

Gabrielle Kremer – Eduard Pollhammer – Julia Kopf – Franziska Beutler (Hrsg.)

## **ZEIT(EN) DES UMBRUCHS**

Akten des 17. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum provinzialrömischen  
Kunstschaffen  
Wien – Carnuntum, 16.–21. Mai 2022



Veröffentlichungen aus den Landessammlungen Niederösterreich  
Nr. 7

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CRAIG A. HARVEY

## A MARBLE STATUE FRAGMENT OF VICTORIA/NIKE FROM HUMAYMA, JORDAN (NABATAEAN *HAWARA*, ROMAN *HAUARRA*)

### Abstract

This contribution presents a small fragment of carved white marble found at the site of Humayma (Nabataean *Hawara*/Roman *Hauarra*), in what is now southern Jordan. Uncovered during excavation of the site's Abbasid family's *qasr* in 1993, this fragment is the first and thus far only known example of marble figural sculpture from Humayma. It is therefore a significant addition to the limited corpus of marble sculpture in this part of the Roman Empire and contributes greatly to our understanding of the sculptural landscape of the site itself. Although poorly preserved, enough of the carved drapery survives to identify the depicted figure as a gliding Victoria/Nike. This fragment's discovery in a secondary context prevents a firm understanding of its original use and display. Regional comparanda, however, suggest that this statue, which likely dates to the first three centuries AD, may have been part of a public display at a sanctuary or may have stood within the Roman fort on site.

### INTRODUCTION

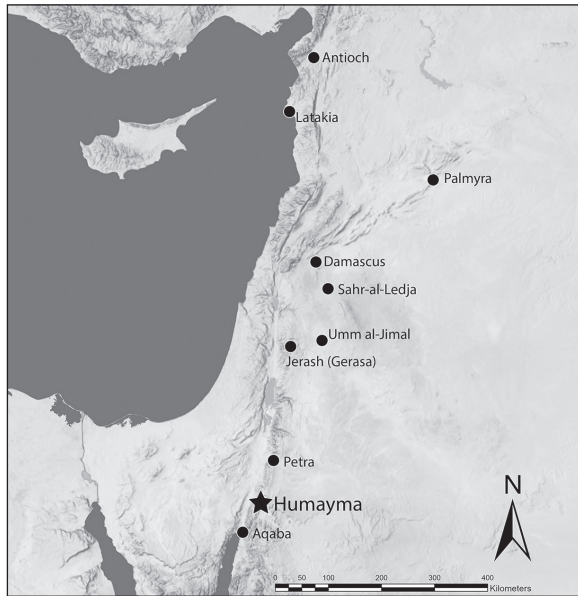
Located on the south-eastern frontier of the Roman Empire, in the deserts of southern Jordan, the archaeological site of Humayma may seem an unlikely place to find marble sculpture, yet during excavation of the site's Islamic *qasr* in 1993, archaeologists unexpectedly uncovered a fragment of white marble, which was quickly recognized as coming from a torso of a statue that likely stood approximately 60 cm in height. Despite the findspot of this fragment, the carved folds of a belted *apoptygma* convincingly date this sculpture to the Roman Imperial period. While excavation of the Byzantine churches at Humayma has produced a considerable quantity of ecclesiastical marble, this fragment is the first and thus far only fragment of a marble statue to be found at this site. Although uncovered during the 1993 excavation season, this marble sculpture has been briefly referenced only once previously in publication<sup>1</sup>. It is described and presented here for the first time.

### THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF HUMAYMA

The site of Humayma (Nabataean *Hawara*, Roman *Hauarra*) is located in the north-west corner of the Hisma desert in present-day southern Jordan, approximately 55 km northeast of Aqaba and 45 km south of *Petra* (fig. 1). Although evidence for habitation in the vicinity of the site dates back to the Paleolithic period, the Nabataean settlement of *Hawara* was established in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC<sup>2</sup>. Situated along the King's Highway, the town served as an important stop on the trade route between the Nabataean capital at *Petra* and the port of *Aila* (modern Aqaba) on the Red Sea. Despite the aridity of the Hisma desert, the settlement flourished thanks to a complex water catchment and storage system that included no less than five reservoirs, 57 cisterns, three

<sup>1</sup> Schick et al. 2013, 449.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the history and development of Humayma, see Oleson 2010, 50–62.



