πετούσιον Εὔδημον (ἑκατόνταρχον) λεγ(εῶνος) (ις›) Φλ(αουίας) Φίρ(μης) Ῥουστικὸς *Σωπάτρου Φαινήσιος τὸν φίλον καὶ εὐεργέτην*[1661]

The following inscription is on a base of a statue recovered in front of the temple.

[---] [---]RIANVS··LEG·IIIGAL [---]IA·K·EC·IT [---] [---] rianus [centurio] leg[ionis] III Gal[lice] [de sua pecun]ia (f)ecit[1662]

The community of Phaina would have played a major role in the temple, as they dedicated an inscription located on the main door of the temple. The inscription does not explicitly say what the community did – whether they commissioned the door or the whole temple. It is most likely the former, as the inscription is on the lintel of the main door of the temple.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νίκης τῶν κυρίων αὐτοκρατόρων Μ(άρκου) Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνείνου καὶ Λ(ουκίου) Αὐρηλίου Οὐήρου Σεβ(αστῶν), Φαινήσιοι ἀφιέρωσαν ἐπὶ [Ἀουιδίου Κασσίου] πρεσβ(ευτοῦ) Σεβ(αστῶν) ἀντ(ιστρατήγου), ἐφεστῶτος Ἐγνατίου Φούσκου (ἑκατοντάρχου) λεγ(εῶνος) γ› [Γαλλικῆς] (AD 166–9)[1663]

It has been suggested that the temple was dedicated to Zeus Phainesios, who is mentioned in a fragmentary inscription found in a house at the centre of the village of Dāmā-Dāmit al-ʿAliyyah, as Zeus Phainesios is named after Phaina, the Roman name of the village at Mismiyyeh.

Ἐπηκόῳ Διὶ Φαινησίῳ εὐχην Σέ<λ>ευκος Οχορανου [ε] ὐσεβῶ[ν][1664]

Moreover, a bust was dedicated to Zeus Megistos on the basis of an inscribed statue base (see below) recovered in a sheltered veranda in front of the barracks at Mismiyyeh; it was then relocated to the garden of the National Museum of Damascus.

Διὶ Μεγίστῳ Ὑψίστῳ Σοαδο[ς] Αδειου τοῦ Καυκαλλου εὐσεβείας χάριν[1665]

A Latin inscription was recovered in the exterior western wall of the barracks. It not only mentions a statue of Nemesis but also that a temple was dedicated to this deity.

[1655] *Wadd.* no.2528a; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 42 no.5.
[1656] *Wadd.* no.2528; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 317; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 41 no.4.
[1657] *Wadd.* no.2527; Sourdel 1957: 92 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 40 no.3.
[1658] *Wadd.* no.2526; Sourdel 1957: 48 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 39–40 no.2.
[1659] *Wadd.* no.2530; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 51 no.17.
[1660] *Wadd.* no.2531; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 52 no.18.
[1661] *Wadd.* no.2532; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 318; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 52 no.19.
[1662] *Wadd.* no.2536a; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 53 no.20.
[1663] *Wadd.* no.2525; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 316; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 38 no.1.
[1664] *PPUAES* II no.800 1; Sourdel 1957: 24 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 361–2 no.300; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 303.
[1665] *RAO* 5, 367–8; *RAO* 6, 372–3; Sourdel 1957: 24 no.1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 44 no.7.

[--ae]dem et sig(num) Nemesis [---][1666]

Bibliography for architecture
Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 286–97; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 103–6, 132, 217–21; Segal 2008: 109–12; 2013: 163–70; *Hauran* IV II: 107.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no. 2525–8, no.2528a, no.2530–2, no.2536a; *RAO* 5, 367–8; 6, 372–3; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 316–8; *PPUAES* II no.800 1; Sourdel 1957: 24, no.1 no.7, 48 no.4, 92 no.7; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 104, 106; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 38–42, 44, 46–7, 51–3 361–2 no.1–5, no.7, no.11, no.13, no.17–20, no.300; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 303.

Bibliography for statues
Weber 2006: 59–60; *Hauran* IV II: 109–10, 112–3.

Mseikeh

A veteran called Gaios Antonios Roufeinos commissioned the erection of an οἶκος, which can mean a temple, together with its base and enclosure in AD 181–3, on the basis of the following inscription. It is reused as a lintel on a small window of a house between the mosque and a southern church.

[Ὑ]πὲρ σωτη[ρίας αὐτοκ]ρά[τ(ορος) Κομόδου Σεβ(αστοῦ)] Γ(άϊος) Ἀντ(ώνιος) Ῥουφεῖ(νος)] οὐετ[ρ(ανὸς)] τὸν οἶκ(ον) καὶ τὸ<ν> περί[βολον] καὶ τὴν κρηπεῖ<δ>α ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ᾠκοδό(μησεν), εὐσεβ(είας) χάριν (AD 180–3)[1667]

Moreover, a soldier of the *Legio III Gallica* built a structure dedicated to Zeus, probably of major significance considering the size of the inscribed lintel, although we cannot put forward any hypothesis about it. The inscribed lintel is inserted into a façade of a modern house in front of a church.

Ἰούλιος Μάξιμος <σ>τρατιώτ[ης λεγ(εῶνος) γ› Γαλλικῆς] κα[ὶ] Ῥοῦφος ἀδελφός ἀνέκτισαν Διὶ πατρῴῳ θεῴ εὐσεΒείας χάριν Αγουρηνός[1668]

There is also an inscription commissioned by soldiers of the *Legio III Cyrenaica* on a lintel, reused in a house situated roughly 90 m from the mosque.

Καὶ Κόμοδος καὶ Μά[ξιμος] στρα(τιῶται) λεγ(εῶνος) III Κυρι(ναικῆς) ἀνέκτισαν ᾠκοδομὴν πατρὸς ἡμῶν Σαδου Σαμειθου[1669]

Moreover, there would also have been statues of emperors and Nikes on site on the basis of the following inscription. We can only suppose that these statues would have been placed in the cult centre. The inscription is inserted in the wall of a tower in the village.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κυρίου Καί[σα]ρος Ἀντωνείνου καὶ νείκης ἀν[ῳ]κοδομήσαμεν [τὸ]ν [---] Σεβαστοῦ καὶ τας Νείκας [---][1670]

Finally, according to the two following inscriptions, one altar was dedicated to an unnamed ancestral deity (AD 132–5), the god of Loaithemos (the dedicator), and the other to Zeus, who was also named an ancestral deity in the inscription. The inscription dedicated to the god of Loaithemos is on a fragmentary altar found in the portico of a small building in the south-western part of the village.

Λοαιθεμος Σαδου ἐπόησεν τὸν Βωμὸν θεῷ πατρῴῳ ἐκ τῶ[ν] ἰδίων ἀσεβείας ἕνεκε, ἔτους ιζ› Ἀδρια[νο]ῦ Καίσαρος[1671]

The inscription dedicated to Zeus is on a fragmentary altar, also found in the south-western part of the village.

[---ἀ]ν[έθ][η]<κ>αν θεῷ [Λο]αιθεμ[ου] ἔτο(υς) εἰκοστοῦ κ[υ][ρ]ίου Ἀδριανο[ῦ Κ]αόσαρος (AD 135–6)[1672]

Bibliography for inscriptions
PPUAES II no.795, no.795 1, no.795, 797–8; Sourdel 1957: 2, 22, 96 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 204–8 no.137–9, no.140a 141; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.

Muṭā'iyyeh

Decorated architectural fragments that resemble those used in rural temples in the Hauran appear on the façade of a mosque. In the eastern façade, the middle portal and the two small side portals are decorated with reused carved lintels. The jambs of the middle doorway have pilasters decorated with grape-vine motifs. The lintel is ornamented with swastika meanders alternated with masks and capped by a *cymatium* with egg-and-dart. Each end of the lintel is decorated with an upright acanthus leaf. Above the lintel there is a frieze-like over-lintel, depicting five arches with small slender columns each embracing an altar in relief. Its extremities are decorated with six-petalled rosettes inscribed in slight engraved circles. The two small side portals have lintels that are capped each with a carved *cymatium* and the surface below the *cymatium* shows remains of carved wreaths; other ornaments have been

[1666] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 46–7 no.11; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[1667] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 207–8 no.140a.
[1668] *PPUAES* II no.795; Sourdel 1957: 2 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 204–5 no.137.
[1669] *PPUAES* II no.795 6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 209–10 no.143.
[1670] *PPUAES* II no.795 1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 208–9 no.141.
[1671] *PPUAES* II no.795 7; Sourdel 1957: 22, 96; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 205–6 no.138.
[1672] PPUAES II no.795 8; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 206–7 no.139.

destroyed. These architectural fragments can be dated to the pre-provincial period as they resemble those in the sanctuary at Sī'. The Princeton University team argued that it was a Nabataean temple because the decorated architectural fragments and a broad flight of steps were recovered in the sanctuary at Sī' identified as Nabataean. However, there is no evidence of a flight of steps at Sī'. As suggested by more recent scholars, the sanctuary at Sī' and its decorative motifs are not Nabataean (§ Ch.4.1 and Sī' in the catalogue).

The following inscription mentioning Tyche is on a modern wall facing the road that leads to the eastern façade of the mosque that was supposedly a temple.

Ἀγαθῇ Τύχῃ[1673]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 88–91; Sartre 2011: 131.

Bibliography for inscriptions
PPUAES II no.42; Sartre 2011: 132 no.9642.

Obṭ'a (ancient village Bouta)

According to Dussaud, the following inscription, found on a lintel above the door of the mosque in the village, mentions that four individuals commissioned more than one *Tychaion*.

Ἀγαθῇ Τύχῃ. Τύχήα (ἀν)άθητη (σπ)ουδή καὶ ἐπιμελίᾳ Σευήρου, Νουμ[ε]ρίανου. Μαξίμου, Βάσσου, Ἀγαπίου, Βερρίου, Βάσσου, Ἀμέρου. Ουαβάλλας οἰκοδόμος'[1674]

Although in her article published in 2004, Sartre-Fauriat used Dussaud's transcription of this inscription and she also referred to the erection of more than one Tychaion in this village, in a more recent publication (2016), after a more careful reading of the inscribed lintel, she and Sartre pointed out that the inscription does not mention the erection of a *Tychaion* but only a dedication to Tyche, with a repetition of the invocation to the goddess that would aim to increase its effectiveness. Therefore, according to Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre, the inscription would refer to small altars or *ediculae* dedicated to Tyche, as it is very unlikely that there would be more than one *Tychaion* in a small village like Bouta. While discussing this, they also argued that this would be the case for other examples, like Zebīreh and Tibneh, where it was initially thought that the inscription mentions the construction of more than one *Tychaion*. The revised version of the same inscription by Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre is:

Ἀγαθῆ Τύχῃ. Τύχῃ Ἀγαθητῇ <σπ>ουδῇ καὶ ἐπιμελίᾳ Σευῆρου, Νουμ[ε]ριανοῦ. Μαξίμου, Βάσσου, Βερρίου, Βάσσου, Ἀμέρου. Ουαβάλλας οἰκοδόμος[1675]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Dunand 1950: 152 no.336; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 8, 11; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 348–9 no.363.

Qirata

An inscription on a plain block that seems to have been used for a building or a consecrated structure is dedicated to an unnamed god.

Βερνεικειανὸς Μονιμου ἀνέθηκεν τῷ θεῷ[1676]

An inscribed flute column that could be a vow is dedicated to an ancestral god.

Ζαδηλος και Ζαδ[---]λε υἱοὶ Εδδιχανου [θε]ῷ πατρῴῳ εὐχῆς [χά]ριν[1677]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 13, 16.

Qrayya

Nehmé drew attention to an inscription recovered on a bank by the Directorate General of the Antiquities of as-Suweidā' in 1994, as it is a dedication of a religious monument, which could refer to a temenos. It was dedicated to the Dushara, who was explicitly referred to as the god of the king in this inscription. The inscription is dated to AD 89/90. Nehmé also pointed out that the writing is closer to the local Aramaic than to the Nabataean script from Petra. Nehmé also described ruins of a colonnade and Greek inscriptions in Qrayya, including two funerary inscriptions.

dnh {mḥrmtʾ} [d]{y} {ʿbd}w mšgr{t w m}---- w bny ʾlmlk ldwšrʾ ʾlh rbʾl ml{k}[ʾ] [m]lk nbṭw dy ʾḥyy w šyzb ʿmh bš[nt] [ʿ]šryn lmrʾnʾ rbʾl mlkʾ (AD 89/90)[1678]

Bibliography for architecture
Nehmé 2010: 470.

Bibliography for inscription
Nehmé 2010: 470.

Rimet Hazim

It is possible to reconstruct the temple and the surroundings of the temple because of the architectural remains recovered in the eastern part of the village.

[1673] *PPUAES* II no.42; Sartre 2011: 132 no.9642.
[1674] Dunand 1950: 152 no.336.
[1675] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 348–9 no.363.
[1676] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 13.
[1677] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 16.
[1678] Nehmé 2010: 270.

Various moulded blocks of a podium, together with Bankes' sketches from the mid 19th century, indicate that the temple was a simple rectangular cella on a podium. The cult centre originally included a courtyard with a colonnaded portico, enclosed by a precinct wall, on the basis of remains of a courtyard surrounded by a wall of temenos in the buildings near the temple, some blocks of an entablature with pilaster projections, column capitals and bases recovered in the sheikh's house, which was close to the temple. We can envisage the embellishment of the temple thanks to scattered architectural blocks mostly recovered in the sheikh's house. Amongst them, there were composite normal Corinthian capitals. Blocks ornamented with a realistic sinuous stem with grapes and fruits and vine leaves were part of the temple's door frame. The entablature was decorated with wreath-like motifs on the frieze, swastika meanders, realistic rosettes and realistic palmettes on the architrave, and sinuous palmettes on the sima. These decorative architectural remains date the temple to the second half of the 1st century AD–last quarter of the 1st century AD. In the sheikh's house, the following statues were recovered: a winged figure in high relief, similar to the example in the fragmentary ceiling of the large temple (A) of Niha in Lebanon, and a mutilated and worn female head with a draped torso. The hairstyle of this female figure, consisting of soft hair strands arranged on the back with a chignon, resembles those in the Hauran, including the style of the figures of the lintel 'the Judgment of Paris' from as-Suweidā'.

