



The Rekem Inscription before it was buried by the bridge abutments.

tinguished: the Nabataean and the Greco-Roman. The Nabataean type starts from the simple pylon-tomb with a door set in a tower crowned by a parapet ornament, in imitation of the front of a dwelling-house. Then, after passing through various stages, the full Nabataean type is reached, retaining all the native features and at the same time exhibiting characteristics which are partly Egyptian and partly Greek. Of this type close parallels exist in the tomb-towers at Mada'in Saleh in north Arabia, which bear long Nabataean inscriptions and supply a date for the corresponding monuments at Petra. Then comes a series of tombfronts which terminate in a semicircular arch, a feature derived from north Syria. Finally come the elaborate façades copied from the front of a Roman temple; however, all traces of native style have vanished. The exact dates of the stages in this development cannot be fixed. Few inscriptions of any length have been found at Petra, perhaps because they have perished with the stucco or cement which was used upon many of the buildings. The simple pylon-tombs which belong to the pre-Hellenic age serve as evidence for the earliest period. It is not known how far back in this stage the Nabataean settlement goes, but it does not go back farther than the 6th century BC. A period follows in which the dominant civilization combines Greek, Egyptian and Syrian elements, clearly pointing to the age of the Ptolemies. Towards the close of the 2nd century BC, when the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms were equally depressed, the Nabataean kingdom came to the front. Under Aretas III Philhellene, (c.85–60 BC), the royal coins begin. The theatre was probably excavated at that time, and Petra must have assumed the aspect of a Hellenistic city. In the reign of Aretas IV Philopatris, (9 BC–40 AD), the tombs of the el-I-ejr type may be dated, and perhaps also the High-place.

2.1 Roman rule

In 106 AD, when Cornelius Palma was governor of Syria, the part of Arabia under the rule of Petra was absorbed into the Roman Empire as part of *Arabia Petraea* and became its capital. The native dynasty came to an end

but the city continued to flourish under Roman rule. It was around this time that the Petra Roman Road was built. A century later, in the time of Alexander Severus, when the city was at the height of its splendor, the issue of coinage comes to an end. There is no more building of sumptuous tombs, owing apparently to some sudden catastrophe, such as an invasion by the neo-Persian power under the Sassanid Empire. Meanwhile, as Palmyra (fl. 130–270) grew in importance and attracted the Arabian trade away from Petra, the latter declined. It appears, however, to have lingered on as a religious centre. Another Roman road was constructed at the site. Epiphanius of Salamis (c.315–403) writes that in his time a feast was held there on December 25 in honor of the virgin Khaabou (Chaabou) and her offspring Dushara (*Haer.* 51).

2.2 Byzantine era – decline

Petra declined rapidly under Roman rule, in large part from the revision of sea-based trade routes. In 363 an earthquake destroyed many buildings, and crippled the vital water management system.^[18] The last inhabitants abandoned the city (further weakened by another major earthquake in 551) when the Arabs conquered the region in 663. The old city of Petra was the capital of the Byzantine province Palaestina III, many churches were excavated in and around Petra from the Byzantine era, in one of them more than 150 papyrus were discovered which contain mainly contracts. The ruins of Petra were an object of curiosity in the Middle Ages and were visited by Sultan Baibars of Egypt towards the end of the 13th century. The first European to describe them was Swiss traveller Johann Ludwig Burckhardt during his travels in 1812.^[19] At that time, the Greek Church of Jerusalem operated a diocese in Al Karak named Battrā (مرطاب in Arabic, and Πέτρας in Greek) and it was the opinion among the clergy of Jerusalem that Kerak was the ancient Petra.^[19]

Because the structures weakened with age, many of the tombs became vulnerable to thieves, and many treasures were stolen. In 1929, a four-person team, consisting of British archaeologists Agnes Conway and George Horsfield, Palestinian physician and folklore expert Dr Tawfiq Canaan and Dr Ditlef Nielsen, a Danish scholar, excavated and surveyed Petra.^[20]