1 Map showing the location of Humayma (C. A. Harvey)

munication routes between *Petra*, *Aila*, and *Hegra* further south ensured its continued relevance as a military site and distribution hub. Although the fort appears to have been briefly abandoned in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, it was re-garrisoned between the early and late 4<sup>th</sup> century. *Hauarra* retained its importance throughout the reorganization of the region into the province of *Palaestina Salutaris (Palaestina Tertia)* and into late Roman and Byzantine periods, as evidenced by its mention in the »Notitia Dignitatum«, »Peutinger Table«, and the »Beer Sheva Edict« as well as the construction of five churches in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>5</sup>.

In the Early Islamic period, the site was renamed Humayma, and in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century it was bought by the Abbasid family, who established their home there with the construction of a *qasr* and adjacent mosque on the eastern edge of the town<sup>6</sup>. This family would shortly thereafter go on to overthrow the Umayyad Caliphate and establish their own caliphate with their seat of power at Baghdad.

## HISTORY OF EXCAVATION AND DISCOVERY OF THE MARBLE FRAGMENT

Since 1986, the Humayma Excavation Project has conducted a series of surveys and excavations in and around the settlement, revealing its history and development. This archaeological investigation has focused primarily on the site's water system, Byzantine churches, Roman fort, extramural settlement, and Islamic *qasr*. The marble fragment presented here was uncovered in the Abbasid family *qasr* on the eastern edge of the settlement (fig. 2)<sup>7</sup>. Excavation of this 8<sup>th</sup>-century residence and its associated mosque was carried out between 1992 and 2002 under the direction of Dr. Rebecca M. Foote.

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993, during the initial surface cleaning of Square 79 in the south-eastern corner of the *qasr* (Field F103), excavators uncovered a fragment of carved marble in the tumble just south of an interior wall (Wall 02)<sup>8</sup>. As this fragment was a surface find, there was little archaeo-

dams or barrier walls, and a two-branched 27 km long aqueduct<sup>3</sup>.

Shortly after the Roman annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in AD 106, the town (then known as *Hauarra*) became home to an auxiliary fort situated on a low rise to the north-east of the Nabataean settlement<sup>4</sup>. This fort, one of the first in the newly organized *Provincia Arabia*, was designed for a garrison of about 500 soldiers and their mounts, likely composed of a mix of auxiliary soldiers and detachments from the *legio III Cyrenaica*. Between the military fort and the settlement, a small cluster of mudbrick and stone structures (including the extramural garrison baths) developed, possibly to service the needs of the troops and their extended community. The strategic location of *Hauarra* at the nexus of trade and com-

<sup>3</sup> Oleson 2010, 63–171.

