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The Hellenistic and Roman periods

Abstract::

Petra was rapidly built in the 1st century BCE in Hellenistic splendor, and developed a population estimated at 20,000. The Nabataeans were allies of the first Hasmoneans in their struggles against the Seleucid monarchs. They then became rivals of the Judaeans dynasty, and a chief element in the disorders which invited Pompey's intervention in Judea. Many Nabataeans were forcefully converted to Judaism by the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus. It was this King who, after putting down a local rebellion, invaded and occupied the Nabataean towns of Moab and Gilead and imposed a tribute of an unspecified amount. Obodas I knew that Alexander would attack, so was able to ambush Alexander's forces near Gaulane destroying the Judean army (90 BCE). The Roman military were not very successful in their campaigns against the Nabataeans. In 62 BC, Marcus Aemilius Scaurus accepted a bribe of 300 talents to lift the siege of Petra, partly because of the difficult terrain and the fact that he had run out of supplies. Hyrcanus who was a friend of Aretas was despatched by Scaurus to the King to buy peace. In so obtaining peace King Aretas retained all his possessions, including Damascus, and became a Roman vassal.

Keywords: Indian Tourism, Service Sector, Economic growth, Social development, Employment

Al Khazneh

Al Khazneh is one of the most elaborate temples in the ancient Jordanian city of Petra. As with most of the other buildings in this ancient town, including the Monastery (Arabic: Ad Deir), this structure was carved out of a sandstone rock face. It has classical Greek-influenced architecture, and is a popular tourist attraction.

History

Al Khazneh was originally built as a mausoleum and crypt at the beginning of the 1st Century AD during the reign of Aretas IV Philopateris. Its Arabic name Treasury derives from one legend that bandits or pirates hid their loot in a stone urn high on the second level. Significant damage from bullets can be seen on the urn. Local lore attributes this to Bedouins, who are said to have shot at the urn in hopes of breaking it open and spilling out the treasure but the decorative urns in fact solid sandstone. Another legend is that it functioned as a treasury of the Egyptian Pharaoh at the time of Moses.

Many of the building's architectural details have eroded away during the two thousand years since it was carved and sculpted from the cliff. The sculptures are thought to be those of various mythological figures associated with the afterlife. On top are figures of four eagles that would carry away the souls. The figures on the upper level are dancing Amazons with double-axes. The entrance is flanked by statues of the twins Castor and Pollux who lived partly on Olympus and partly in the underworld.

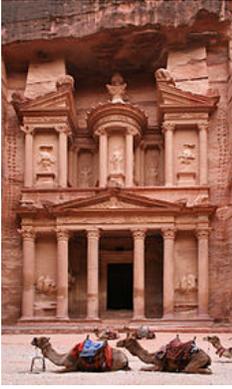


Image Source:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Al_Khazneh_Petra_edit_2.jpg **In popular culture**

The Treasury has appeared in many Hollywood movies, gaining particular fame after being featured in climactic scenes in the popular 1989 film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, in which it is represented as the entrance to the final resting place of the Holy Grail near Hatay.

More recently, the Monastery Arabic Ad Deir, which is also located within Petra and often confused with The Treasury, appears in *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* 2009 as the hidden Tomb of the Primes. In the film, the location of the structure was originally thought to have been in Egypt, but dialogue within the movie suggests it to be in modern-day Jordan.



Image Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Al_Khazneh_02.jpg

Ancient Megastructures: Petra, a television series from National Geographic Channel, is dedicated to the Khazneh, explaining how it was created through human resourcefulness and courageous endeavour.

The Treasury is also depicted in Herge's *The Red Sea Sharks*, one of the *Adventures of Tintin*, *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*, Sky 1 travel series *An Idiot Abroad*, and the history series *The Naked Archeologist*.

In Ubisoft's 2007 videogame *Assassins Creed*, the relief where Altair confronts the Templar Grandmaster Robert de Sable in Solomon's Temple appears remarkably similar to, and is modeled after, the Al Khazneh Treasury.

Mada'in Saleh

Mada'in Saleh also called Al-Hijr, el Hijr, and Hegra is an ancient pre-Islamic archaeological site located in the Al-Ula sector, within the Al Madinah Region of Saudi Arabia. A majority of the vestiges date from the Thamud civilization and Nabatean kingdom 1st century CE. The site constitutes the kingdom's southernmost and largest settlement after Petra, its capital. Remains of the native Lihyan civilization has been found. Traces of the Roman occupation before and after the Nabatean rule, respectively, can also be found in situ. Mada'in Saleh was home of the Thamud civilization. Accounts from the Qur'an place the settlement of the area by the Thamud people after Noah but before Moses, which can be interpreted as the 3rd millennium BC. According to the Islamic text, the Thamudis, who would carve out homes in the mountains, were punished by Allah for their persistent practice of idol worship, the non-believers being struck by a sound wave. Thus, the site has earned a reputation down to contemporary times as a cursed place an image which the national government is attempting to overcome as it seeks to develop Mada'in Saleh, officially protected as an archaeological site since 1972, for its tourism potential.

In 2008 UNESCO proclaimed Mada'in Saleh as a site of patrimony, becoming Saudi Arabia's first

World Heritage Site. It was chosen for its well-preserved remains from late antiquity, especially the 131 rock-cut monumental tombs, with their elaborately ornamented façades, of the Nabatean kingdom.

Name

The long history of the place and the multitude of cultures to have occupied the site have led to the several names that are still in use to refer to the area. The place is currently known as Mada'in Saleh, Arabic for "Cities of Saleh," which was coined by an Andalusian traveler in 1336 AD. The name "Al-Hijr," Arabic for "rocky place," has also been used to allude to its topography. Both names have been mentioned in the Qur'an when referring to the settlements found in the locality. The ancient inhabitants of the area, the Thamudis and Nabateans, referred to the place as Hegra.

Location

The archaeological site of Mada'in Saleh is situated 20 km (12.4 mi) north of the Al-'Ula town, 400 km (248.5 mi) north-west of Medina, and 500 km (310.7 mi) south-east of Petra, Jordan. The site is on a plain, at the foot of a basalt plateau, which forms the south-east portion of the Hijaz mountains. The western and north-western portions of the site contain a water table that can be reached at a depth of 20 m (65.6 ft). The setting is notable for its desert landscape, marked by sandstone outcrops of various sizes and heights.

The Lihyans



Lihyani Head of a statue (4th/3rd century BC) from Al-'Ula

Image Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pergamon-Museum_-_Statuenkopf.jpg

Lihyan is an ancient Arab kingdom. It was located in Mada'in Saleh, and is known for its Old North Arabian inscriptions dating to ca. the 6th to 4th centuries BCE. Dedanite is used for the older phase of the history of this kingdom since their capital name was Dedan which is now called Al-Ula oasis located in northwestern Arabia, some 110 km southwest of Teima.

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