2.3 T. E. Lawrence

In October 1917, as part of a general effort to divert Ottoman military resources away from the British advance before the Third Battle of Gaza, a revolt of Arabs in Petra was led by British Army officer T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) against the Ottoman regime. The Bedouin women living in the vicinity of Petra and under the leadership of Sheik Khallil's wife were gathered

this time, it has worked together with numerous local and international organizations on projects that promote the protection, conservation and preservation of the Petra site.^[29] Moreover, UNESCO and ICOMOS recently collaborated to publish their first book on human and natural threats to these sensitive World Heritage sites. They chose Petra as its first, and the most important example of threatened landscapes. A book released in 2012, *Tourism and Archaeological Heritage Management at Petra: Driver to Development or Destruction?*, was the first in a series of important books to address the very nature of these deteriorating buildings, cities, sites, and regions.^[30] The next books in the series of deteriorating UNESCO World Heritage Sites will include Macchu Picchu, Angkor Wat, and Pompeii.



Tombs in the southern part of the city

4 Religion



The Theatre

See also: Nabataean art

The Nabataeans worshipped Arab gods and goddesses of the pre-Islamic times as well as a few of their deified kings. One, Obodas I, was deified after his death. Dushara was the primary male god accompanied by his female trinity: Al-'Uzzá, Allat and Manāt. Many statues carved in the rock depict these gods and goddesses. New evidence indicates that broader Edomite,

and Nabataean theology had strong links to Earth-Sun relationships, often manifested in the orientation of prominent Petra structures to equinox and solstices sunrises and sunsets.^[31]

A stele is dedicated to Qos-Allah 'Qos is Allah' or 'Qos the god', by Qosmilk (melech – king) is found at Petra (Glueck 516). Qos is identifiable with Kaush (Qaush) the God of the older Edomites. The stele is horned and the seal from the Edomite Tawilan near Petra identified with Kaush displays a star and crescent (Browning 28), both consistent with a moon deity. It is conceivable the latter could have resulted from trade with Harran (Bartlett 194). There is continuing debate about the nature of Qos (qaus – bow) who has been identified both with a hunting bow (hunting god) and a rainbow (weather god) although the crescent above is also a bow.

Nabataean inscriptions in Sinai and other places display various references to the most prominent – Allat, El and Uzza – and goddesses, with the title 'El' used to refer to El and Elah and 'Elah' to refer to Elah. Allat is a goddess found in Sinai in South Arabia (notably in the Garamelos) and Arab inscriptions refer to her as 'Aussallos'. We find both Shalm-lahi 'Allah is peace' and Shalm-allat, 'the peace of the goddess'. We also find Amat-allahi 'she-servant of god' and Halaf-llahi 'the successor of Allah'.^[32]

The Monastery, Petra's largest monument, dates from the 1st century BC. It was dedicated to Obodas I and is believed to be the symposium of Obodas the god. This information is inscribed on the ruins of the Monastery (the name is the translation of the Arabic "Ad Deir").

Christianity found its way to Petra in the 4th century AD, nearly 500 years after the establishment of Petra as a trade center. Athanasius mentions a bishop of Petra (An-hioch. 10) named Asterius. At least one of the tombs (the "tomb with the urn"?) was used as a church. An inscription in red paint records its consecration "in the time of the most holy bishop Jason" (447). After the Islamic conquest of 629–632 Christianity in Petra, as of most of Arabia, gave way to Islam. During the First Crusade Petra was occupied by Baldwin I of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and formed the second fief of the barony of Al Karak (in the lordship of Oultrejordain) with the title *Château de la Vallée de Moyse* or Sela. It remained in the hands of the Franks until 1189. It is still a titular see of the Catholic Church.^[33]

Two Crusader-period castles are known in and around Petra. The first is al-Wu'ayra and is situated just north of Wadi Musa. It can be viewed from the road to "Little Petra". It is the castle of Valle Moise which was seized by a band of Turks with the help of local Muslims and only recovered by the Crusaders after they began to destroy the olive trees of Wadi Musa. The potential loss of livelihood led the locals to negotiate surrender. The second is on the summit of el-Habis in the heart of Petra and can