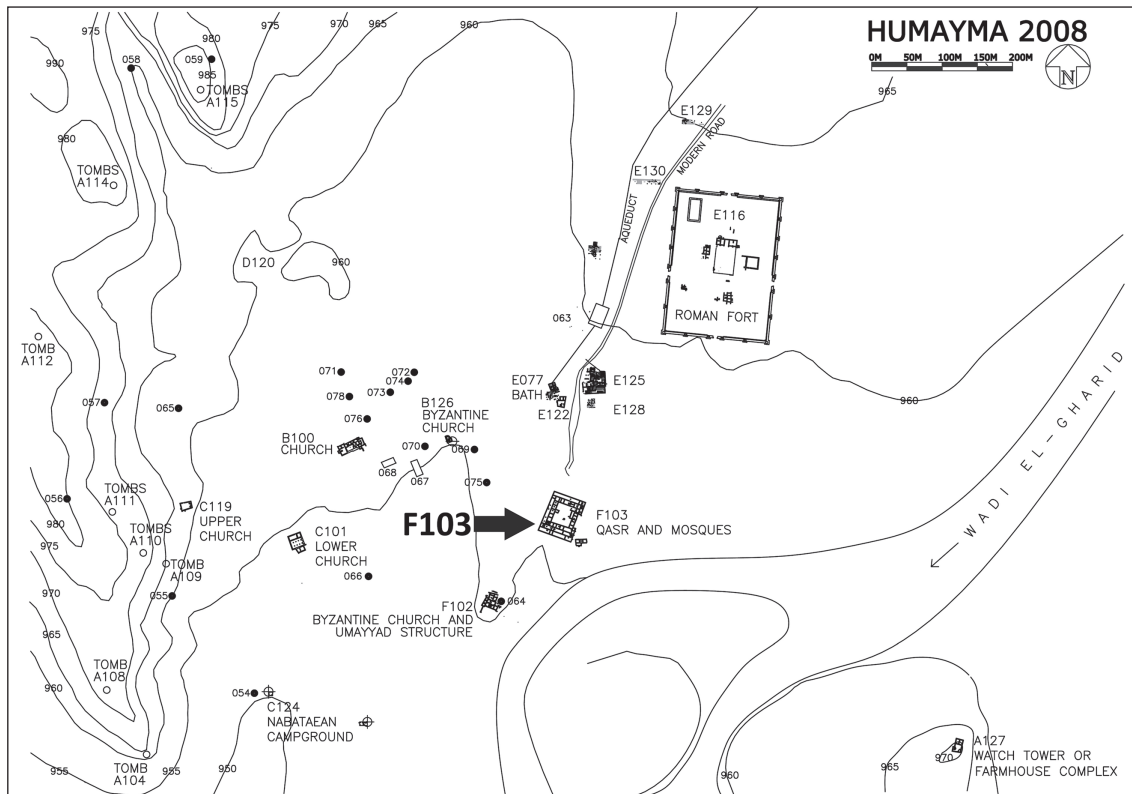
<sup>4</sup> Oleson 2009; 2019; Oleson et al., in press.

<sup>5</sup> For discussion of the site's mention in the »Notitia Dignitatum« (or. 34, 25) and the »Beer Sheva Edict« (fr. 2, line 2), see: Oleson 2010, 54–55.

<sup>6</sup> Foote 2007.

<sup>7</sup> It was registered with the number 1993.0198.01.

<sup>8</sup> As recorded on the daily sheet for F103.79, on June 12, 1993. For the preliminary report of this excavation, which does not mention the marble fragment, see Oleson et al. 1995, 343–349.



2 Site plan of Humayma, showing the location of the *qasr* and the findspot of the marble fragment (Area F103) (courtesy of M. B. Reeves)

logical context to help date and identify it, but inspection of the object's surfaces noted finely carved »Hellenistic-looking drapery«. The excavators identified the fragment as part of a marble statue dating to the Roman Imperial period, recorded its measurements, and photographed the piece before it was sent to storage. No samples were taken for provenance research, nor was the marble fragment available for subsequent study by the author.

This statue fragment is the first and thus far only marble sculpture found at Humayma. The site has, however, produced numerous examples of ecclesiastical marble, including chancel screens, colonettes, and other decorative elements, from its excavated churches and other structures<sup>9</sup>. One such marble chancel screen fragment was found in close proximity to the marble sculpture presented here (1993.0128.01), and a total of 17 fragments of marble were found throughout the Abbasid family's manor house (F103)<sup>10</sup>.

## DESCRIPTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE MARBLE FRAGMENT

The small fragment of carved white marble has maximum preserved dimensions of 14 cm, by 9 cm, by 9 cm and weighs 1360 g. Although poorly preserved, the front and back surfaces display the finely carved folds of a belted *apoptygma* over the abdomen of a female figure (figs. 3, 4). The drapery on the front appears to cling tightly to the centre of the abdomen, while the sickle-shaped lateral folds of the *apoptygma* are blown back to the sides, where much of the girded drapery appears collected above the waist. On the back, the hem of the *apoptygma* is rendered with blousing folds. Below, the *peplos* hangs down over the backside of the figure. The fineness of the carving on both the front and back of the fragment suggests that this piece belongs to a statue in the round (rather than a sarcophagus) and likely one designed to be seen from all directions, as opposed

<sup>9</sup> See Schick et al. 2013, 449–485.