The following inscription also came from the sheikh's house; it is a dedication to Helios commissioned by a centurion of *Legio IIII Scythica*.

[Ἡ]λίῳ θεῷ μεγίσ[τῳ --- Ἰ]ουλιανὸς ἑκατόνταρχος λεγ(ιῶνος) δ' Σ[κυθικῆς] εὐχήν (2nd century AD)[1679]

An altar was dedicated to Apollo; its recovery place is not specified.

[---τὸν Βωμό]ν τῷ [΄ Α] πόλλονι ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων[1680]

Bibliography for architecture
Dentzer-Feydy 1990b: 652 ff. fig.21–22; 1998; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 114 –5, 235–6.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2407; *IGRR* III no.1242; Speidel 1998: no.36; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 308.

Bibliography for statues
Dentzer-Feydy 1998: 211 fig.21–22.

[1679] *Wadd*. no.2407; IGRR III 1242; Speidel 1998: no.36.
[1680] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 308.

Sahwit il-Khiḍr

The Princeton University team recorded an inscription on the capital of a column-altar standing in front of the sanctuary that mentions a cult stone and sanctuary. Lewis and Macdonald only mentioned that it was a cubic altar, reused as the abacus of a column in the church dedicated to Saint George/al-Khiḍr.

[d]nh msgdʾ dy bnh w ʿbd
ʿwtw h{prkʾ} br gwm{ʾ} ----
{.}{h/ḥ}z{n/b}{d/r}----mšp{t} ʿl{ḥ/t}----
---- šnt X {.}----[1681]

The following inscription would have been on a smaller column-altar next to the one mentioned above.

[d]nh ḥm[nʾ dy] qrb b{drw br}----[1682]

The Princeton University team described that at the time of the expedition there were hardly any ruins of a sanctuary, as the buildings in this area had already been destroyed and rebuilt.

Bibliography for inscriptions
CIS II 188; *PPUAES* IV no.96–7; Lewis and Macdonald 2003: 75 no.34.

Saḥr

Remains of a sanctuary next to a theatre at the centre of a cluster of structures extending 400 m (north–south) and 450 m (west–east) were found in the heart of a basaltic lava plateau.

In recent investigations the French team has revealed that the sanctuary had two phases, whereas the Princeton University visitors did not mention an earlier phase. Its earlier phase consists of remains of a finely made pavement in a different axis (east–west) from the temple, built in the second phase (north-east–south-west axis). There is a sort of apsis, cut into the rocky surface, on the eastern border of the paved area. The configuration of mortises suggests that a stele or a *betyl* would have been placed on the pavement. In the sanctuary a fragmentary *betyl*, or a trunk-shaped cyppus, has been found. There are hardly any remains that can inform us about the superstructure of the cult centre in this phase, this was most likely because it would have been destroyed during the building of the second phase of the temple. It is only possible to assume that there would be a simple enclosure to circumscribe the paved area, if there were one. A test pit undertaken in the paved area discovered a large quantity of calcined ovicaprid bones and two silver tetradrachms from the city of Tyr, dated to 89/88 and

[1681] This is the reading suggested in Lewis and Macdonald 2003: 75 no.34. It is also recorded in *CIS* II 188; *PPUAES* IV no.96.
[1682] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.97.

57/6 BC. They were votive offerings for the foundation of the early phase of the sanctuary. As the more recent coin does not show traces of wear, implying that it was used only for short time, it can date the foundation of the sanctuary to the mid 1st century BC.

The second phase is the main one, as the sanctuary and a theatre were built then. According to the Princeton University team the sanctuary resembled the one of Sī' as it had a temple as a circumambulatory cella (i.e. a square cella inside a smaller square one, with four columns placed in a square at the centre of the inner cella) with a vestibule with two columns flanked by two small towers. Recent investigation by the French team has, however, revealed that the cella consists of a tripartite adyton facing a small courtyard. The adyton consists of a large central niche at the back of the temple wall flanked by two small rooms which are hardly bigger than a corridor. In small lateral room of the adyton on the south-east there is a cistern (2 m wide and 3 m deep). The façade of the central room of the adyton would have had a vaulted entrance on the basis of numerous remains of voussoirs and archivolt archstones from the rubbles in the pavement. Some of the blocks of the archivolt are decorated with egg-and-dart and wreath-like vine branches and large sinuous rosettes, which were used in rural temples in the Hauran and in the architecture in the Near East in the provincial period (Ch.4.5).

According to Weber, statue fragments depicting a bearded head, an arm, a knee and a hand holding an unidentified long object have been recovered in the adyton; as they are larger than life-size, they therefore would have belonged to the main statue of the sanctuary, which would have been placed in a significant part of the sanctuary, such as the adyton. Weber has interpreted the statue remains to represent a seated bearded male god holding a sceptre. According to the French team it is not possible to identify with certainty who this male statue could represent. It could be the Lord of the Sky, like Baalshamin, identified with Zeus. The identification of these statue fragments with Zeus is supported by the recovery of four eagle statues, also recovered in the adyton according to Weber, as they are symbols of Zeus (§ Ch.4.3). Additionally, according to Weber a fragment of an eagle that could be 2 m high was recovered, and it could have been an offering rather than a statue that decorated the temple.

In the statuary group in the adyton, a statue fragment of a naked boy was also recovered. Weber has suggested that it could represent a *lampadophoros* (a young male torch-bearer), as he is usually represented as a naked boy and the presence of the *lampadophoros* would complement the depiction of Zeus holding a sceptre. However, the statue fragment consists of a naked waist and there is no evidence of a lamp.

The adyton faces a courtyard with remains of a colonnaded portico on the sides, where the re-worked elevated rocky terrain (0.40 m higher than the central part of the courtyard) could have been used for banquets or seating. In the middle there would have been an elevated horned altar with a small flight of stairs with acroteria, most likely palmettes, at the outer angles.

The small courtyard with the altar leads to a bigger courtyard. The main courtyard was completely paved but it has been looted over time. It would have had a colonnaded portico in front of two steps along the side walls. The columns might have been Doric, like in the colonnade at Sī' 8, on the basis of some fragments of Doric capitals, including one recovered in building 33 at Saḥr, near the sanctuary. Blocks decorated with fasciae of Ionic mouldings, including one example also with large rosettes, a row of eggs and a plain cavetto, found out of context, could have been the architrave of the colonnade.

A podium holding a statuary complex was situated in the courtyard. It is not in axis with the entrance of the adyton, with the small courtyard, or with the entrance of the sanctuary that leads to the bigger courtyard. The statuary complex consists of two sides: one facing the entrance of the sanctuary, the other facing the smaller courtyard with benches. According to Weber the former comprises five headless equestrian male figures wearing long tunics with cloaks across one shoulder, and two equestrian male figures wearing a strip cuirass and pteryges. One of the five statues wearing a long tunic is bigger than the others: it is life-size and it seems to have the right hand raised. Only in an earlier reconstruction by Weber was the bearded head associated with the representation of Zeus in the adyton part of the horsemen group. According to Kropp, instead, it is more likely that this statue head belonged to the life-size horseman, as it would fit with the latter. Weber has argued that these statues represented the troop of Zamarids with Agrippa II, but his hypothesis has been questioned by Kropp, who, instead, has suggested that they could be deities, considering the figures on the other side of the podium as divine (§ Ch.3.2 for further information). Weber initially thought that the statuary complex on the other side comprised a torso of Athena (having an aegis and a gorgon at the centre of its breast) and a draped male figure of obscure identity, along with a chariot with two lions and two tamers on either side, where several Nikes would probably have been raised on pillars at the corners of the platform. After a more careful reading of the statue fragments, Weber has altered his hypothesis by suggesting that there were two chariots instead of one, with two additional feline animals of undefined nature. Whereas

according to Kropp the sculptural group is dated to the Flavian period, according to Weber it is later than the Neronian period on the basis of the heads of the lions pulling the chariot, which stylistically resemble lion heads in the temple of Jupiter at Baalbek, dated to this period.

The tunic of the draped male figure consists of wavy folds, tubular forms and a wide belt. It resembles the garment used by Bedouins and that of a statue found at Ahiré in the Hauran, which has been identified as the local god Aumos according to its inscribed pedestal. For those reasons Weber and the French team suggest that the statue at Saḥr was a local god. However in recent archaeological investigations Weber and the French team only recovered the legs with a folded tunic of this statue, and the upper part of this statue is based on a drawing and photograph by Butler, a member of the Princeton University team, from the early 20th century.

There are no preserved remains of the entrance of the sanctuary, which is not in axis with the entrance of the small courtyard and the adyton, because of a room next to it being in axis with, and opposite to, the small courtyard with the adyton. The Princeton University team recorded it as a propylon as it had an entrance on its sides and one into the courtyard. However the French team has identified only one entrance from the courtyard. It is inserted into a decorated façade with a simple gable, whereas the outer walls of this structure are plain. Therefore, the only entrance being into the courtyard, and the lack of decoration of the exterior walls, seem to negate the hypothesis of this room being a propylon. Because of its opening into the courtyard, its function would have been in relation to the courtyard. According to the French team it could have been a chapel, or *naïskos*, where a secondary divine figure could have resided. It could have been the house of Gad, who was the divine protector of the place assimilated to Tyche. An inscribed statue pedestal explicitly mentions the identity of the statue of Gad, commissioned by an individual recovered in the eastern part of the cella.

Οβοβαθη Χασετου Γαδει[1683]

On the basis of their dimensions, the inscribed block could be the pedestal of a Nike statue recovered from the rubble with other statue fragments in the wide courtyard. This statue could have been part of the statuary group on the platform of the wide courtyard. Weber is inclined to suggest that it could belong to a pillar against a wall, therefore it could have been placed on the right of the entrance of the chapel.

Similarly, the statue of Seeia (also a divine protector of the land of the Hauran assimilated to Tyche) was situated in a similar small rectangular structure with a decorated facade (temple 2) facing a courtyard (forecourt 2). Additionally some fragments of eagles used as acroterion could have come from the chapel according to Weber.

The main phase of the sanctuary has been dated to the second half of 1st century AD, in particular, during the reign of Agrippa II, on the basis of the statues according to Weber. Some of the architectural and decorative elements seem to belong to the regional style of the 1st century AD, whereas others seem to be typical of the provincial Near Eastern style (§ Ch.5.5). Apart from the decorated blocks of the archivolt, of particular interest are the small architectural blocks of a cornice found 100 m south of the temple. It is decorated with a drip band, consoles and dentils on corona decorated with modillions, and egg-and-dart motif. This decoration is widely used in temples in the Hauran and in the architecture in the Near East in the provincial period. In one of the first cleaning phases of the mortar of the cella a fragment of a lamp of Palmyrene type was recovered. The style from Palmyra is dated 2nd century and thus the Saḥr find could shift the dating of the foundation to the end of the 1st century to the beginning of the 2nd century AD.[1684]

The sanctuary stopped being used at the end of the 3rd century AD and its ruins were occupied by squatters between the 4th and 6th centuries AD, on the basis of the recovery of a huge quantity of cooking and tableware.[1685]

Only a few inscriptions survive and their state is very fragmentary.

The following inscription is on a statue base recovered in the courtyard of the sanctuary. From the statue the folds of a tunic and two feet were preserved.

Γαμος Νασρου ἱερόδουλος ἐποίησεν[1686]

The following inscription is on a statue base recovered in the temenos of the sanctuary.

Γαμος Νασρο[υ ἱ]ε[ρ]όδου<λ>ος ἐπόησεν[1687]

[1683] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 81–2 no.47; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 336–7 no.13.

[1684] Renel 2017.

[1685] Renel 2017.

[1686] *PPUAES* III no.805 1; Weber 2003a: 354–5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 76–7 no.40; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 330 no.3.

[1687] *PPUAES* III no.805 1; Weber 2003a: 354–5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 77–8 no.41; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 330–1 no.4.

It might be the pedestal of the statue of a male deity according to Weber.

The following inscription is on a statue base recovered in the temenos of the sanctuary.

Αναμος ΘΗCΑΚΑ ΤΕΑΞΑ ἐποίησεν. ΟΜCΕΜΑΙΕ αμεν[ο]ς [ἀνέ]στησε<ν> Νί<κην>[1688]

The following two inscriptions were found to the south-west of a tower-like building, 200 m north of the temple. The first one could belong to a pilaster from the sanctuary.

[Β]άσσος [Χα]σετου ΒΗ[---]ΟΥ, εὐσε[βῶν] [ἀνέθηκεν][1689]

[---] C[---]ΚΕΙ[---] ἀν[έ]θηκεν[1690]

The following inscription was on the base of a column which could have belonged to the portico of the courtyard of the sanctuary.

[εὐσεβ]ῶν [ἀνέ]θηκεν[1691]

The following inscription was found in the temenos of the temple by the early 20th-century expedition. Later, one fragment of the inscription was rediscovered in the southern part of the cella, in the late 1990s, and another two in the western part of the courtyard of the sanctuary.

[---]ΔΟ[-]ΑΡΑ[-]ΔΟC [---]ου καὶ Αδρος [ἀπε] λεύθαρος[1692]

The following inscription was first found in the courtyard of the sanctuary by Khalil al-Muqda, and then rediscovered in the southern part of the cella in the late 1990s by the French-German expedition.

