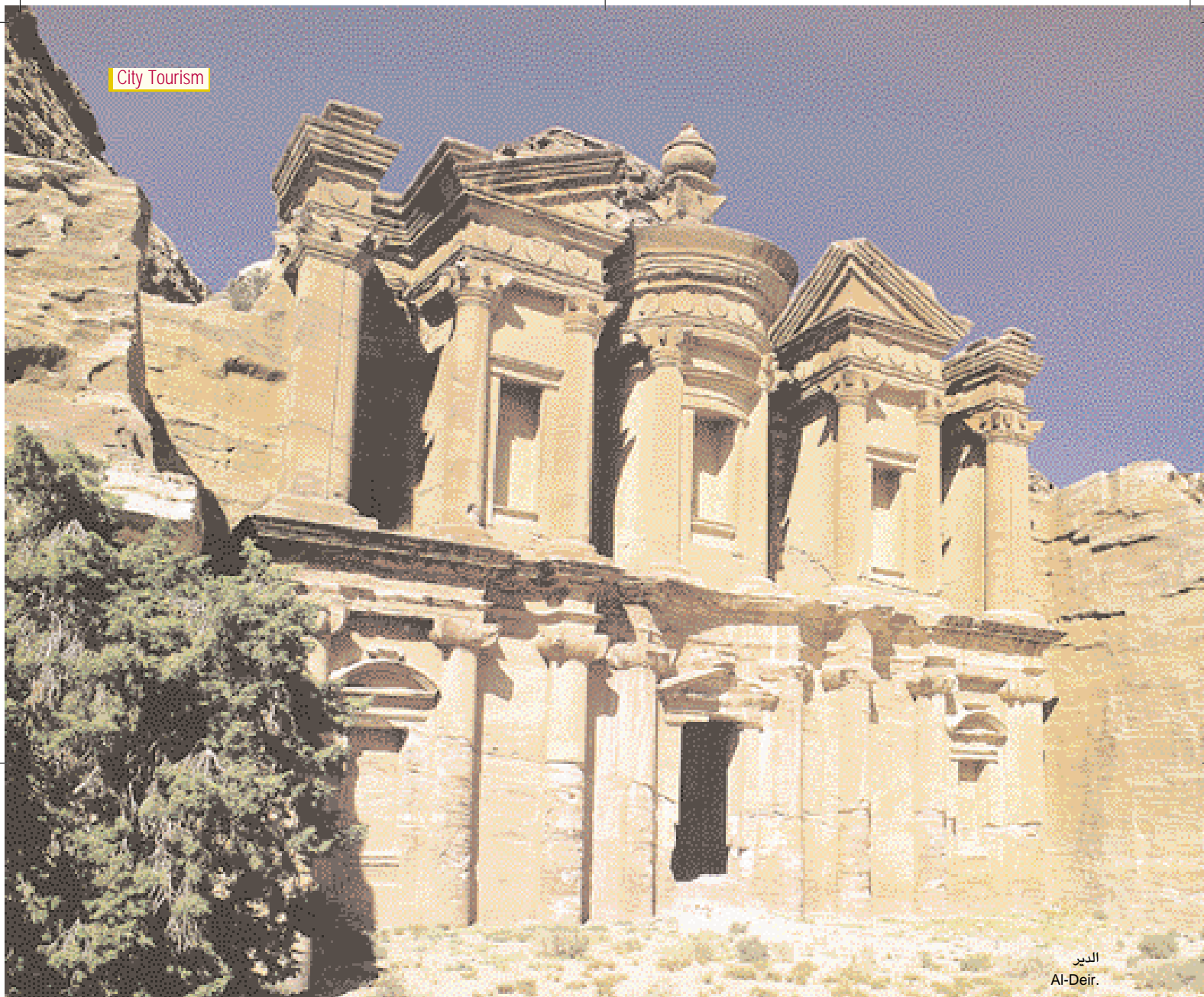


City Tourism

الدير
Al-Deir.