<sup>10</sup> Schick et al. 2013, 480–483.



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



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

to being placed in a niche or against a wall. Although the inaccessibility of the fragment prevented a detailed assessment of its carving technique, it appears to be carved with linear detail in the recesses across its front, while the marble itself appears to be of medium grain without any discernible geological bedding planes or flaws. Based on the proportions and size of this fragment, it is estimated that the entire statue would have once stood approximately 60 cm in height.

The sickle-shaped lateral folds of the *apoptygma* and the clinging of the garment to the abdomen in the fragment are closely paralleled in the drapery of the gliding *Victoriae/Nikai* that formed a conspicuously common iconographic type in the Hauran region of southern *Syria* (fig. 5)<sup>11</sup>. Primarily sculpted in basalt, these statues were locally produced and fall into two clear categories<sup>12</sup>. The first type, the so-called *Amazonen-Typus* (*Amazon type*), portrays the goddess in a *peplos* fastened with a broach, with her right breast exposed in similar fashion to depictions of Amazons. The second type, the so-called *Heraklesknoten-Typus* (*Heracles knot type*), depicts the goddess in a *peplos*, the *apoptygma* of which is tied under the covered breasts with a belt that is held with a symmetrical *Heracles knot*.

In both schemes, the goddess is rendered with the fabric of the *apoptygma* pressed against the abdomen by a headwind that causes the garment to ripple out in curved

folds that frame the abdominal area as an oval. Better preserved examples of these sculpted *Victoriae/Nikai* reveal the winged deity holding a cornucopia or palm fronds in her lowered hand and a crown in her raised and outstretched hand, thereby rendering her in the act of crowning a god or mortal. The use of these *Victoriae/Nikai* to frame sculptural groups resulted in laterally inverted copies, with some examples portrayed with a raised right arm, and other with a raised left arm. In seemingly all cases, one leg is extended to portray a forward movement that is also seen in the flowing folds of the *apoptygma*, and either sandals or closed shoes appear on the feet. While some of these statues rest on simple square or rectangular plinths, many of the figures are depicted atop full or hemispherical globes, an iconographic representation that took inspiration from Roman models<sup>13</sup>.

All the known examples of these *Victoriae/Nikai* are presumed to date to the first three centuries AD and are likely to have come from sanctuaries where they were set up as separate votive offerings or as part of larger cultic or triumphal monuments<sup>14</sup>. One such large-scale display was

<sup>11</sup> Linant de Bellefonds 1997; Dentzer – Weber 2009, 60–64; Töpfer 2015, 9–13; Töpfer 2021, 238–240.

<sup>12</sup> Dentzer – Weber 2009, 60–64.

<sup>13</sup> Töpfer 2015, 11–13.

<sup>14</sup> Töpfer 2015, 10.





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

found in the Sanctuary of Sahr-al-Ledja, in southern Syria, the reconstruction of which comprises two figures of Victoria/Nike on high pillars flanking a sculptural group of riders and a central mounted figure that may have been a local ruler<sup>15</sup>. On the back of this monument, two divine carriages driven by gods are similarly flanked by Victoriae/Nikai on high pillars. A comparable sculptural display featuring carved Victoriae/Nikai also existed at Umm al-Jimal, in present-day northern Jordan, where it was constructed in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and possibly destroyed by Zenobia's forces in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>16</sup>.

While particularly common in the basalt statues of the Hauran, this sculptural formula also appears on a 2<sup>nd</sup>- to 3<sup>rd</sup>-century AD marble statue of a gliding Victoria/Nike from Latakia (ancient *Laodikeia ad Mare*) on the Syrian coast, which is now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (fig. 6). Like the fragment of marble found at Humayma, the oval-shaped lower abdomen of this figure is framed by the sickle-shaped folds of the *apoptygma*, and its size (38 cm tall, with a recon-

<sup>15</sup> Dentzer – Weber 2009, 23–88 fig. 120.