Γοδαιλαιη Αδ[.]ου τοῦ Οβαιαθο[---][1693]

The following inscription was recovered 120 m south of the back wall of the cella. It is a block belonging to a statue which most likely represented Nike.

Σεμαθος Ἑρμοῦ ἀν<έ>θηκεν[1694]

The following inscription was recovered in the northern part of the cella.

[Τ]αλεμος Ουαλανου[1695]

The following inscription was found in a house in the south of the village of Tāff, but the inhabitants believed that it came from the sanctuary. It could be part of an altar.

Σοαιδος Χειλου τ[---][1696]

The following inscription was found in the southern part of the cella. It could be the pedestal of a statue from the podium in the courtyard.

[---]δου Χεειλο[ο---][1697]

The following inscription is on two fragments: one recovered *c.* 100 m south from the exterior wall of the cella and the other *c.* 200 m north of the exterior wall of the cella.

Ζαι<δ>ος Χαελου (?)[1698]

The following inscription was recovered in the southern part of the cella.

[Μ]ολαιχα Θ[---] ου Μ]ολαιχαθ[ος ου ης][1699]

The following inscription is part of three fragments recovered in the southern part of the cella.

[---]Βαζουρου ἀ[νέθηκεν---][1700]

The following inscription was recovered in the southern part of the cella.

Χασιτος Σεο[υήρου] [---]ἑκ τῶν εἰ δ<ί>ων [---ἀνέθη] κεν[1701]

Two fragments of a base below an echinus were found in the eastern part of the courtyard of the sanctuary.

[---]Υ-[---]-χου εὐσεΒῷν [---]CAI[---]ΥΝ[---][1702]

[1688] *PPUAES* III no.805; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 75–6 no.39; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 326–7 no.1.
[1689] *PPUAES* III no.805 5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 78 no.42; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 331–2 no.6.
[1690] *PPUAES* III no.805 3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 79 no.44; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 332–3 no.8.
[1691] *PPUAES* III no.805 4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 78–79 no.43; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 332 no.7.
[1692] *PPUAES* III no.805 2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 80 no.45; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 333–4 no.10.
[1693] *Hauran* IV II: 207–7; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 81 no.46; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 335–6 no.12.
[1694] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 82 no.47a; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 337 no.14.
[1695] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 83 no.47b; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 337–8 no.15.
[1696] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 83 no.48; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 339 no.16.
[1697] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 84 no.49; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 340 no.18.
[1698] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 85 no.49a; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 340–1 no.19.
[1699] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 85 no.49b; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 341 no.20.
[1700] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014; 86 no.49c; Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 341–2 no.21.
[1701] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 89–90 no.50h.
[1702] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 329 no.2.

This small fragment was found 50 m north-west of the external wall of the cella.

[---] [---]I I[---]AΨON[---][--]AEN[---][---].[1703]

The following extremely fragmentary inscription was found on the wall of the cella.

IO ου OI [---][1704]

The following fragmentary inscription was found in the southern part of the cella of the sanctuary.

[---γ]υνὴ Σ<α>ιου Θαιμου[1705]

The following inscription was found *c.* 200 m north of the external wall of the cella.

OPAI OEKE I[---][1706]

Only three letters from a fragment of an echinus found in the sanctuary can be read.

[---]ΔAN[1707]

Another small inscribed block was found in the eastern part of the courtyard.

[---]ΔABAP[---][1708]

A block with only a couple of letters visible was found in the south-western part of the cella in the Ottoman stratigraphy.

[---]OC [---]N [---][1709]

Two inscribed fragments were found in the southern and north-western parts of the cella.

[---]OC [---]N [---][1710]

The following fragmentary inscription was part of two blocks: one found in the southern part of the cella and the other in the north-western part of the cella with other inscribed blocks. It has at least five lines implying it was unlikely on a statue pedestal and it could be the dedication of the sanctuary, but it is too fragmentary to understand the text.

[---]ΛΛA[---][---]ΛEY[---][---]COA[---][---]CA[---][1711]

Two inscribed blocks with only a couple of letters visible were recovered in the courtyard.

TEP[---][1712]

[---]ME[---] [---]O [---]γ E[1713]

Two fragments of an inscribed block were found in the cella.

[---]OΠYΩ[---][---]γους καὶ Aδ[---] [---]A[---][1714]

The following inscription is on a plinth broken into two joint fragments: one found 300 m south-west of the external wall of the cella and the other from the work by Khalil al-Muqda in 1989. It seems to be of a later date than the other inscriptions because the basalt (more porous) and the writing are different from other examples on site. The formula τῶν εἰδίων is extremely common in the 3rd and 4th centuries. Therefore the inscribed plinth can suggest a repair of the monument undertaken in 3rd century AD.

Χασιτος Σεο[υήρου] [---]ἐκ τῶν εἰδ<ί>ων [ἀνέθη] κεν[1715]

The theatre is 16 m south-east of the sanctuary on its same axis. According to the Princeton University team the wall of what would be the *frons scaenae* of the theatre was parallel with the façade of the small courtyard facing the wider one, whereas it is parallel with the back wall of the adyton according to recent investigation by the French team. The theatre's alignment with the sanctuary suggests it was built at the same time as the second phase of the sanctuary. The *orchestra* is circular. The *cavea* has a horse-shoe shape with its extremities extended on the far ends, where would have been the *frons scaenae* wall. This plan leaves only a small rectangular area between the two extremities of the *cavea* that could have functioned as a *pulpitum*. The *cavea* consists of seven steps. The Princeton University team identified five flights of steps that divided the *cavea* into four parts, whereas it seems that there are three (one in the middle and two at the two extremities of the *cavea*) that divided the *cavea* into three, according to recent investigation by the French team. It has three entrances and could accommodate *c.* 600 people.

[1703] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 329 no.3.
[1704] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 333 no.9.
[1705] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 334–5 no.11.
[1706] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 339–40 no.17.
[1707] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 342 no.22.
[1708] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 342 no.23.
[1709] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 342–3 no.24.
[1710] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 343 no.25.
[1711] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 343–4 no.26.
[1712] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 343–4 no.27.
[1713] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 345 no.28.
[1714] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 345 no.29.
[1715] Sartre-Fauriat 2017: 345–6 no.30.

Table 1: Division of the types of buildings that surround the sanctuary at Saḥr, according to Kalos (1997) and Dentzer (1999).

Main division	Description	Sub-group	Description	No. of structures	Further information	No. of people who could be accommodated in each structure
I	Quadrangular structure with vaulted façade or open-plan	A	Oblong plan	92	- From 12 to 26 m^2 - Usually 3 m deep - No windows	6-8
		B	T-shaped plan	3	- 33 m^2, 22.60 m^2 and 18.5 m^2 - It seems that they developed later than type I.A	9–12
		C	Squared plan	6	- One or two internal arches	25–30
II	Portico	A	Linear plan	6/7	- Difficult to distinguish as colonnade is usually badly preserved - They are usually wider than type I.A	16–18
		B	L-shaped plan	6	-	Unspecified
		C	U-shaped plan	1	-	Unspecified

The Princeton University team referred to the complex cluster of buildings as having very few ruins, whereas the French team has provided a completely different picture. Although the remains do not seem to belong to a city or village (e.g. absence of a grid plan, roads, a systematic building programme and a necropolis), it seems to include an elaborate hydraulic system to collect rain water through stone channels directing into three cisterns, with capacities of 320 m^3, 190 m^3 and 60 m^3. A wide oval depression (40 m x 30 m) is situated at the south-western border of the clusters of buildings (in particular buildings Saḥr 9 and 10). The depression is circumscribed with a well-built wall with its opening to the north. It has been interpreted as an enclosure for animals for sacrifices during religious festivals, as the sanctuary is not too far away. Alternatively it could have been a large reservoir for rain water.

Buildings appear to be concentrated on the west, south and east of the cluster, contrasted by the low density in the north (Figure 39). There are around 50 groups of buildings that could have accommodated roughly 600 people. Their layouts vary – from a room with an oblong plan to a more complex portico structure; and one building could have more than one sub-group type identified by Kalos (Table 1) (Figure 40).

They have usually niches into the interior walls. As the buildings lack flooring, cowsheds, storage space, and doorways, they cannot be considered as permanent dwellings, with the exception of a couple of examples (e.g. building Saḥr 47). So most of these buildings would have been used by various small groups of pilgrims for feasting during religious festivals (§ Ch.6.1–2). They could host from 6 to 18 people, with a higher number in fewer cases (Table 1).

Some of these buildings have an extra attached structure of smaller size, which can be part of Types I.A, I.C or II (Table 1). They have one or two doors. They are extensions situated at the corner, in parallel position with the main opening, or with their door perpendicular with the main opening. They function as service rooms.

Despite the limited archaeological investigation and their bad preservation, excavations of some of the buildings have offered some chronological data. Some Iron Age pottery were recovered in enclosures of these buildings during investigations undertaken in 1974. In recent excavations the earliest pottery are dated from the 1st century BC. A major development and use of these buildings is from the first to the beginning of 2nd century AD. It is difficult to differentiate between the phase of construction and the phase of its use. A second phase of intensive development and occupation of these buildings is from the 3rd–5th centuries AD, although there is no evidence of Christian presence on site. After the 5th century AD, there is evidence of irregular and reduced presence of small groups. However, we have to bear in mind that these structures were most likely occasionally used over time. We have to bear in mind that small rudimentary structures, which, in this cluster and across Leja, consisted of dry

Table 2: Coins recovered at Saḥr, according to Augé (2017).

Type	Quantity	Location of recovery	Period	Place of mint
Tetradrachm of Tyr	1	Foundation of first phase of sanctuary in cella	89/88 BC	Tyr (Phoenicia)
Tetradrachm of Tyr	1	Foundation of first phase of sanctuary in cella	57/56 BC	Tyr (Phoenicia)
Roman bronze coin	1	Main courtyard in front of façade of temple	AD 222–35	Bosra
Roman bronze coin	1	Building Saḥr 9	AD 222–35	Bosra
Roman bronze sesterce coin	1	Main courtyard of sanctuary	AD 244–49	Damascus
Roman bronze coin	1	Building Saḥr 9	AD 253–68	Damascus
Coin	2	Building Saḥr 9	AD 283–85	Antioch
Coin	1	Courtyard in front of façade of temple decapage	AD 285–c AD 294	Antioch
Building Saḥr 9 AD 313–17/18 Roman bronze coin	1	Cella	c. AD 294–305	Siscia
Roman bronze coin	1	Destruction layer of building Saḥr 9	AD 321–24	Western atelier
Roman bronze coin	1	Sahr 9	AD 336–7	Eastern atelier (Constantinopolis or Nicomedia)
Bronze coin	1	No precise location	AD 253–68	Damascus

stone walls that were built by shepherds from Iron Age onwards. Instead, buildings with more redefined masonry, by one or more teams of stonemasons (i.e. cut stones, walls facing each other and rectilinear joints, vaults), can be probably dated to the second half of the 1st century AD. Most of the buildings have both building techniques (consisting of cut stones and rough, uneven stones), which make it impossible to date them.

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 441–6 ill.387–8; Freyberger 1991: 10, 25; Kalos 1997; 2003; Dentzer 1999: 257–60; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 90; 2010: 232–6; Kropp 2013a: 259; Segal 2013: 169–70; *Hauran* IV I.

Bibliography for inscriptions
PPAES III no.805 1–5; Weber 2003a: 354–5; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 73–90; Sartre-Fauriat 2017.

Bibliography for statues
Weber 2003a; 2003b; *Hauran* IV II; Kropp 2013a: 259–62.

Bibliography for coins
Augé *2017.*

Bibliography for pottery
Renel 2017.

Ṣalkhad

Archaeological remains that survive from this sanctuary are only isolated blocks bearing a realistic sinuous stem with grapes and fruits and vine leaves, an archaic Corinthian capital (consisting of acanthus leaves on the echinus) and a lintel decorated with meander swastika motif (§ Ch.4.5). The following inscriptions, nevertheless, clearly inform us that the cult centre was built in the mid 1st century BC and rebuilt in AD 56 and AD 93. It was dedicated to Allat. The recovery place of inscriptions from Ṣalkhad is generally not specified, apart from a few cases that are here explicitly stated.

dnh byt' dy bnh rwḥw br mlkw br 'klbw br rwḥw l-'lt 'lht-hm dy b-ṣlḥd w dy nṣb rwḥw br qṣyw 'm rwḥw dnh dy 'l' b-yrḥ 'b šnt 'šr w šb' l-mnkw mlk nbṭw br ḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥ[m] 'm-h (AD 56)[1716]

According to the Princeton University team, the following inscription was inserted in the front wall of a modern house near the Druze sheikh's house.

[1716] This is the reading suggested in Cantineau 1932: 16–7. It is also recorded in *CIS* II 182; *Suw.* 1934 no.377.

dʾ msgdʾ
dy ʿbd
ʿbydw br
ʾṭ{y}pq
l-bʿlšmn ʾlh
mtnw b-šnt
XXXIII l-mnk[w]
mlkʾ mlk nb{ṭ}[w] (AD 72–3)[1717]
dnh bytʾ dy bnh ʿwtʾlh br qṣyw br ʾdynt br ʿwtʾ[lh]
br ʾklbw br rwḥw br qṣyw l-ʾlt w wgr-h {b-}
----ṭbʾ b-yrḥ sywn šnt ʿšryn w ḥmš l-rbʾl
mlkʾ mlk nb[ṭw] dy ʾḥyy ʿm-h w {š}[yzb-h] (AD 93)[1718]

According to the Princeton University team, the following inscription was on an altar recovered in the courtyard of a modern house on the way to the mosque from an ancient church in the village.