From the Tourist's Map of Jordan:

Petra:

A Living Museum of Civilizations

Abdul Muhsin Ar-Rikaby

Jordan is a distinguished map for visitors, combining various aspects of tourism and beauty. Here you will recognise authentic features of this great land that are both old and original. Indeed, even talking about these is both fascinating and entertaining. It takes you on a journey through the movements of prophets, blessed individuals and martyrs who fell on Jordan's

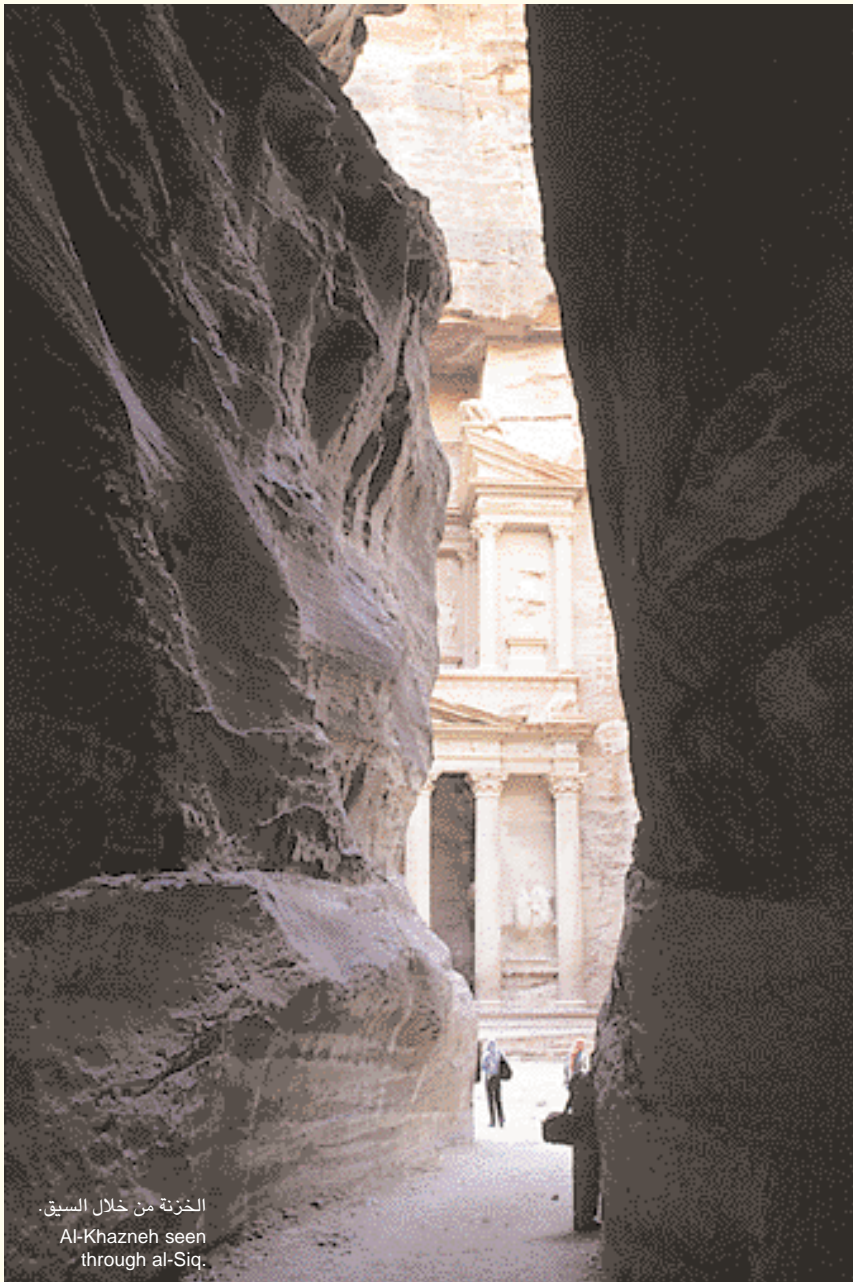
soil, and takes you on a tour through shrines and relics harking far back to an ancient history. And it is a long history, a history that belongs to different nations and civilisations that have inhabited Jordan. And it takes you to the magic, beauty and variety of nature, including waters that are renowned for their therapeutic qualities.