<sup>16</sup> Weber-Karyotakis – al-Khdair 2018.



6 Marble figurine of a gliding Victoria/Nike from Latakia (ancient *Laodikeia ad Mare*), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (KHM Vienna)

structed height of about 1 m) is also analogous to the presumed height of the Humayma example. The drapery on the Latakia Victoria/Nike, however, appears less finely finished than that of the Humayma piece<sup>17</sup>. Significantly, the statue from Latakia demonstrates the extension of this iconographic scheme to white marble sculpture.

The popularity of Victoria/Nike extended across the Roman East and appears in a broad array of artistic media<sup>18</sup>. In *Nabataea* and Roman *Arabia*, in which *Hawara/Hauarra* was located, depictions of these winged deities appear on relief sculpture from *Petra*<sup>19</sup> and *Khirbet et-Tannur*<sup>20</sup>, wall paintings at *Mampsis*<sup>21</sup>, and even on Nabataean coins<sup>22</sup>. This iconography may have been used as royal propaganda to celebrate a military victory, much in the same way as their Roman antecedents<sup>23</sup>. Alternatively, the Syrian practice of depicting *Victoriae/Nikai* with cornucopiae suggests that the popularity of these figures may have partly resulted from their association with ideas of protection and fortune, through syncretism with *Tyche* and *Gad/Gadde*<sup>24</sup>.

Unsurprisingly, depictions of Victoria/Nike commonly appear in military contexts of the Roman East. Recently, a fragmentary limestone sculpture of Victoria/Nike was found at the Roman legionary base at *Legio*<sup>25</sup>. Further away, at *Dura-Europos*, excavators uncovered a painting of a gliding Victoria/Nike on a plastered pillar in the *frigidarium* of Bath F3<sup>26</sup>, while another depiction was found on a wooden panel of a shrine in the

site's Palmyrene Gate<sup>27</sup>. Also from *Dura-Europos* comes the remarkable painted *scutum*, adorned with two *Victoriae/Nikai* flanking a central eagle<sup>28</sup>. Other examples of this deity's representation on Roman military equipment in the eastern Empire include those found on a late Roman shield

<sup>17</sup> Weber 2015, 580–581 suggests the Latakia statue may have a training piece of a local sculptor working with imported marble.

<sup>18</sup> Linant de Bellefonds 1997.

<sup>19</sup> McKenzie 1990, 142 pl. 80; Schmid 2009, 329.

<sup>20</sup> Glueck 1965, 430–450 pl. 179–185. 188–189; McKenzie et al. 2013, 78–87 fig. 139–157.

<sup>21</sup> Negev 1988, 154–156 photos 153. 154.

<sup>22</sup> Hoover 2006, 114–115.

<sup>23</sup> Hoover 2006, 114; Schmid 2009, 329–330.

<sup>24</sup> Töpfer 2015, 13–16.

<sup>25</sup> Fischer et al. 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Brown 1936a, 63–67 pl. 41, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Rostovtzeff – Baur 1931, 181–193 pl. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Brown 1936b, 459–460 pls. 25. 25 A.

cover, purportedly found in Egypt<sup>29</sup>, and the one seen on the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century painted *vexillum* also found in Egypt<sup>30</sup>.

While the fragment of sculpture presented here is the first marble statue found at Humayma, it is not the first Victoria/Nike from the site<sup>31</sup>. Excavation in the Roman fort uncovered the remains of wall paintings which may depict representations of this winged deity<sup>32</sup>. A fragmentary figural scene depicts what appears to be a triumphal scene with a likely Victoria/Nike placing a laurel crown on a figure's head, while a separate fragmentary depiction of a larger figure from the fort's *praetorium* may also represent a Victoria/Nike, similar to those seen at Mamphis<sup>33</sup>.