[dn]h msgd-
[ʾ] dy qrb
ph<zw>rw
br ʾwšw l-ʾlt rb-
t ʾl ʾtr[1719]

There are also inscriptions dedicated to the deities Baalshamin/Zeus Megistos and Tyche.

The following inscription is on a side of an altar where a bull's head is also sculpted. Its recovery place is not specified; it is currently situated in the museum of as-Suweidā'.

Διῒ μεγάλῳ τῷ κυρίωι. Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Μονίμου Βασιλίσκου Κ[υρ]ου. Ἄνος οἰκοδόμος εὐσεβῶν ἐποήσε (provincial period)[1720]

Ἀγατῇ Τύχη. Θαῖμος Ναέμου, Σάβαος Σίχμου, Βάσσος Οὐλπίου, Βόρδος Σαι[ρή]λου ἐπισκοποι ἐκ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκτισαν, ἔτους ρμζ' (AD 252–3)[1721]

The following inscription mentions the presence of temple treasures; it is on a worked stone block found at the entrance of a modern house in the village.

[Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νίκης Αὐτοκράτος Μ(άρκου) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Ἀντωνείνου Κ]αίσαρος Σεβ(αστοῦ) Εὐσεβ(οῦς) Ἀρμε(ενιακοῦ) Μηδ(ικοῦ) Παρθ(ικοῦ) Μεγ(ίστου) ἐπί [Ἀουιδίου Κασσίου τοῦ] λα[μτροτάτου ὑπατικοῦ] [---]ς ἔτους ἐνάτου ἐκ τῶν ἱερατικῶν ἐκτ[ίσθη] (AD 169–70)[1722]

Bibliography for architecture
Schulmberger 1933: pl.27.2; Sartre-Fautriat 2004: 101–3; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 81–2, 97 note 236, 100.

Bibliography for inscriptions
CIS II 182–4; *Wadd*. no.1990; *PPUAES* III no.155; *PPUAES* IV no.23–4; Cantineau 1932: 16–7; *Suw*. 1934 no.200, no.374–5, no.377; 1991 INV311 [218] (5, 32); Mascle 1944: no.311; Milik 1958: 227–8 no.1; Sourdel 1957: 24.

Ṣanamein (ancient name Aire)

The ruins of a temple are situated on the north side of a cistern, isolated from the village and other ruins. The Princeton University team suggested that the layout of the temple was a tetrastyle prostyle. However, they acknowledged that their reconstruction is based on a conjecture that would require archaeological excavations to verify the presence of the porch of columns at the entrance of the temple. It seems that the north façade was first destroyed and then rebuilt with decorated architectural fragments that belonged to a temple, most likely of this temple whose foundations, interior side and back walls still survive. The façade presents a wide doorway at the centre between two narrower portals. Amongst various decorated architectural fragments inserted in the façade there are: the sima of the cornice and raking cornice of the temple, both showing realistic and sinuous palmette decoration; and cornice fragments from the entablature with modillions, floral decorations (undulating tendrils and long leaves with three leaflets on each side of the stem and two cherries in the middle of a tendril) and swastika meander fascia. There are also Ionic door frames, architectural fragments of the architrave, decorated with realistic and sinuous rosettes alternated with swastika meander motifs; and frieze fragments, ornamented with wreath-like leaves and swastika meander fascia. Corinthian capitals, fragments of two conches and the end of a pediment re-inserted into the façade suggest that the original façade had small lateral niches and decorated doorways with pediments, like rural temples at 'Atīl and Breikeh from the provincial period.

We can have a better understanding of the interior of the temple as it is better preserved than the façade. There are a couple of steps before entering the adyton, which consists of two side chambers flanking the apse at the centre that has a conch niche at the back wall. A complete entablature of the façade of the adyton is arched above the apse. It is supported by a row of four free-standing columns extending across the south wall,

[1717] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.23.
[1718] This is the reading suggested in Milik 1958: 227–8 no.1. It is also recorded in *CIS* II 183, 184; *Suw. 1934 no.374–5.*
[1719] This is the reading suggested in Milik 1958: 230, except for last two lines. The reading is a combination of *PPUAES* IV no.24 and Milik 1958: 230, and it includes a suggestion for *rbt ʾl ʾtr*, 'the lady of the place' in Macdonald forthcoming.
[1720] *Suw*. 1934 no.200; 1991 INV311 [218] (5, 32); Mascle 1944: no.311; Sourdel 1957: 24.
[1721] *Wadd*. no.1990.
[1722] *PPUAES* III no.155.

two engaged half columns, in the eastern and western walls, and engaged quarter columns, in the two north angles. The lateral doors of the façade of the adyton are decorated with vine branches with S-shaped stems (i.e. wreath-like motif).

This temple is from the second half of the 2nd century AD on the basis of the architectural remains. This dating is confirmed by an inscription that informs us that a centurion of *Legio III Gallica* completed the precinct of the *Tychaion* in AD 191. In the early 20th century the Princeton University expedition recovered the inscription on a lintel inserted into the north wall of the temple, whereas almost a century earlier explorers Seetzen and Richther found it on the door of the temple.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νείκης τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοκράτ(ορος) [Λουκίου Αὐρηλίου Κομμόδου] Σεβ(αστοῦ) Εὐσεβ(οῦς) Εὐτυχοῦς Ἰούλιος Γερμανὸς (ἑκατοντάρχος) [λεγ(εῶνος) γ΄ Γαλλ(ικῆς)] ὁ εὐεργέτης Αἰρησίων καὶ κτίστης τὸν σηκὸν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιγραφῆς συνετέλεσεν, καὶ τὸ τυχαῖον ἀφιέρωσεν ἔτους ις΄ (AD 191)[1723]

Apart from the inscription above, there is no doubt that this temple was dedicated to Tyche by the multiple dedications to this goddess, also her statue was placed in a large niche at the back wall of the temple according to the following inscription placed in the back wall.

Θεόδοτος Ἕκτορος Ἑπτακιν an engraved leaf θιανὸς ἅμα συμβίω καὶ τέκνοις τὴν Τυχέαν σὺν τῇ κόνχῃ τῇ πατρίδι χρυσῷ ἐκόσμησεν[1724]

Four inscriptions, inserted into the wall of the temple, mention the dedication of candelabra to Tyche.

Φιλωναῖος Κυνάγου τοῦ Μορρου, ἱεράσας Δόμναν θυγατέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τῇ Τύχῃ τοὺς τέσσαρας λαμπαδηφόρους ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέθηκεν[1725]

Φιλωναῖος Κυνάγου τοῦ Μορρου, ἱεράσας Δόμναν θυγατέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τῇ Τύχῃ τοὺς τέσσαρας λαμπαδηφόρ[ους ἐκ] τῶν ἰδίω[ν ἀνέ]θ[ηκεν][1726]

Φιλωναῖος Κυνάγου τοῦ Μορρου, ἱεράσας Δόμναν θυγατέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τῇ Τύχῃ τοὺς τέσσαρας λαμπαδηφόρους ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέθηκεν[1727]

[Φιλωναῖος Κυνάγου] [τοῦ Μορρου, ἱεράσας] [Δόμναν θυγ]ατέ[ρα] [τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐ]τοῦ το[ὺς [τ]έ[σσ]αρας λαμπαδηφόρους τῇ Τύ[χ]ῃ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων [ἀ]νέθηκεν[1728]

There are other two inscriptions dedicated to Tyche. One was on a block set into the wall of a courtyard about 50 m north of the temple.

Μοσχίων Κλήμεντος τῇ Τύχῃ, ἱερασάμενος Ζηνόδωρον υἱόν, ἀνέθηκεν[1729]

Another inscription dedicated to Tyche was found on two adjacent sides of a large parallelepiped-shaped block found about 100 m north-west of the temple before it was moved to a house in the north-west of the village along the wadi.

Side A

[Μοσχίω]ν Κλήμεντος τῇ Μεγά[λῃ Τ]ύχῃ ἱερασάμενος Ζηνό[δωρο]ν υἱὸν, ἀνέθηκεν ἐκ τῶ[ν ἰδίων] τὸν ἀνδρίαντα καὶ [τοὺς] τέσσαρες φωσφόρου[ς]

Side B

[-------] ΩΔΕΛ καὶ τὴν ΓΗΤΗΝ πρότε[ραν ἀ]φιεροῦν[τε] ς ἐξ ἰδίων[1730]

The block with the inscription above was originally a console into the western inner wall of the temple, which also displayed two additional fragmentary inscriptions mentioning the benefaction of the community of the village Aire.

[---] [ἐπίτ]ροπον [τοῦ] [Σ]εβ(αστοῦ), τὸ κοινὸ[ν] ἁγνῶς ἐπιτ[ά]ξαντα τειμῆ[ς] κάριν[1731]

[---]ν[---] τὸ κοι(νὸν) Αἰρη[σ(ίων)] ἐπίτροπον τ[ο]ῦ Σεβ(αστοῦ) τειμῆς κάριν[1732]

At the back of the temple, there is a pool; in particular, to its south side there are remains of a colonnade from which only two Corinthian columns are preserved, according to the Princeton University team. They carry an architrave with two bands and a highly finished *cymatium*, and a frieze presenting a right-lined moulding at the top. This set of evidence suggests that the temple and the pool belong to the same complex, as they could have been enclosed by the colonnade; the pool would have been used for ritual activities (§ Ch.6.1). However, Seetzen, Richter and Bankes, explorers from

[1723] PPUAES III no.652; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–4 no.548.
[1724] *Wadd.* no.2413 h; PPUAES III no.654, Sourdel 1957: 51 no.6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 538–9 no.553.
[1725] *Wadd.* no.2413 g; PPUAES III no.653 A; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 534–5 no.549.
[1726] *PPUAES* III no.653 B; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 535–6 no.550.
[1727] *PPUAES* III no.653 C1–C2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 536–7 no.551.
[1728] *PPUAES* III no.653 D1–D2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 537–8 no.552.
[1729] *Wadd.* no.2413 i; *PPUAES* III no.655 4; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 542 no.556.
[1730] Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 1–4 no.1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 542–4 no.556a.
[1731] *PPUAES* III no.655; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 539–40 no.554.
[1732] *PPUAES* III no.655 1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 540 no.555.

the beginning of the 19th century, provided a different picture. According to them, a building was situated to the south of the *Tychaion*. It had an apse flanked by a large niche on the left at the rear wall. Bankes represented the building as being elevated and having the rear wall open in the centre towards south; Richter described it as a large arcade. Seetzen illustrated the structure as a vague rectangle with two columns at the entrance. This structure could have been the second temple in the village, as an inscription recovered in the village informs us that three individuals (Eunomos and his brothers, Aias and Nikaios) began the construction of the temple dedicated to Zeus Kyrios in AD 45–6. More explorers (Seetzen, Richter, Berggren and Thomson) mentioned a second temple in the village; it was converted into an oil press, at the time of Richter; into a mosque, at the time of Berggren; and into a church, according to Thomson. The inscription that mentions the construction of the temple dedicated to Zeus Kyrios was on a lintel re-inserted into the wall of a courtyard near the south-western angle of the town.

Ἔτους πέ<μ>πτου τῆς (ἡγεμονίας) αὐτοκράτορος Τιβερίου Κ<λ>αυδίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ, Εὔνομος Ἕκτορος καὶ Αἴας καὶ Νείκαιος ἀδελφοὶ ἦρξαν οἰκοδομῆσαι ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων τῷ Διῒ Κυρίῳ εὐσεβείας καὶ εὐχαριστείας ἕνεκα (AD 45–6)[1733]

Two inscriptions also mention the construction of the door, including a statue of Nike; small figures of Nike and lions and other carved work on the door of the temple were dedicated to Zeus Kyrios in AD 85–6.

One inscription was found in the house of a sheikh, according to Ewing.

Ἔτους λζ΄ καὶ λβ΄ βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα κυρί[ου Μ]αββογαιος Φίδω[νος κα]ὶ υἱοὶ οἰκοδόμησαν [τὴν θύ]ραν σὺν νεικεδίοις κα[ὶ λεον]ταρίοις καὶ τὰν θυρώμα[τ]α ἔστησαν Διὶ Κυρίῳ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων εὐσεβείας χάριν (AD 85–6)[1734]

The other inscription was on a lintel inserted in a medieval building about 200 m north-west of the temple.

Διῒ τῷ Κυρίῳ Καμαμο<ς> Μαλχαίου καὶ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ τὴν θύραν σὺν νεικαδίοις καὶ Μεγάλη Νείκη καὶ λεοταρίοις καὶ πάσῃ γλυφῇ καὶ τῆς ἐκ τῶν δύω μερῶν καθαρουργίας ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων κατ› εὐσέβειαν ἔθηκ<α>ν[1735]

Two altars were also dedicated to Zeus. According to Berggren, the first was found in the mosque called Diamna Ameri.

Αμερος Μαθειου καὶ Οναινος ἀδελφός ἐποίησα(ν) τὸν βωμὸν θεοῦ Διὸς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἔτ(ους) δεκάτου Ἁδριανοῦ Καίσαρος (AD 126–7)[1736]

The second altar was found in a house in the western part of a village, but it was specifically dedicated to Zeus Airesios, Zeus named after the village Aire.

Διὶ Αἰρησίῳ Φλάιος Οὐάλης Φαβ(ία) Φλαίου τὸν Βωμὸν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων εὐσεβῶν ἀνέθηκεν[1737]

A Latin inscription is dedicated to the Twelve Gods. The text on face B of this inscription has not yet been published, as it still needs to be deciphered. The place of its recovery is not specified.