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Archaeology provides the most valuable evidences of the history of nations and civilisations that have lived in Jordan. The country is particularly rich in heritage. The land has seen many civilisations, including Cannanite, Nabataean, Greek, Roman, Islamic and Crusader. The unique location of Petra, on one of the most important routes known in the ancient world, was the main reason for its early ascendancy as a civilisation. But it was also the reason for attracting so many invaders.



الخرنة من خلال السيق.
Al-Khazneh seen
through al-Siq.

The Shrines of Prophets and Saints:

The great prophets have walked on Jordanian soil, among them Moses, Jesus and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them). The land is also home to shrines of many other messengers of God and their relics, including some belonging to the prophets' friends and acquaintances, including those of Muhammad who were martyred during the battle of Moatah, as well as others such as Dharar ibn al-Azuar' near the town of Der Ula, 'Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah in Gore and Sharhabil ibn Hassnah in Mishara.

The Natural and the Therapeutic

Jordan's area totals about 90,000sq.km with a varied natural beauty, including Wadi Rum with its beautiful plateau, Wadi al-Mujib with its waterfalls, Aqaba on the edge of the Red Sea, famous as a retreat and its many date palms, and the Dead Sea, with its quiet atmosphere and therapeutic waters.

Archaeological and Historical Sites

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Petra in Ma'an is among the important historical and archaeological sites in Jordan. The Roman Theatre and Heracles' Temple in Amman, Um Qays in Irbid, The Palace of Umrah the Umayyad, The Palace of Halabat, and al-Azraq castle in Az-Zarqa, Um al-Jimal City in al-Mafraq, the rare Peacock Floor in Madaba (which has the oldest map of the Holy Land), Jerash City, and so many more will wow the visitor.

Present and Future Prospects for Tourism in Jordan

It is no wonder then that Jordan attracts so much tourism. The statistical data show that the country is receiving increased numbers of tourists each year. It reached a million tourists in 2000 and more than that last year. Moreover, Jordan is one of ten countries that depend on tourism for its national income. The sector represents today its second largest income after mining and has experienced accelerated growth over the past few years, amounting to about US\$800m in 2000, for example. Tourism also represents 40% of Jordan's exports. ➔





City Tourism

“Petra was called ‘Sela’ in ancient times and was known to the Arabs as Wadi Musa (Moses). It was Capital of the Nabataeans, although Arab historians do not agree on the exact date of its founding. It was most likely in existence around the 5th Century BC and lasted until 106CE, and was bordered by Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), al-Sham (Syria), the Arabian Peninsula, and Egypt.

Petra: The Red Rose of the Desert:

Petra grabs the breath, sight and thoughts of the visitor and fills them with poetry and admiration. It has been said of Petra that it is the Pink City, or the Red Rose of the Desert, the *Human Miracle* that extracts cities from the heart of mountains or the city which is carved into the stones, the Architectural Gift, The Splendid Oriental City, The Lost City, The Jewel in the Jordanian Crown, and other epithets. It is indeed apt to describe it as a red rose that grows in the desert - it is extracted from the pink rocks of Wadi Musa in the



قمة الدير.

The summit of al-Deir.

Jordanian Desert as a living example of the Nabataeans' skills and excellence in stone-carved architecture. An English poet once wrote a poem saying that Petra was not man-made but borne from stone and magical, eternal and unique in its beauty. Its colour is pink, just like the ashes of the many temples in its environs, but also resembles the colour of dawn.