Although fragmentary and poorly preserved, the piece of marble sculpture found at Humayma likely comes from a statue of a Victoria/Nike. The presence of sickle-shaped folds of drapery that frame the abdomen of the figure closely parallel the renderings of *Victoriae/Nikai* found elsewhere in the Roman East. Furthermore, the placement of *Hawara/Hauarra* within the Nabataean heartland and the site's military character after the Roman annexation of this territory in AD 106 further support this identification, given the popularity of this deity in Nabataean art and the Roman military community.

If not a depiction of a Victoria/Nike, the carved drapery on this fragment bears some resemblance to the tucked and girded *chiton* found on statues of the goddess Artemis, and marble sculptures of this goddess have been found at several sites in Roman *Arabia* and the neighbouring regions. Examples include those uncovered at *Gerasa*<sup>34</sup>, *Abila*<sup>35</sup>, *Pella*<sup>36</sup>, the Sanctuary of Pan at *Caesarea Philippi*<sup>37</sup>, and at *Petra* where a life-sized bronze statue of the goddess was fortuitously found in a wadi after a flash flood<sup>38</sup>. While these regional finds, combined with the wide-spread veneration of Artemis in the Roman East and her syncretization with local goddesses like *Atargatis* within Nabataean society<sup>39</sup>, raise the possibility that the Humayma fragment belongs to a statue of Artemis, the details of the preserved drapery suggest an identification as a gliding Victoria/Nike is much more likely.

Assigning a date to the sculptural fragment is complicated both by its discovery as a surface find and its poor preservation. If its identification as a gliding Victoria/Nike is correct, the cited comparanda suggest a date ranging from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. It may be possible to refine this date range by identifying the location of the statue's original placement, but the site of its display remains uncertain.

## LOCATION OF DISPLAY ON SITE

The marble fragment's discovery among wall tumble in the Abbasid family's *qasr* suggests that it was reused for wall construction, and it is unlikely that the statue was ever displayed in this structure. Although excavation under the *qasr* uncovered the remains of an earlier building dating to the Nabataean or Roman period<sup>40</sup>, there is no evidence that the statue was displayed in this earlier structure either. Instead, it is likely that this fragment was carried to the *qasr* for reuse, as was done with the numerous fragments of ecclesiastical marble found throughout the building<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Goethert 1996, 119–124 figs. 198. 203–204.

<sup>30</sup> Rostovtzeff 1942, pl. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Harvey, forthcoming.

<sup>32</sup> Harvey, in press.

<sup>33</sup> Negev 1988, 154–156 photos 153. 154.

<sup>34</sup> Weber 2002, 485–486; Lichtenberger – Raja 2015, 493 fig. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Mare 1997; Weber 2002, 465.

<sup>36</sup> Weber 2002, 483.

<sup>37</sup> Friedland 2012, 110–113.

<sup>38</sup> Weber 2002, 525.

<sup>39</sup> Kampen 2003; Ovadiah – Mucznik 2012, 520–533.

<sup>40</sup> Oleson et al. 2003, 59–60.

<sup>41</sup> Schick et al. 2013, 480–483.



At present, there is no clear candidate for the location of the statue's original installation, and it is entirely possible that its place of display has not yet been excavated. According to Töpfer, most of the basalt statues of Victoria/Nike found in the Hauran were likely set up in sanctuaries as votive offerings comprising single statues or larger compositions<sup>42</sup>. The only sanctuary thus far excavated at Humayma is the community shrine in Field E125, which is located east of the garrison baths and south-west of the fort<sup>43</sup>. This small sanctuary was not large enough to have held a monumental composition such as those found in the Hauran, but it is possible that a single votive statue of a gliding Victoria/Nike could have been erected along the processional way leading to the shrine.

If not at this small shrine, it is possible that the sculpture was displayed in a larger temple or sanctuary on site. The discovery of numerous architectural cut stone blocks at Humayma (including Nabataean capitals, column drums, bases, and moldings) point towards the existence of a monumental public structure, most probably a temple, that was dismantled sometime in the Roman or Byzantine period<sup>44</sup>. There is not enough evidence to suggest that a cultic or triumphal sculptural display like those found at sanctuaries in the Hauran was ever erected at Humayma. If, however, the Humayma Victoria/Nike was set up at a larger temple or sanctuary at the site, this statue may have been placed atop a stone pillar similar to those found at Umm al-Jimal and elsewhere in the Hauran<sup>45</sup>.