Dodeca Diss ob die(m) felicissinim(u)m quinquem[n]aliorum natalis d(omini) n(osri) Li[c]ini eterni Aug(usti, Val(erius) Sperianus P(rae)P(ositus)? simul[---][1738]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 315–22 ill.287–92 pl.11 abb.288, 291; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 286–97; Freyberger 1989: 101 pl.23b, 38a–b. 39b–d; 1991, 21; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 81–2, 97–8, 100, 190–3, pl.65 no.182–4, pl.78; Sartre-Fautriat 2004: 68–75, 239–41; Segal 2008: 105–7; 2013: 171–7.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2413 j, h, i, no.2413 i; *RAO* V, 27; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 310; *PPUAES* III no.652, no.653 A, B, C1–C2, D1–D2, no.654, no.655, no.655 1–4; Sourdel 1957: 22 no.2, 26 no.4, 51 no.4, no.6, 26 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 74; 2006, 1–4 no.1; 2015, 302–3, 307; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 532–9, 542–50 no.548–52, no.655–7, no.556a, no.558–6, no.561a.

Saneh

According to Sartre-Fauriat, a lintel, recovered in the village and dedicated to Athena, may belong to a monumental building.

Ιασος Ασαδου ἐπόησεν κυρίᾳ[1739]

Bibliography for inscription
Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 45.

Sawara

Sartre informed us that the early explorer Buckingham in the mid 19th century advised Bankes to visit Sawara because of a complex temple attached to a large tower.

[1733] *PPUAES* III no.655 2; Sourdel 1957: 26 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 545–6 no.558.
[1734] *RAO* V, 27; Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904: 310; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 546–7 no.559.
[1735] *Wadd*. no.2413 j; *PPUAES* III no.655 3; Sourdel 1957: 26 no.4; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 547–8 no.560.
[1736] Sourdel 1957: 22 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 74; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 548–9 no.561.
[1737] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 544 no.557.
[1738] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 549–50 no.561a; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 307.
[1739] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 45.

No further information is provided. Bankes and more recent scholars, such as Sartre and Fauriat-Sartre, have only reported the following inscription, reinserted in the northern wall of the new mosque of the village on the eastern slope of a tell. It mentions that *pistoi* commissioned a *Tychaion*.

Εἰς ἀγαθὸν, ἀνεώθη καὶ ἐκτίσθη ἡ Μεγάλη Τύχη τῆς κώμης, ἐπὶ Μαξίμου Φ[ο]υσκια(ν)οῦ καὶ Μορεκου Αφρου κα[ὶ Κ]ασσιανοῦ Ῥούφο[υ] καὶ (Ζ)αβδου Ζεουαρου, πιστῶν[1740]

Bibliography for architecture
Sartre 2011: 293.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 14; 2007: 4–5 no.2; 2015, 301 footnote 39; Sartre 2011: 293–4 no.9882.

Sawarat al-Kebireh

An inscription inserted into an interior wall of a church was commissioned by a priest of Athena. According to Sartre-Fauriat, there must have been a sanctuary that could have been replaced by the church, as Athena was honoured by her priest according to the inscription.

ΦΟΥΜΝ[---]ΟΝ[---]ΑC υἱὸς Α[---]νομου[---] ἱερεὺς Ἀθῆνας εὐσεβῶν ἐποίησεν[1741]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 48.

Shaqrā

The following inscription, found in the sheikh's house, mentions that the councillor of *Philippopolis* commissioned more than one *Tychaion* in AD 244–7.

Ὑπὲρ σω[τηρίας καὶ ν]είκης τ[οῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν] αὐτοκράτορος ἐφιλοτείμησεν [---] νος Σομαιου Βουλευτὴς Αὐγου[σθ--] Φιλιππολείτης [---πλη]σίον τῶν Τυχαίων [---] ΤΟΙ ΙΖΟΜΕΙΥΙΑΤ - ΝΩ [---] αγ[---] ΠΛΑ στρατη[γούντων] ἐν τῇ πόλει (AD 244–7)[1742]

Furthermore, thanks to other inscriptions we know that soldiers made written dedications at Shaqrā. A soldier who had the title of *candidatus* of the *Legio III Gallica* made an invocation to the god Tyche, according to the following inscription, found 50 m north-east of an ancient church in the village.

Ἀγαθῇ Τύχ[η] Φλα(ούιος) Γερμανὸς σ<τ>ρατιώτης κανδιδᾶτος λεγεῶν(ος) τρίτης Γαλλικῆς[1743]

A veteran commissioned a statue of the Victory for the *Legio III Cyrenaica* in honour of the emperor Severus Antoninus (Caracalla), according to the following inscription on an altar that Dunand claimed came from Shaqrā.

Text on one face:
Μ(άρκος) Αὐρ(ήλιος) Τιβέρριος Σαβεῖνος οὐετρανὸς ἔστησεν τὴν νείκην ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων Τερτίᾳ Κυριναίκᾳ.

Text on another face:
Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν αὐτοκράτορς Σεουήρου Ἀντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ (AD 211–7)[1744]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2506; *Suw*. 1934, 80 no.164; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 217–21 no.152–4.

Shā'rah

There are two or three cult centres in this village and its surroundings. One is a Mithraeum (a specific place of worship and of ritual practices in honour of Mithras), located in the south-west of the village, and next to it there is possibly a separate cult area. Remains of a sanctuary are found in the outskirts of the village in the south-west.

The Mithraeum comprises the following multiple areas and structures: to the north-west, a cave with a spring; to the east, an arbitrarily named eastern building, due to its location; and an economic complex, named after its economic purpose. They are all circumscribed by the same wall precinct. As the interior of the cave has been destroyed by looters, niches carved into the natural rock remain the only visible features. They could have been used to place cult statues. The entrance to the cave has the same orientation as the eastern building; this may imply that they were used at the same time. The eastern building appears to be the monumentalised religious focus of this complex on the basis of its layout and divine representations. When entering the eastern building, there was in all likelihood a colonnaded *pronaos*, in front of a banquet room, which has benches and niches on both sides and opens onto the adyton. The adyton consists of a small squared apse on a podium framed by a triumphal decorated arch. Two damaged reliefs of a young male figure wearing a pointed hat, representing the deity Mithras, are preserved at either side of the arch placed at the entrance of the adyton. The archivolt is decorated with zodiac figures, which are associated with Mithras. The eastern building is connected to the economic complex through a secondary passageway on its east side. The economic complex is called thus because it had most likely an economic function, considering the

[1740] Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 4–5 no.2; 2015, 301 footnote 39; Sartre 2011, 293–4 no.9882.
[1741] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 48.
[1742] *Wadd.* no.2506; Sourdel 1957: 51 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 217–8 no.152.
[1743] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 218–9 no.153.
[1744] *Suw*. 1934, 80 no.164; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 219–21 no.154.

structure and its area that exceeds the usual capacity of the houses. It has a courtyard surrounded by a wide area for cowshed/stables (25 mangers), in the north, and a vast barn (25 m long by 8 m) with two large doors and covered by a row of five arches, most likely used for a kind of warehouse, in the east. According to the published information on this site, this economic complex with stables does not appear to go through modifications. The sanctuary can be dated, roughly, to the 2nd century AD, taking into account the recovery of a hardly worn sestertius of Trajan in a test pit dug in front of the *pronaos*, and, more specifically, to the second half of the 2nd century AD, considering the scene of the Mithras and zodiac used in that period.

Additionally, to the south of the Mithraeum an area on a lower level is surrounded by a wall that could be another cult centre with a second temenos, which, however, needs to be investigated and identified further. Weber only mentioned it by referring to the place where various fragments of sculptures were found that resemble those from the sanctuary at Saḥr. They are: two fragments of chariot wheels, torso of a charioteer, a Nike, a human figure with garments, a young figure with a short chiton, three small fragments of a horseman, and a statue fragment of a horse.

With regards to the cult centre outside the village, it is near a pool. Remains of a precinct wall and architectural blocks survive, including a base of a pilaster similar to the type used in the sanctuary at Sūr al-Lejā and Sī', which can date the cult centre to the 1st century AD.

Lintels bearing the following inscriptions were reused and incorporated within the mosque; they mostly belong to a sanctuary, considering that some of them mention a temenos and individuals, members of the community and magistrates, and others are dedicatory inscriptions. These inscriptions could belong either to the Mithraeum, although there is no reference to the cult of Mithras in these inscriptions, or the sanctuary situated outside the village, or the cult area circumscribed in the second temenos, just south of the Mithraeum.

The following two inscriptions mention the temenos; the first is incorporated into the mihrab of the mosque in the village, the second inserted into the inner wall of the mosque.

Οἱ ἀπὸ πρώτου τεμένους οἰκονομίας Ζεκούνδου καὶ Αὐρελ›ιου Φίρμου[1745]

[Οἱ ἀπὸ---] [---]μαλου τεμέ[ν]ους οἰκονόμ[οι] Αὐρ(ήλιοι) Νασσος Αλ[ασ]αθου, Οσαι‹δ›ε[λ]ος Φαχελου [Μ]οκειμος Θαιμ[ο]υ ἀνέθηκα[ν] (3rd–early 4th century AD)[1746]

[1745] *PPUAES* III no.803 1; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 106 no.55.
[1746] *Wadd*. no.2413 m; *PPUAES* III no.803 2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 107–8 no.56.

The following inscription, incorporated in the mosque, commemorates the consecration by the strategoi of something, possibly part of a building.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας αὐτοκρατόρων Μ(άρκου) Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνείνου καὶ Λ(ουκίου) Αὐρηλίου Οὐήρου Πρόκλος Γερμανοῦ καὶ Σαιος Ζοβαιδου καὶ Αδειος Αβαβου στρατηγοὶ ἀνέθηκεν (AD 161–9)[1747]

The following inscription, found outside the mosque, was a dedication by a priest.

Ἰούλ(ιος) Οὐειλιαν[ὸς Θεο]δώρου εἱερεὺς καὶ Βασσος θεῖος αὐτοῦ, ἐξ ἰδίω[ν] [ἀνέθ]ηκαν ΟΥ ΕΥ Π - Ι[1748]

The following inscription commissioned by the community was incorporated within the mosque.

Τὸ κοιν[ὸν---] εὐτυχο[---] τῆς μεγά[λης---][1749]

Bibliography for architecture
Kalos 2001; Dentzer-Feydy 2010: 226, 229.

Bibliography for inscriptions
PPUAES III no.693, no.803 1, no.803 2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 103–19.

Bibliography for statues
Kalos 2001; *Hauran* IV II: 114–9.

Sheikh Sa'ad

A group of sculptures that were displayed in the National Museum of Damascus and the National Gallery of Prague resemble the statuary complex at Sahr. They were found along the walls of a Roman building at Sheikh Sa'ad, built on an Iron Age structure. The Roman building has been identified as a sanctuary, but no further information is provided. These statues are dated to the 2nd–3rd century AD. The statues from the National Museum of Damascus were: a beardless statue representing Dionysus and a fragment of a panther on most likely Dionysus' feet; a fragment of a naked male figure riding a horse and a naked boy that looks like he is about to mount the back of a horse; a horse head; a complete Nike, a small statue of a male torso bearing a necklace with a crescent and a torch; and a relief depicting a wild animal. The fragments of horses with a boy and a naked man can be read as a representation of a horse race during the festivals in honour of Dionysus. From the collection at Prague there were four headless Nikes, small statues of a torch-bearer and of a male torso. The last one was holding a palm

[1747] *Wadd*. no.2520; *PPUAES* III no.803; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 105–6 no.54.
[1748] *Wadd* no.2522; *PPUAES* III no.803 6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 108–9 no.58.
[1749] *Wadd*. no.2521; *PPUAES* III no.803 3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 109–10 no.59.

and wearing a cloak thrown over the right shoulder and fastened by a circular brooch and had traces of a thick ring around the preserved parts of the forearm. It has been identified as Ganymede. Inscriptions were also found in this provincial building, claimed to be found along the walls of the sanctuary. Because they are too fragmentary, often bearing only a name of an individual or the verb 'consecrated', they do not offer information about the sanctuary or any information associated with it; therefore, they are not provided in this catalogue.

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 326–34.

Bibliography for sculpture

Weber 2006, 42–8; *Hauran* IV II: 130–7; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 17, 325.

Sī'

The sanctuary complex is mostly situated on the top of a hill, apart from an additional later structure in the valley, named Sī' 8, which will be fully explained below. The top of the hill was most likely used as a place of cult practices from the 2nd–early 1st century BC on the basis of the recovery of pottery and animal bones and the stele recovered in the valley of Sī'. It mentions the cult of Baalshamin, Seeia, Isis and the Angel of the God at Sī' from the end of the 2nd century BC.

[q]ṣyw br [m]tyw šlm Κασιος [Ματ]ιου μνησ[θῇ] [šnt] 204 'yth [b'l]šmyn 'syw [š'y]'h wmlklh[''] (105–104 BC)[1750]

The earliest monumental building phase is at the western end of the promontory; it comprises a precinct wall that encloses a temple dedicated to Baalshamin and a *theatron*. It is dated to the end of the 1st century BC on the basis of the following local Aramaic inscription on a fragmentary architrave of the portico in the forecourt of the temple of Baalshamin. The Princeton University team did not recover it, so they used the copy of the inscription by de Vogüé that modern scholars still refer to.

dkrwn ṭb l-mlykt br ʾwšw br mʿyrw
dy hw bnh ʿl bʿšmyn byrtʾ gwytʾ w byrtʾ brytʾ w tyṭrʾ dʾ w mṭ[ltʾ----]
šnt CCLXXX ʿd šnt CCCXI w ʿd ḥyyn b-šlm (32/2 BC or 2/1 BC)[1751]

It is difficult to have an accurate reconstruction of the temple of Baalshamin due to the present day modern hut built over the foundation of the temple. The Princeton University team argued that the temple was a circumambulatory cella, consisting of a square cella inside a smaller square with four columns placed in a square at the centre of the inner cella. Moreover, according to them, the cella would have led to a second storey on the top of the temple, through the stairwells in the two square towers at either side of the entrance.