The British writer, Jane Taylor, describes Petra in her book, *Petra, or the Lost Kingdom of the Nabataean*, as a magic mixture of beauty and magnificence such that the pen, whatever

its power, cannot reflect its majesty. Engineers and architects in Jordan and outside have learnt from the architecture of Petra, with its Nabataean / Hellenic influences. Recent years have witnessed the borrowing of elements from other civilizations, such as doors, columns, crowns and windows. The interior of the Arab Tower in Dubai includes designs from Petra.

Capital of the Nabataeans

Petra was called 'Sela' in ancient times and was known to the Arabs as Wadi Musa (Moses). It was capital of the Arab kingdom of the Nabataeans, although Arab historians do not agree on the exact date of its founding. It was most likely in existence around the 5th Century BC and lasted until 106CE, and was bordered by Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), al-Sham (Syria), the Arabian Peninsula, and Egypt. Because it was situated on an important trade route of its time, the Nabataean Kingdom expanded and flourished. The caravans used to reach it with spices from southern Arabia, silks from Damascus, henna from Gaza and Asqalan, glasses from Sidon, and pearls from the Gulf. Some of these trade routes were close to natural wealth, such as the copper mines of Wadi Arba. The Nabataeans built many trade stations and towns in Madain Salih, Wadi Rum, Petra, Um Ar-Rasas, Um al-Jimal and Busra. They also had control over the two ports of Gaza and Aqaba and paid attention to industries, such as copper, pottery and irrigation. They dug wells, channels, dams and established hundreds of agricultural settlements. This is reflected in the wealth they possessed and the power of their state. One of the major military victories recorded by historians was the Nabataeans' defeat of the Greek leader, Entitus, near Petra in 312 BC. The kingdom was able to expand as far as Damascus in 85 BC.

There have been many distinguished kings in the history of the Nabataean civilisation, the foremost being Harth the Third. Their state reached its apex in terms of its expansion during his era and included at the time Sinai, al-Naqab, northern Arabia, both sides of Wadi Arba, Dorawaz Mountain and I-Biqa'a. Archaeologists have recorded the presence of Nabataean habitation in more than one place,



الصخور الملونة في البترا.

Colorful stones in Petra.