Another possible location for the statue's display at Humayma is an enigmatic stone platform (in Field E121), which is located approximately 100 m west of the military fort and close to the *Via Nova Traiana*<sup>46</sup>. The north and east edges of this platform measure almost exactly ten Roman feet, suggesting that its construction dates to the Roman period, which corresponds to the likely date range of the marble sculpture. Although the use of this platform remains unclear, it may have functioned as a base for a sculptural display set up along the northern approach to the settlement.<sup>47</sup>

If not displayed publicly, the gliding Victoria/Nike statue may have once adorned a private residence. Similarly sized marble statues have been found in domestic spaces in *Petra*, such as those recovered on the summit of Umm al-Biyara<sup>48</sup>. Two marble statues of Aphrodite were also uncovered in an elite residence on Petra's North Ridge, although these were likely deposited in a dump long after the abandonment of the complex<sup>49</sup>. Few domestic spaces have been investigated at Humayma, but of those which have been excavated, the most likely location for the display of the marble Victoria/Nike is the *praetorium* (the commander's residence) of the Roman military fort. This elite domestic space featured a central courtyard with a fountain and interior rooms richly decorated with bright wall paintings and complex mosaics<sup>50</sup>. An imported marble sculpture would have aligned with the decorative scheme of the residence, and the image of a Victoria/Nike would have similarly been appropriate for decorating the *praetorium* of a Roman fort.

Another option for display in the fort at Humayma is in the *principia* (the headquarters building). Excavation of this structure uncovered several examples of statue bases on which statues such as the one presented here may have stood<sup>51</sup>. Statuary was a common feature of the *principia*<sup>52</sup>, and statues and altars to Victoria have been found in the *principia* of forts across the Empire<sup>53</sup>. The fragmentary limestone statue of Victoria/Nike found at *Legio*, for example, is thought

<sup>42</sup> Töpfer 2015, 10.

<sup>43</sup> Reeves 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Oleson 2013, 214; Schick et al. 2013, 497–501.

<sup>45</sup> Weber-Karyotakis – al-Khdair 2018, 217–219 fig. 6–8.

<sup>46</sup> Reeves et al. 2009, 241–246 fig. 21; Babbitt 2009, 52–94.

<sup>47</sup> Babbitt 2009, 72–74; Reeves 2016, 172–173 fig. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Schmid – Bienkowski 2012, 258–259 figs. 13, 15; Schmid et al. 2012, 81–83 figs. 11, 13.

<sup>49</sup> Parker – Perry 2019, 719 fig. 25.

<sup>50</sup> Oleson – Reeves, in press; Harvey, in press; Harvey, forthcoming; Klapecki – Oleson, in press.

<sup>51</sup> de Bruijn – Oleson, forthcoming.

<sup>52</sup> Johnson 1983, 111–114.

<sup>53</sup> Sarnowski 1989, tab. 4–5.



to have come from the *principia* of the site's Roman fort<sup>54</sup>. Display in the *principia* is thus one further possibility for the original placement of this marble Victory/Nike statue at Humayma.