After their more recent investigation, the French team concurred with the hypothesis that the temple was probably a square cella within another cella, which was also supported by the Aramaic inscription as it refers to this temple as comprising an inner and an outer *birtas*, meaning cella.

In front of the temple, there was a forecourt that comprises two steps and a portico across the two sides of the inner wall and four steps in front of the temple, which together formed what was named *tyrt'*, which would be *theatron* in Greek, according to the local Aramaic inscription regarding the temple of Baalshamin mentioned above.

In front of the temple Waddington found the following three inscribed statue pedestals of the king Herod and the benefactor Malikat, who was the patron of temple 1 and of the *theatron*; however, no sculptural fragment has survived. It has been suggested that a head preserved in the Louvre was Malikat.

The following inscription comes from the pedestal of a statue of Herod I which was in the Louvre at the time of the Princeton University expedition.

[Βα]σιλεῖ Ἡρώδει κυρίῳ Ὀβαίσατος Σαόδου ἔθηκα τὸν ἀνδριάντα ταῖς ἐμαῖς δαπάναι [ς.][1752]

The bilingual inscription on the statue's base in honour of Malikat follows:

dnh ṣlmʾ dy ʾqymw ʾl ʿbyšt
l-mlykt br mʿyrw br mlykt
l-qbl dy hw bnh byrtʾ ʿlytʾ
kdw br ʿbyšt ʾmnʾ šlm[1753]

Ὁ δῆμος, ὁ τῶν Ὀβαισηνῶν, ἐτείμησεν Μαλείχαθον Μοαιέου ὑπεροικοδομήσαντι, τὸ ἱερόν, ἀρετῆς τε καὶ εὐσεβείας χάριν[1754]

[1750] Milik 2003.
[1751] This is the reading suggested in Starcky 1985: 175. It is also recorded in *CIS* II 163; *PAAES* IV no.1; *PPUAES* IV no.100; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1.
[1752] *Wadd.* no.2364; *PAAES* III no.427b.
[1753] This is the reading suggested in in *CIS II* 164.
[1754] *Wadd.* no.2366; *PAAES* III no.428a.

The other inscribed statue base was dedicated to Malikat by the *Seenoi*.

Σεειηνῶν τὸ κοινὸν [ἀ]νέθηκαν Μαλειχά[θ]ῳ Αὔσου τοῦ Μοαι[έρ]ου, [ὅτι κατεσκεύα]σας τὸ ἰε[ρὸν ? καί τὸ]ν περὶ αυ[ὸ πάντα κόσ]μον[1755]

From the debris of the *theatron* there are various decorative, architectural and statuary fragments. There are the archaic Corinthian capitals consisting of acanthus leaves on the echinus; sometimes these capitals also include human figures represented in geometric style (§ Ch.4.5). A radiate head of a young, clean-shaven male figure on the keystone in high relief with fragments of voussoirs ornamented with scrolls which were found amongst the debris, and they would have decorated the vault of the entrance to the *theatron*. Other fragments recovered from debris of the *theatron* are: an eagle statue, following a Nabataean representation of this bird (§ Ch.3.1); high relief fragments of horses and human characters, represented in geometric style (§ Ch.4.5). One of these human figures is a male character playing possibly a trumpet, which is confirmed by a fragmentary relief, depicting a saddle horse. This fragment has also the following inscription that explicitly mentions the trumpeter.

Τρείτωον Βουκινάτ[ωρ][1756]

Amongst the rubble of statues, there is a fragment bearing a partial inscription (a signature of the sculptor) in the local Aramaic on the saddle-girth under the horse's belly between the legs of the horseman.

----{w} br mʿyrw
ʿb[d][1757]

Amongst the ruins at the entrance of the *theatron*, a fragment of an ornament bears the following incomplete inscription dedicated to Zeus Kyrios.

[---Δ]ιῒ Κυρίῳ (?) [---] νιου σ [---][1758]

A fragment of a local Aramaic inscription mentioning Agrippa was recovered in the rubble from the *theatron*.

[---]hgrps mlkʾ[---][1759]

Amongst decorative motifs of the earliest building phase, the main door frame of temple 1 and its architrave display a realistic sinuous stem with grapes and fruits, large rosettes with double corolla of petals; whereas vine branches with S-shaped stems (i.e. wreath-like motif) are on the frieze of the temple of Baalshamin and the door frame of the *theatron*. The architrave and the door frame of the temple of Baalshamin and the door frame of the *theatron* at Sīʾ are decorated with grape vines having a bird on the stem.

A second phase of the sanctuary took place to east of the temple and the *theatron* of Baalshamin. There was a courtyard with porticos on both sides and a temple to the south-west (temple 2). An inscribed pedestal, dated to AD 29/30, was recovered amongst the ruins in front of temple 2. It has the following local Aramic inscription, on the front of the die, and the following Greek inscription on another side.

b-šnt XXXIII l-mr-nʾ
plps ʿbdw wtrw br
bdr w qṣyw br šwdy
w ḥnʾl br mškʾl w mnʿ b[r]
grmw bwms ṣlm glšw
br bntw
ʾnʿm br ʿṣbw ʾmnʾ šlm (AD 29/30)[1760]

[---] [Ἔρ]γον Ζαι[δ]ηλου ἱερο[δ]ούλου[1761]

This pedestal looks like an altar, as the upper corners of part of its front are decorated with lions' heads connected by a wreath.[1762] However it is used to support a statue, as the inscription also shows; a certain Gallis received the honour of a statue from his countrymen.

The Princeton University team argued that temple 2 has a similar layout to temple 1 (a circumambulatory cella). However, the French team's more recent investigation has provided a different picture of temple 2. It consists of a small rectangular elevated structure (roughly 5 m by 4 m) situated at the back of a larger, monumental façade facing courtyard 2. The door frame of temple 2 displays swastika meander patterns and geometric palmettes. Up to the 1970s, scholars considered that this temple was dedicated to Dushara, a Nabataean god. They believed that a fragmentary statue recovered in front of the temple represents Dushara, as they identified floral decorations of vine branches that decorate the statue and the architecture of the sanctuary to be Nabataean. However, these elements are common decorative patterns in the Hauran and not in the Nabataean kingdom (§ Ch.3.1). Furthermore, it appears clear that the statue represented Seeia, because the block where the Aramaic and Greek bilingual inscription (below) explicitly mentioning the name of the deity Seeia is the right shape and size to support the statue fragment (§ Ch.3.1).

[1755] *Wadd.* no.2367; *PAAES* III no.428b.
[1756] *PPUAES* III no.772.
[1757] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.107.
[1758] *PPUAES* III no.774.
[1759] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.102. It is also recorded in *RES* 1091.
[1760] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.101. It is also recorded in *RES* 2117.
[1761] *PPUAES* III no.768.
[1762] *PPUAES* II, 200 ill.338.

dʾ ṣlmtʾ
dy šʿyʿw[1763]

Σεεια κατὰ γῆν Αὐρακεῖτιν ἑστηκυῖα[1764]

The inscription was found against the north wall of the podium of temple 2 by the Princeton University team. Seeia was the local Tyche who protected and embodied the sacred place of Sī (§ Ch.31, Ch.4.4).

In forecourt 2, the following inscription, dated AD 50–100, was found. Here the text proposed is the one by Waddington which scholars still refer to, as during the Princeton University expedition only two fragments of a lintel or architrave of that inscription were recovered.

Ἐπὶ βασιλέως μεγάλου Ἀγρίππα, Φιλοκαίσαρος, Εὐσεβοῦς καὶ Φιλορωμα[ί]ου, τοῦ ἐκ βασιλέως μεγάλου Ἀγρίππα, Φιλοκαίσαρος, Εὐσεβοῦς καὶ [Φι]λορωμαίου, Ἀφαρεὺς ἀπελεύθερος καὶ Ἀγρίππας υἱὸς ἀνέθηκαν (AD 50–100)[1765]

A fragmentary inscribed altar found in the ruins in the forecourt in front of temple 2 was found and dated to the 2nd–3rd century AD. It is dedicated to Zeus by a councillor and a centurion of the cohort Augusta.

[Διί (?)] Κυρί[ῳ. [---] ο Βουλ(ευτής) καὶ [--]νιο[ς] ἑκατόντα[ρ(χος)] σπίρης Αὐ[γ(ούστης) (2nd–3rd century AD)[1766]

The sanctuary extended farther south-east with a wide courtyard, conventionally labelled forecourt 3, and another temple, conventionally named temple 3. Forecourt 3 leads to an elevated terraced area to the south where temple 3 was situated. The Princeton University team reconstructed this temple with a tetrastyle prostyle layout, which has been commonly accepted by the scholarly community. Temple 3 is dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (roughly AD 70–106) on the basis of the style of Nabataean capitals used in the temple. Another type of capital is associated with this building: the floral Corinthian capital that has some resemblance to capitals from the Nabataean kingdom (§ Ch.3.1).

Between forecourt 2 and forecourt 3, the so-called Nabataean Gate was built. This gate was originally and erroneously named Nabataean by the Princeton University team, because its floral decorations were incorrectly associated with the Nabataean decorative style (§ Ch.3.1). The Princeton University team only recovered the foundation of the two doors (decreasing in size from north to south) next to the bigger gateway in the south. As they incorrectly assumed that these two doors would have also been placed on the north of the gateway, they reconstructed the Nabataean Gate with five openings. The French team has verified the main passageway, whose decorations are still partly preserved amongst the scattered blocks. However, on either side of this passageway there are, instead, symmetrical buildings. The better preserved building, which is the on the south, shows it was built at a higher level (1.20 m) than the courtyard; it has a bay opening on the east but it was not accessible from the east. As several blocks of the architectural frame of the passageway were found in the pavement of courtyard 3 and its foundation layers, the French team has supposed that the façade of this gate was destroyed, possibly during an earthquake at an unknown date.

In the valley on the north side of the hill, the building conventionally called Sī' 8 was built. It has a tripartite arrangement of a highly decorated façade of the cella, consisting of a small adyton with two small rooms at either side. The two small lateral rooms are also visible through decorated framed openings, like windows. They have been considered as decorated niches on either side of the doorway with a decorated door frame, which is similar to other façades of rural cult centres in the Hauran (ʻAtīl, al-Mushennef, Breikeh and Sūr al-Lejā). This highly decorated façade opens onto a courtyard surrounded by a colonnaded portico with Doric columns, and in front of it there are three rows of steps. The French team suggested that there would have been an altar at the centre of the courtyard, like in the small courtyard facing the adyton at Saḥr, but it would have disappeared in the Ommeyad period. Only the inscription that follows was found in the south-east of the courtyard of Sī' 8.

[- - -] Ο Ν Α Ο Κ Ο Ρ Ο Σ Α Ι Λ Ι Ο Υ Δ Ι Ο [- - -] ΖΤΗΝΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΗΝΔΙ[---] ΥΣΑΒΕΙΑΣΕΝΕΚΕΝ[---] ὁ ναοκόρος Αἰλίου Διο[---υἱό]ς τήν οἰκοδομὴν δι[ήγαγεν ε]ὐσαβείας ἕνεκεν (roughly 3rd century AD)[1767]

Sī' 8 is dated to AD 70/71–75/76, or a bit later, in the last quarter of the 1st century AD, on the basis of a coin from the first years of the Nabataean king Rabbel II's reign placed under the threshold of the doorway of Sī' 8.

Because Sī' 8 has similar decorative elements to those of the Nabataean Gate and temple 3, these three structures seem to belong to the same building phase, dated to the second half of the 1st century AD. At Sī' 8, a realistic sinuous stem with grapes, fruits and vine leaves, large S-shaped rosettes with double corollas of petals, vine branches with speared leaves, geometric palmettes and rosettes and swastika meander patterns were used. The

[1763] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.103, but it is also recorded in RES 1093.
[1764] *PPUAES* IV no.103; *PPUAES* III no.767.
[1765] *Wadd.* no.2365; *PAAES* III no.428.
[1766] *PPUAES* III no.769.
[1767] Sartre 2003.

decorative blocks of the Nabataean Gate have a realistic sinuous stem with grapes, fruits and vine leaves, geometric vine branches and palmettes, and swastika meanders. From temple 3, there are architectural fragments having a realistic sinuous stem with grapes and fruits, and vine branches with S-shaped stems (i.e. wreath-like motif).

The Princeton University team, the French team, Freyberger and Steinsapir have widely agreed on the presence of a sacred way from forecourt 3 to Sī' 8, despite the lack of evidence for a monumental structure, such as a colonnade.

The sanctuary shows two later additions. One is the Roman Gate, placed at the entrance of forecourt 3. It is dated to the late 2nd century–early 3rd century AD, according to two inscriptions. One was on the east face of the north jamb of the northernmost of the three arches of the Roman Gate.

Προνοί[ᾳ] Ἰουλίου [Ἡ]ρακίλιτου Δ(ιὶ) ἠκτίσθη[σα]ν αἱ θύ[ραι] καὶ τὸ [π]ερίβολον (AD 138–235)[1768]

The other inscription was on an architrave broken into three fragments recovered in the ruins of the the Roman Gate.