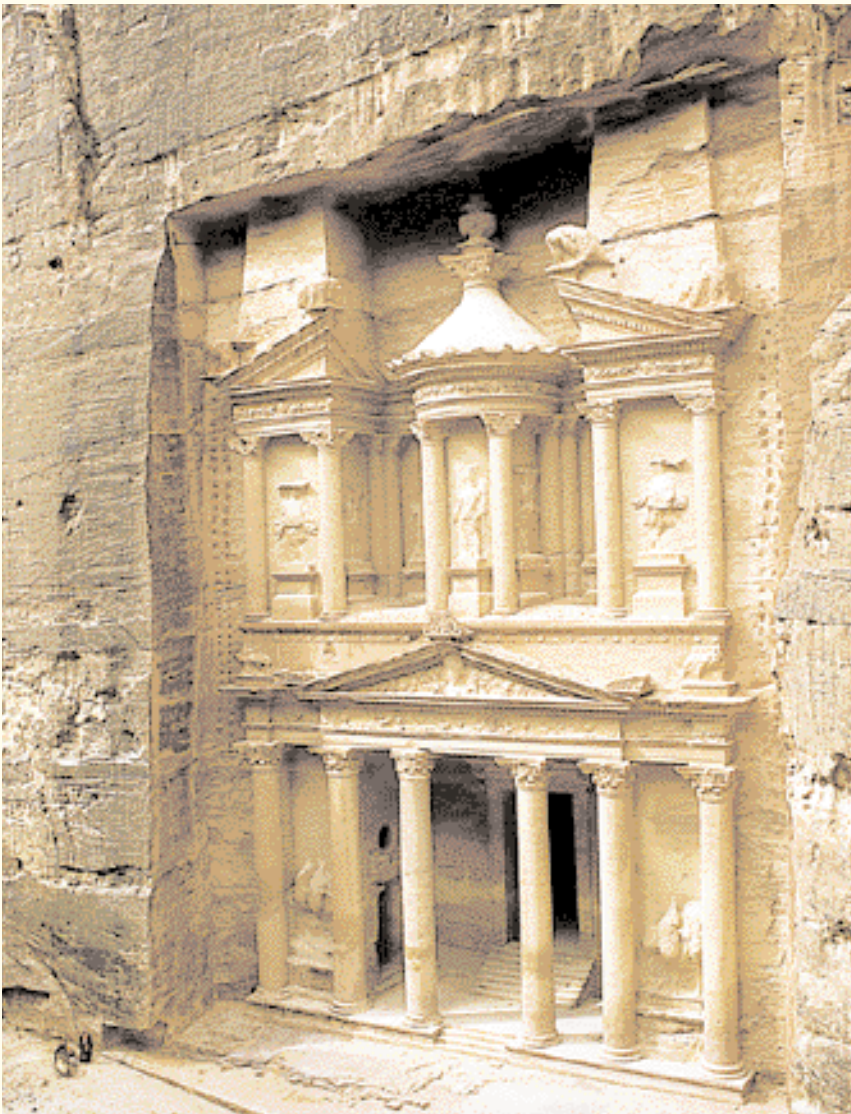
in the south of Italy, on islands in the Mediterranean, in Yemen and in Arabia. The Nabataeans have left many relics in northern Arabia, such as the Nabataean Roman Temple in Roafa, some graves in Beda, and a palace in Athra. There were many Arab kingdoms at the same time as Nabataean rule, such as the Kingdom of Lahian in al-Ula region which survived at the end of the 3rd Century BC, and the Kingdom of Ma'an, which lasted until the beginning of the 1st Century CE.

The first collapse of the Nabataean State was at the hands of Rome, which saw in the increasing power of Petra a threat to its own power. The Emperor, Trajan, succeeded in annexing it in 106BC, but its real end came with the Roman decision to change the trade route to Busra in Syria, and so Palmyra took its place. ➔





City Tourism



and precious jewels. Inspired by classical Hellenic architecture, it is thirty metres wide and forty-three metres high. Some scholars believe that al-Khazneh was a tomb for one of the Nabataean kings during the 1st Century CE and was later on used as a temple. The elaborately carved facade depicts Nabataean gods and goddess, along with mythological figures.

5. High Place of Sacrifice, situated on a summit of a mountain 137m above sea-level. This is accessible only after a long and strenuous trek through mountain paths and staircases. At the summit one may take in the view. Two seven-metre high obelisks lie at the top. They are believed to represent the two most important Nabataean gods, Dushara and Uzza.

6. Street of Facades. These rows of houses

(tombs) with intricate carvings are thought to be of Assyrian origin. This leads into the theatre.

7. The theatre had an original capacity of 7,000 people but was later on expanded by the Romans.

8. Uneishu Tomb.

9. Nymphaeum.

10. Colonnaded Street is the heart of the city of Petra, once a bustling market place lined with shops and houses.

11. Temenos Gate.

12. The Royal Tombs. Of the five hundred tombs in Petra, the Royal Tombs are perhaps the most impressive. The largest among them, the Urn Tomb, easily competes with al-Khazneh and al-Deir (Monastery) in size. Thought to be have been carved around 70CE, the main

chamber (17m x 18.9m in size) was altered in the mid-5th Century and used as a Byzantine church.

13. Winged Lion Temple.

14. Qasr al-Bint.

15. Museum.

16. Lion Triclinium.

17. Al-Deir (Monastery) is the largest of Petra's monuments. It can be reached after a strenuous but well rewarded trek. A flight of eight hundred steps cut into the rock take you up to the 45m x 50m structure. This temple was an important pilgrimage site with worshippers and priests using a processional route to congregate in the open area in front of it. From the 4th Century onwards it was used as a monastery during the Christian Byzantine era.