### SOURCE OF THE MARBLE

The absence of marble quarries in the Roman Near East necessitated the importation of white marble statues to the region, either as unfinished blocks of stone or in a semi-finished or fully finished state<sup>55</sup>. Unfortunately, no isotopic analysis was conducted on the statue fragment from Humayma, and thus it is not possible to identify the source of the marble. Despite this lack of analysis, provenance studies conducted on several samples of ecclesiastical marble found at Humayma suggested that these architectural fragments were imported from the quarries at *Prokonnesos*, *Thasos*, and *Naxos*<sup>56</sup>. Similar investigations of white marble veneer uncovered from structures in *Petra* have likewise determined that this material came from quarries in Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy, including *Thasos*, *Naxos*, *Paros*, *Penteli*, *Prokonnesos*, *Dokimeion*, and *Carrara*<sup>57</sup>. White marble statues uncovered in the Decapolis cities of *Gerasa*<sup>58</sup>, *Gadara*<sup>59</sup>, and *Philadelphia*<sup>60</sup> were similarly sourced from quarries in Greece and Asia Minor, and this near complete reliance on Greek and western Anatolian quarries (with the possible use of the Italian quarry at Carrara) is true for white marble sculpture more generally throughout the Roman East<sup>61</sup>. Thus, although the statue fragment found at Humayma was not analyzed, regional comparanda and other imported marble found at the site strongly suggest that it was sourced from quarries in the Aegean or Asia Minor. The difficulty and cost of importing marble sculpture to this inland site no doubt contributed to the paucity of marble sculpture at *Hawara/Hauarra*.

### CONCLUSION

As the only known marble sculpture thus far uncovered at Humayma, the fragment presented here represents a significant contribution to our understanding of sculptural display at the site and is an important addition to the limited corpus of white marble sculpture from *Nabataea* and the Roman Province of *Arabia*. Despite its small size and poor preservation, the marble fragment still preserves enough of its carved drapery to allow recognition of the sickle-shaped curves of a belted *apoptygma* framing the abdomen that characterize gliding *Victoriae/Nikai* found in the Hauran region. The identification of the Humayma sculpture as a similar *Victoria/Nike* is supported by this deity's popularity in Nabataean art and the military character of the site after Roman annexation in AD 106.

The discovery of this marble statue fragment as a surface find prevents a clear understanding of where and how it was displayed on site. It may have once stood alone or formed part of a monumental sculptural group of cultic or triumphal character erected on a Roman-period stone platform on the northern edge of town or at a temple which was disassembled later in the site's history. Alternatively, it may have adorned a building in the Roman fort, such as the *praetorium* or *principia*. Most likely, however, the original place of its display has not yet been uncovered, and thus it is difficult to assess how it was viewed or appeared in ancient *Hawara/Hauarra*.

Despite these uncertainties, the presence of this imported marble sculpture speaks to the prosperity and status of the settlement. *Hawara* was the largest Nabataean settlement in the northern Hisma and was located strategically along the important trade route between *Petra* and *Aila*, on

<sup>54</sup> Fischer et al. 2022, 230.

<sup>55</sup> For general discussions on the importation of marble sculpture to the Roman Near East, see Fischer 1998, 245–265; Friedland 2012, 21–34.

<sup>56</sup> Schick et al. 2013, 485–492.

<sup>57</sup> Abu-Jaber et al. 2012; Al-Bashaireh – Bedal 2017.

<sup>58</sup> Friedland 2003, 415–417; Al-Bashaireh – Weber-Karyotakis 2021.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Bashaireh et al. 2019, 356–360; Al-Bashaireh 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Friedland – Tykot 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Fischer 1998, 245–258; Friedland 2012, 21–24.

the Red Sea. The significance of the site increased after annexation and the establishment of the Roman fort next to the settlement. It should be no surprise, therefore, that a resident or group thereof had the funds to commission, import, and erect this statue. While there is not enough evidence to suggest that this marble statue belongs to the same tradition of erecting chariot sculptural groups seen in the Hauran to the north, the similar rendering of this Victoria/Nike to those in the Hauran reflects the connectivity of the site and the awareness of its inhabitants to the artistic visual language of the wider region. The regional popularity of this statue type as well as the scale and technique of the Humayma sculpture may suggest that this statue was a product of a coastal or regional workshop in the Roman East, rather than an import from Greece or Asia Minor. The poor preservation of the fragment, however, severely limits any attempt at identifying the place of its fabrication. While much remains unknown about this marble statue, it has provided new insight into the sculptural landscape of Humayma, and its existence hints at the possibility that other marble figural sculptures once existed at *Hawara/Hauarra* and have yet to be uncovered.

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