[Ἰούλιους Ἡράκλιτος, φιλοτιμησάμενος Διὶ Μεγίστῳ τὸν] πύλον ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων [ἔκτισεν] (AD 138–235)[1769]

With regards to the second structure from the provincial period, the Princeton University team, first, stated that it replaced the northern part of the Nabataean Gate; then they suggested that it was erected in the north-western corner of the courtyard, meaning this part of the gate was disused. After a recent cleaning of the north-western corner of courtyard 3, the French team recovered a substructure of parallel walls supporting a terrace delimited by walls to the west, north and east. It forms a space of about 15 m by 20 m; it roughly covered the same area of the temple and the *theatron* of Baalshamin. It constitutes the north-western extension of forecourt 3, being at the same level. This structure is not on the same east–west axis as the Nabataean Gate. Various architectural blocks and reliefs indicate that this building was dated to the provincial period. They are: Corinthian capitals of engaged half or quarter columns with a collar sculpted with a swastika meander, a modillion cornice decorated with heads or floral motifs, a corona with a swastika meander, fragments of a door frame that resembled decorative motifs of the central doorway of the Serail at Canatha. These decorative and architectural elements appear in rural cult centres al-Mushannef and Rimet Hazim, or in blocks reused at Canatha. Sculpted blocks include a large frieze framed on the top with a wide-egg motif (mid 2nd century AD) representing a reclining figure with floral decorations; a similar fragment of a frieze topped with similar wide-egg motif and a reclining male figure with an offering of grapes; a narrow door frame depicting animal heads in large acanthus leaves; a lintel fragment with a divine figure seated near a possible lion (possibly Athena/Allat) and a fragment of a ceiling representing a winged figure holding a crown (Nike).

Dentzer-Feydy suggested that the following two frieze fragments in the Damascus museum and at as-Suweidā' could also belong to this series of decorated blocks. One is a fragment of a frieze with wreath-like branches and a winged nude female bust holding a vine branch (Nike). Like the other figures with vine grapes and branches, this representation of Nike, together with the floral decoration, may stand for the lands of Sī' and also could refer to Seeia/Tyche. The other fragment mentioned by Dentzer-Feydy is a relief of a nude male figure, holding the long pinecone-topped thyrsus stuff and accompanied by a maenad and satyr holding a bunch of grapes; it is dated to the mid 2nd century AD, according to the style of wide-egg motif placed at the top of the depiction. It has been suggested that it represents Dionysus, as the type of staff is considered an attribute of this god, the maenad and the satyr are typical figures associated with this deity, and the bunch of grapes is a symbol of Dionysus. However, Dentzer-Feydy recently does not exclude the possibility that this figure stands for the god Poseidon on the basis of his masculine silhouette.

This series of decorated blocks may suggest the monumentality of this provincial structure; the French team has offered two hypotheses as to its function. One is a monumental gate leading to the north-west extension of courtyard 3, from where porticos or structures could be used for banqueting. The other is a façade of a building, possibly a temple. Stensapair supported the hypothesis of a banquet room for ritual meals with the recovery of a relief of a reclined nude character with his elbow resting on a stool, as it could represent a feasting scene. Alternatively, she proposed that this provincial structure could be a temple – focusing on its careful construction, graceful proportions and placement within the sanctuary.

Apart from the statue of Seeia and the inscription associated with it, and the relief of Dionysus from the provincial structure, representations of other deities have been recovered in the sanctuary.

Athena is depicted on one side of a non-dated altar with Baalshamin/Zeus on its other face. Recently an

[1768] *RAO* I no.11; *PAAES* III no.431.
[1769] *PAAES* III no.432.

inscribed statue pedestal mentioning the name Athena was recovered, suggesting a statue of Athena was displayed in the cult centre.

[---]α Μονιμ[---] Ἀθηνᾷ Ρου[---][1770]

A statue of Heracles was also found in this religious complex.

Two inscriptions are also dedicated to Zeus; they are on altars found in the sanctuary, but the place of their recovery is not specified.

[Διῒ Κυ]ρίῳ εὐχήν. Λο[ύ]κι[ς] [---]ώνις βενεφικιάρις λεγεῶνος ι' Φρετησίας (1st century AD)[1771]

Διῒ ἐπηκόῳ Ἰουλιανὸς Ζηνᾶ ἱππεὺς κατ› εὐχὴν ἀνέθηκεν (2nd–3rd century AD)[1772]

An inscription dedicated to Atargatis by a centurion from the Herodian army of Agrippa II, Lucius

Obulius, has been recently published.

θεᾷ κυρίᾳ Ἀταργάτει Λούκιος Ὀβούλυιος ἑκατοντάρχης σπείρης Αὐγούστης ἀν(έ)θ[ηκεν][1773]

Two reliefs of Mithras slaughtering the bull (the tauroctony representation) were found in the sanctuary: one in courtyard 2 in front of temple 2, the other near temple 3. They indicate his cult at some point in the sanctuary (§ Ch.5.3 for a detailed discussion on the matter).

There are also other non-divine statues recovered from the site, but the place of their original recovery is unknown. One is a stiff human figure with parallel feet, wearing a drapery of a long tunic, consisting of long, almost oblique marks below the cord around the hips and a long cloak over one shoulder (§ Ch.4.5). Another is a male statue on an altar wearing a loincloth (§ Ch.3.1). Two statue heads possibly recovered at this site have a *Schillerlocken* hairstyle, which consists of short, spiral-shaped curly hair strands. A male character wearing a loincloth and a fabric belt knotted around his hips is represented with quadrupeds (either horses or bovines) on an altar, recovered in the debris of the sanctuary (§ Ch.3.1).

Bibliography for architecture
PAAES II: 322–424, 334–40; *PPUAES* II: 365–99; Dentzer 1985; 1991; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 265–77, 280–3; 1990a, 652 ff.; 1993, 106–7; 2003; 2010: 225–6, 232, 236; 2015; Steinsapir 2005: 13–24; Tholbecq 2007; Kropp 2010a; 2013a: 293–302; Segal 2013: 206–13.

Bibliography for inscriptions
RAO I N11; *CIS* II 163; *RES* 1091, 1093; *Wadd.* no.2364–7; *PAAES* III no.427b, no.428, no.428a, no.428b, no.431–2; *PAAES* IV no.1; *PPUAES* III no.767–9, no.772, no.774; *PPUAES* IV no.100–3, no.107; Dunand 1926: 328 pl.69; Cantineau 1932: 11 no.1; *Suw.* 1934 no.15, no.27 pl.8–9; 1991 INV 15 [190] (5, 23); INV27 [191] (5, 33); Mascle 1944: no.15, no.27; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64; Starcky 1985: 175; Milik 2003; Sartre 2003; Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 46.

Bibliography for statues
PPAAES II: 416 ill.328; *PPUAES* II: 378 ill.320; Bolelli 1986: 351 no.44–7 pl.11; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 76 fig.14; 2003, 189 fig.13; 2015; Weber 2006: 109–14; *Hauran* IV II: 141–5; Kropp 2010a; Dentzer 2003: 189 fig.13.

Bibliography for coinage
Augé 1986; 2003.

Bibliography for pottery
Barret *et al.* 1985; Barret and Orssaud 1985; Orssaud 1985; 2003; Orssaud *et al.* 2003.

[1770] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 301 footnote 46.
[1771] Dunand 1926: 328 pl.69; *Suw.* 1934 no.15 pl.9; 1991 INV 15 [190] (5, 23).; Mascle 1944: no.15; Sourdel 1957: 28, 64.
[1772] *Suw.* 1934 no.27 pl.8; 1991 INV27 [191] (5, 33); Mascle 1944: no.27.
[1773] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 297 footnote 8.

Table 3: Coins recovered at Sī', according to Augé (1986; 2003).

Type	Quantity	Period	Place of mint	Distribution
Ptolemaic bronze coins	2	3rd century BC	Alexandria and Ptolemais (Phoenician coast)	Widely diffused in Syria
Seleucid bronze coins	1	Antioch IV (175–164 BC)	Antioch	Widely diffused in Syria
	1	Antioch VIII (121–96 BC)	Seleucia Pieria (Northern Syria)	Widely diffused in Syria
Herodian bronze coins	7	Herod the Great (40–34 BC)	Jerusalem	Herodian kingdom
		Herod Philip I (AD 29–30)	Caesarea Panias (modern Banias on the northern coast of Syria)	Herodian kingdom
		Agrippa II (c. AD 50–95)	Probably Caesarea Panias	Herodian kingdom
Nabataean bronze coins	110	Mainly Aretas IV (AD18–19, AD39–40) and some Obobas III (from 18–1 or 10–9 BC to 6–5 or 4–3BC). also Malichus II (AD 39–40 and 70) and Rabbel II (AD 70–101)	Most likely Petra	Nabataean kingdom
Bronze coins from cities in Near East	2	Caligula (AD 34–38 or AD 38–39)	Canatha	Similar to common coins in southern Syria and Palestinian coast minted in Caesarea Maritima (Judea). Coins from Canatha are their local imitation.
	6	Domitian (AD 93–96)	Canatha	Unspecified
	3	Marcus Aurelius (AD 140–161) or Commodus (AD 117–192)	Bosra	Bosra
	2	Faustina I, wife of Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius (c. AD 141–144 or 161)	Bosra	Bosra
	1	Mid 1st century AD (AD 56–57)	Tyr (Phoenician coast)	Largely diffused in Near East. Tyr was the only workshop atelier that could issue coinage after Augustus

Type	Quantity	Period	Place of mint	Distribution
End of Hellenistic period to 2nd century AD Unidentified small coins and fragments with depiction of *hemhem* crown (Egyptian pharaoh style) of Harpocrates, Ptolemaic Alexandrian god because of the bearded head Unidentified reused coins recovered in the Islamic context of Sī' 8	28	Trajan (AD 112–113 and 113–114), and Hadrian or Antoninus (first half of 2nd century AD)	Probably Alexandria	Small coins found in Palestine, Transjordan and especially at Jerash
Unpublished coins with this theme are also found at Jerash and Bosra Antonine period (AD 138–193)	1	Earlier than 2nd century AD	Palestine	Palmyra. In numerous quantity at Caesarea Maritime in Palestine c. AD 54 and also at Pella in AD 82/3–84/5
2 unidentified Similar to the Nabataean coins under King Aretas IV Unidentified small bronze coins with depiction of bearded head on one side and quadrupeds on the other 118 unidentified small bronze coins with depiction of a head or a bust of a ram	Not specified	Probably 2nd century on basis of similar coins	Probably local production - Similar to small coins from Alexandria in Trajan period (AD 103–110) because they share the denticulation on the sides of the coins and the depiction of different African animals with examples found at Sī' - Similar to small coins from Alexandria during the reign of Hadrian (AD 126–27), because they share denticulation on the sides of the coins and the depiction of a dog or wolf with examples found at Sī'. - Similar to small coins dated to Commodus at Canatha, Bosra and Palmyra, because they share the depiction of bovines with examples found at Sī'	Unidentified very small coins that represent a head or a bust on the right

Type	Quantity	Period	Place of mint	Distribution
Unidentified small coins and their fragments decorated with stripes, points, and globules Not specified Probably first half of 1st century AD	Not specified	Second half of 1st century AD	Similar to Parthian small bronze coins with depiction of Parthian kings Volagases I (AD 52–78) and Pacarus II (AD 75–105) because they share decoration with globules and small stripes with examples found at Sī'	Unspecified
Trajan (AD 98–117) Rome, Near East Unidentified small coins and fragments badly worn	Unspecified	Unidentified	Unspecified	Unspecified
2 Roman bronze coins	2	Gallienus (AD 253–268)	Unspecified, probably Antioch	Unspecified
	1	Maximinus II (AD 305–313)	Alexandria	Unspecified
	14	Constantine (AD 313–324)	Alexandria	Unspecified
	5	Constantius II (AD 337–340)	Alexandria	Unspecified
	1	Valentinian (AD 364–375)	Probably Antioch	Unspecified
	4	Roman period	Unidentified	Unspecified
	2	Hellenistic–Roman period (?)	Unidentified	Unspecified
Umayyad coins	2	Umayyad (Islamic) period	Probably Damascus	Unspecified
Modern coins	1	Present day	Jordan	Jordan

Sleim

Substantial remains of a temple are found at the east side of the village. The anta wall of the north-east angle of the temple is preserved to its full height (over 12 m), whereas over 3 m (in height) of the south anta is preserved. Foundation walls of the rest of the temple are preserved, but they are almost hidden by the fallen building stones. The Princeton University team identified the temple as a tetrastyle prostyle. The temple is set on a high podium with rich base mouldings. Although the interior plan is much more difficult to identify from the debris, it seems that there was a niche-structure at the centre back wall of the temple with a narrow chamber beside it on the north and presumably a similar chamber on the south.

Dentzer-Feydy suggested that the temple was built over two phases. The earliest phase is from the 1st century AD on the basis of the mouldings of the podium that appear at other cult centres in the Hauran in that period. The second phase is from the end of the 1st century AD, when the region was first annexed to the Roman province of Syria. The sima of the cornice is decorated with realistic and sinuous palmettes. The cornice and architrave of the entablature of the temple have a fascia alternating between swastika meanders and realistic and sinuous rosettes. A fragment of frieze has wreath-like motifs. A variation of normal Corinthian capitals, consisting of smooth, long and straight acanthus leaves, and normal Corinthian capitals were both recovered in this temple. Many decorative blocks from the doorway are currently reused in houses of the village, including Ionic decorated door frame fragments with grape vine decoration with realistic sinuous stems and with a bird on the stem. A statue of an eagle, following Nabataean representations of this bird (§ Ch.3.1), a statue of a male figure wearing a loincloth and with a fabric belt tied with a knot around his hips, and a fragment of a lion statue are known to come from Sleim. Their original recovery place is, nevertheless, unknown.

An inscription is dedicated to Dushara; its recovery place is not specified.

Θεῷ Δουσάρι Τ. Αἴλιος Σεουηριανὸς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων[1774]

The following inscription is on a column, dedicated to Zeus Megistos, found in the sheikh's medafeh in the western part of the town.