18. Urn Tomb.

19. Silk Tomb. This smaller tomb, badly damaged by nature's elements, should be noted for its brilliant colours. Melodious reds, yellows and greys trail through the stone and across the façade that is fronted by a double cornice.

20. Corinthian Tomb. Distinguished by a mixed design, the top part of this tomb is an imitation of the al-Khazneh and the bottom storey is clearly a copy of the Bab al-Siq Triclinium, mostly damaged by earthquakes.

21. Palace Tomb. So called because it appears to be an imitation of a Roman palace, thus leading to the belief that it is indeed the most recent construction in the city.

22. Sextius Florentinus Tomb. The only dated tomb in Petra. Carved around 130 CE for the Roman governor of the province of Arabia and dedicated by his son. An inscription over the doorway recounts the governor's life and legend.

23. Crusader Fort.

24. Moghar al-Nassara.

25. Broken Pediment Tomb.

26. Renaissance Tomb.

27. Triclinium.

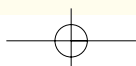
28. Roman Soldier Tomb. Situated in Wadi Farsa. Once connected to the opposite Triclinium by the colonnaded courtyard. The style of architecture and statues in Roman armour suggest that the tomb may have been carved after the Roman annexation of the region.

29. Garden Triclinium.

30. Lion Monument.

31. Snake Monument.

Petra has many more heritage sites beside those of the Nabataean civilisation. Close by, for example, are the sites of al-Bidha and al-Basta which are very ancient and which belong to the Edom kingdom. ■





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Who were the Nabataeans?

The Nabataean were one of the tribes of ancient Arabia that lived in northern Arabia and then expanded to Mesopotamia and Bilad al-Sham. They were firstly shepherds and farmers. Their success in farming earned them the name 'Nabataean', which literally means one who knows how to draw water from the ground, as reported by aj-Jawhari. Some of them reached Jordan during the 6th Century BC and lived in the land of Edom. They overtook Edom and made Petra home. Due to the location of Petra they abandoned the nomadic life for trade and became most famous as traders. The Nabataean were, like many other Arab tribes, animists who worshipped many gods, some of whom were worshiped especially by Arabs, such as Lat, Manat, Uzza and Hubal. The others were inherited from other nations, such as Ishtar, the goddess of fertility of the Phoenicians. The Nabataeans called Ishtar, 'Attes'. Mystery still surrounds the history of the Nabataeans, their culture and language and the role their scripts played in the development of Arabic writing.

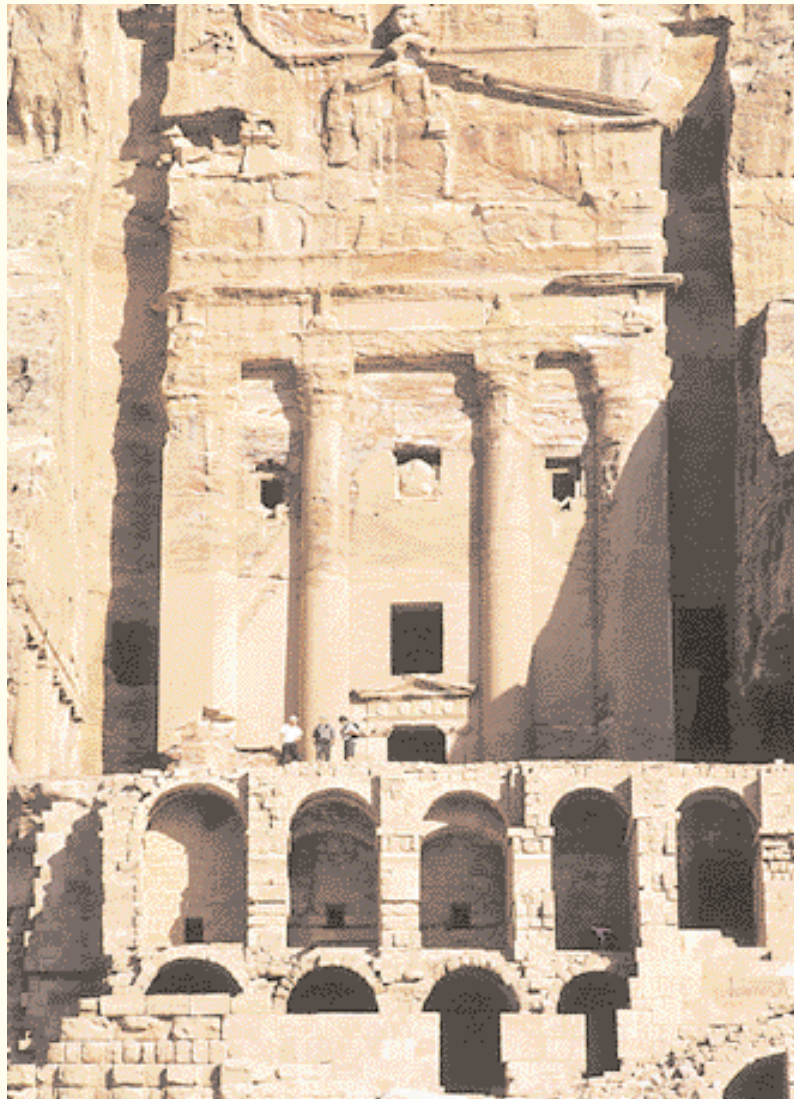
The Originality of the Art of Carving Stones

The art of carving stones is an ancient one with respect to Arabia and old Syria, and was well established before the days of the Nabataeans. The Qur'an reprimanded Thamud (the nation of the prophet Salih) by saying to them: 'And ye carve houses out of mountains with great skills' (as-Shuara, 149). The reference to great skills indicates the level of sophistication of this style of building as well as the carved tombs in the rest of Arabia, which were treated by the Arabs as palaces for their fine characteristics and beauty.

After the fall of Petra, the political significance of it was lost. Petra was not known for a long time except to the Bedouin of the region. The world did not know much about it even during the Crusades, and certainly not until the explorer Burckhardt rediscovered it in 1816 when he convinced a Bedouin guide to take him there to see it.

A guide tour through Petra

Petra is situated some 262km south of the capital Amman. There are about 800 monuments, including a unique system for transporting water. There are geometrical channels that allow the water to flow with the help of gravity. The channels take the water from its sources to all vital quarters of the city. It is believed that Petra's history goes back to the 6th Century B.C. It has been selected as one of the international heritage



The Urn Tomb.

ضريح الجرة.

sites of the world.

If we follow the archaeological sites in Petra from the first site at the entrance and ending with the last you will pass the following (see the map):

1. Djinn blocks, situated several metres passed the ruins of the gateway; they are three massive stone monuments and their original use is debated and surrounded with mystery. Some believe them to be tombs, whilst others think they are dedicated to the Nabataean god, Dushara.
2. Obelisk Tomb and Bab al-Siq Triclinium. The Obelisk Tomb is named after the four obelisks on the upper storey of the monument. The obelisk was a Nabataean funeral symbol. The Bab al-Siq triclinium is a classical Nabataean design characterised

by three rooms. These carved rooms are thought to have been banquet halls to honour the dead.

3. The Siq is considered to be the main entrance to Petra. It is a narrow (1.2km long)gorge hemmed in by 100m cliffs. The entrance used to be marked by a Roman archway of which only the vertical ruins are visible. The Siq provides splendid views of Petra. There are symbols in different languages inscribed over it and rooms that are cut into the stone and sculptured in the sandy rocks.

4. Al-Khazneh (The Treasury) is the most famous site in Petra and appears in a dramatic fashion at the end of the Siq. The urn perched at the top of the monument was believed to hold countless treasure, gold ➤