[1774] *SEG* VII 1107.

Θεῷ Μεγίστῳ Φλάουιος Οὐαλερίου ἀνέθηκεν[1775]

A soldier made a written dedication to Zeus Ammon. The inscription was also found in the courtyard that adjoins the east side of the inn of a sheikh in the western part of town.

Ἀλέξανδρε, Ἀλεξάνδρου, στρατιῶτα κὲ ἀποδημε[τά], <ἄ>ωρε χαῖρε. Εὐθεῖ<α>ν [---] θνητοί πρός σε ἐρχόμενοι ὀδύναι τοῖ<ς> γεννήσασι. Ἄμμων ζήτω[1776]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 356–9 fig.319–20 pl. 26–7; Dentzer-Feydy 1986: 266, 277–9; 1990b: 646, 651–2 fig.7–8 fig.19–20; 1992: 76–77 fig.16; 1993: 110; 96 footnote 219, 97 footnote 237; Freyberger 1991; 1998: 55–62; Sartre-Fauriat 2004: 65, 115; Segal 2008: 99–101; 2013: 191–4.

Bibliography for inscriptions
SEG VII 1107; *PPUAES* III no.765 3, no.765 4.

Bibliography for statues
Suw. 1934 no.73; Bolelli 1986: 322, 332, 342, 348 no.6 pl.2; Dentzer-Feydy 1992: 76 fig.16; *Hauran* IV II: 161–2.

Ṣmeid

The Princeton University team described a well-preserved ancient paved area laid in rectangular worked lava-stone blocks. They suggested that on one side of the ancient paved area there was a shrine, highly altered over time; however they did not describe its ruins. As they pointed out, the presence of a religious building is shown by inscriptions that mention the presence of a temenos dedicated to Helios, the construction of a pavement (most likely the one preserved) and altars. They do not offer any dates.

The inscription referring to the temenos was inserted into the house of a Druze priest in the south-east of village.

Αυλαμος Σα<γ>ιου Ζο[.] ς Μορεμος Αιλεσου Οσμος Γαρμεθιου ΠΑΩ[.]ΟΥ ΕΔΟΥΜΟΛΟCΟCCΙΟCΓΡΑεμος Μογεμος <υ>ἱοῦ [Σ]ε<ο>ς Αυμος Λ-ʿΥΛΟC Σ[ε]α[δ]ος Μολεμος [Αυ]μου Μοσεμος Μοο<ρ>ος Ανερου Τοραχου Μοαιερου Σαγιου Σεειρος τὸ τέμενος Ἡλίο[υ] διὰ Αιλαμου Σολεος[1777]

The inscription that refers to the construction of the pavement, together with altars, was found in a courtyard roughly 200 m north from the paved area.

Αὐρ(ήλιοι) Κασιανό[ς] καὶ Ουιθρος κὲ Ιδανης υἱῶν Οδενου τὴν στρῶσιν καὶ τοὺς βωμοὺς καὶ τὴν θυσίαν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἐπόησ[αν][1778]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES III: 415–6.

Bibliography for inscriptions
PPUAES III no.786, no.786 6; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 545–52.

Smeij/Deir Smeij

According to the Princeton University team, a small temple was placed to the west of the church; its rear wall was preserved up to the cornice, which is decorated with grape vine and leaves. In the east wall, the jambs of a doorway were ornamented with a grape vine and a meander with spaces in the fret where motifs, such as double axe and scroll, were inserted. According to Dentzer-Feydy, the decoration of this temple resembles the one used at Sī'. On the basis of this comparison, the decoration dates the temple to the beginning of the 1st century AD. Additionally, the paving of the south of the church could be the paved area of the courtyard of the cult centre; there is no clear standing evidence of a precinct wall but its existence at that time cannot be excluded. A Nabataean inscription, on a lintel of a house in the eastern part of the village, refers to a building, most likely a cult centre, dedicated to Baalshamin.

dnh ʿbd ʾl {q}ṣyw l-ʾlh-hm bʿ{l}[šmn][1779]

Another fragmentary Nabataean inscription was placed in the building complex of the temple and the church.

----w {br} rʿw yly{s}
----w šlm bnw-h
----h{r/d}----ʾnʿm[1780]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 108–9 ill.86; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 100; Sartre 2011: 105.

Bibliography for inscriptions
RES no.2031; *PPUAES* IV no.11–2.

Sūr al-Lejā

The Princeton University team stated that the cult centre consists of a circumambulatory cella opening onto a wide courtyard with steps and rooms on its

[1775] *PPUAES* III no.765 3.
[1776] *PPUAES* III no.765 4.
[1777] *PPUAES* III no.786; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 545–8 no.477.
[1778] *PPUAES* III no.786 6; Sourdel 1957: 109 no.2; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 548–9 no.478.
[1779] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.11.
[1780] The reading is very uncertain. It is the one suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.12, which is clearer. It is also recorded in *RES* 2031.

sides, enclosed by a precinct wall. The Princeton University team recorded this type of layout in other rural sanctuaries in the Hauran (Sī' and Saḥr) but it has been discarded in these instances. In an archaeological investigation in 2004, a French–Syrian mission recorded the wall of a rectangular *edicula* at the centre of the temenos. The sanctuary has a large underground pool. No further information of the layout of the sanctuary has been provided due to the several visible alterations of this structure undertaken in the Byzantine period. Additionally, Dentzer-Feydy pointed out the presence of niches on the façade of the temple. Amongst the few decorative elements mentioned by scholars, Dentzer-Feydy pointed out a realistic sinuous stem with grapes and fruit and vine leaves on isolated blocks, and decoration of geometric palmettes consisting of a central stem with three symmetric leaves on each side (the extremities are curved outwards or inwards) on the doorway of the temple and Corinthian capitals and Attic bases. It is unclear what type of Corinthian capitals are present at this site. Pottery and architectural decorations seem to date the sanctuary to the pre-provincial period.

A statue fragment of a female torso associated with Allat/Athena has been recovered in a house of the village. Due to the fragmentary nature of the statue, the aegis, her symbol in statues from the Hauran, is missing. The sanctuary could have been dedicated to Allat/Athena but there is no inscription that confirms this hypothesis. One inscription dated to AD 161–2 mentions that the community of the village Saura commissioned a monument in honour of the god named after an individual – Maleichathos.

Ἔτους ιέ Μ(άρκου) Αὐρηλίου Ἀντονίνου Ζεβα(αστοῦ), Σαυρῶν τὸν κοινὸν οἰκοδόμασαν μετὰ τῶνθρησκε<υ>όντων <θ>εῷ Μα<λ>ειχαθου, ἐφεστώτων Γ(αίου) Ἰουλ(ίου) Τερεντιανοῦ Αυσου κα[ὶ] Μαλειχαθου Μαίορος καὶ Σεμπρωνίου Ἀδριανοῦ Μαξίμου καὶ Ασλαμου Αβειβου (AD 161–2)[1781]

An altar has been recovered in the southern part of the modern town; from the inscription we only know that it was dedicated by an individual.

Μαβογ[αι]ος Ανη[ου] ἐποίησ[εν] ὑπὲρ σωτ[ηρ]ίας Μαλει[χ]αθου υἱο[ῦ] εὐσεβεία[ς χάριν][1782]

A Greek inscription was commissioned by a veteran. According to the Princeton University team, it comes from three fragments found in different parts of the town; two fragments were built into the north wall of a courtyard in the northern part of the town and the other was built in the north wall of a stable in the western part of the town.

[---] Μάλχος οὐετ[ρανὸς καὶ --- συστρατιώτ]ης αὐτοῦ λεγε[ῶνος ---] εὐσεβείας χάριν[1783]

A Latin inscription, inserted in a modern wall at the eastern outskirts of the village, was commissioned by a soldier from the *Legio III Cyrenaica* and dedicated to Zeus Ammon.

Ioui Hammoni M(arcus) Aur(elius) Theodor(us) a quaest(i) onario leg(ionis) III Cur(enaicae)[1784]

Bibliography for architecture
PPUAES II: 428–31 ill.371; Dentzer-Feydy 2003: 81–3, 97 footnote 237, 100, 107 pl.78.8, pl.88.1; Segal 2013: 180 –1.

Bibliography for inscriptions
CIL III 13.604; *PPUAES* III no.797, no.797 4, no.797 9; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 156–9 no.95–7.

Bibliography for statues
Hauran IV II: 121–2.

Tell Ahmar (near Mesad)

This is an unusual cult centre as it is in a cave in the red volcanic tuffa near Mesad. Its entrance is made of worked stone blocks; only some blocks at the base are preserved. The cave has a central large room flanked by ten secondary rooms, five on each side. At the back of the central room, there is another room that is vaulted at the back. In this cave was found an altar dedicated to the saint god Askaras, commissioned by Soaidos, son of Segnas, and his sons.

Θεῷ ἁγίῳ Ασκαρᾳ Σοαιδος Σεγνα καὶ υἱοὶ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέθηκαν[1785]

Another block found in the cave commemorates the offering of an eagle, and it could be dedicated to the same god.[1786] The inscription is not provided in Sartre-Fauriat's 2015 article. Its text is in the forthcoming book in the series *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (*IGLS*), devoted to the inscriptions recovered in the Djebel al'Arab (*IGLS* XVI no.383e).

Bibliography for inscriptions
Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.

[1781] Sourdel 1957, 96 no.5; Sartre 1993: 121 no.19; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 157–8 no.96.
[1782] *PPUAES* II no.797 9; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 158–9 no.97.
[1783] *PPUAES* III no.797 4.
[1784] *CIL* III 13.604; *PPUAES* III no.797; Sourdel 1957: 91 no.3; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 156–7 no.95.
[1785] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 306.
[1786] The inscription is not provided in Sartre-Fauriat's article (2015: 306). Its text is in the forthcoming book, part of the series *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (*IGLS*), dedicated to the inscriptions recovered in the Djebel al'Arab (*IGLS* XVI no.383e).

Tibneh

The following inscription, reused as a lintel above a door of a house in the village, mentions the presence of a *Tychaion*.

[---] Σεπτεμισ[έου κ]ὲ Ουιτίρου καὶ [Ἀ]ντω[ν]εί[ν]ου [---] Βόνηος [---ἀ]νέθηκ[εν μεγάλῃ] Τύχῃ (ἐ)κ τῶν [ἰ] δί[ων][1787]

After a more careful reading of the inscription in 2016, Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre suggested that the inscription could simply refer to the representation of Tyche. Their revised version reads:

[---] [αὐτοκρατόρ]ων Σεπτεμίο[υ Σ]εουήρου καὶ [Ἀ] ντω[ν]εί[ν]ου [---] ΒΟΝΗΟC Λ[---]Ε Ρ[---ἀ]νέθηκε[ν] τύχιν ἐκ τῶν [ἰ]δί[ων][1788]

Bibliography for inscriptions
Dunand 1950: 159 no.355; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 8; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 563–4 no.578.

Tsil

An inscription on a plain block used for a substantial structure marks the consecration of a building dedicated to an unnamed god.

Τῶν Βηρύλου ἔκτισ[εν---] Φλ(άουιος) Βήρυλλος εὐχαριστῶν τῷ [θεῷ ἐκ τῶν] εἰδίων εξεθεκτον [---][1789]

Bibliography for inscription
Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 12.

Umm is-surab

The Princeton University team recorded an inscription mentioning a cella in AD 76 on two fragments of the same lintel, lying on the ground of the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus.

dnh ʾrbʿnʾ dy ʿbd mḥlmw w ʿdyw w ḥwrw ʿl ʿ{l}[t]---- [b-šnt] trtyn l-rb[ʾl mlkʾ mlk nbṭw dy ʾḥyy w šyzb ʿm-h] (AD 76)[1790]

Bibliography for inscription
PPUAES IV no.2.

Zebīreh

An inscription mentions that the Arisenoi, the Iachphirenoi (both members of the indigenous communities) and an individual commissioned more than one *Tychaion* in AD 213–4.

Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ αἰωνίου διαμονῆς τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοκράτορος Μ(άρκου) <Αὐ>ρ(ηλίου) Ζευήρου Ἀντωνίνου Καίσαρος Βρ<ι>ταν<ν>ικοῦ τά Τυχέα οἰκοδόμησαν Αρισηνοί καὶ Ιαχφιρηνοί οἱ ἀπὸ ἐποικίου Ἁβιβηνῶν καὶ Βασσος, ὑπατίας Σευήρου το δ› καὶ , <β>αλβίνου β› (AD 213–4)[1791]

Waddington suggested that the Arisenoi and the Iachphirenoi could be members of tribes of shepherds or farmers of Leja, who called themselves Habibians, from Habiba, the ancient name of the village of Khabab. On the basis of the late 19th-century record the inscription came from this site but Ewing mentioned that he saw it in a house in Khabab in 1895.

Sartre-Fauriat, in 2004 and, then, in 2014, together with Sartre, maintained that the inscription mentions the construction of more than one *Tychaion* in Zebīreh. However, in 2016 both scholars revised the inscription while discussing the inscription at Obṭʿa. In that instance they suggested that the inscription would most likely refer to a dedication of small altars, or *ediculae*, to Tyche, and this would be the same for the case at Zebīreh (see Obṭʿa for further discussion on the reasons for Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre's recent argument).

Bibliography for inscriptions
Wadd. no.2512; Sartre-Fauriat 2007: 8, 11; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 143–7 no.90; 2016: 348–9.

[1787] Dunand 1950: 159 no.355.
[1788] Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016: 564–5 no.578.
[1789] Sartre-Fauriat 2015: 298 footnote 12.
[1790] This is the reading suggested in *PPUAES* IV no.2.
[1791] *Wadd*. no.2512; Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2014: 144–6 no.90.