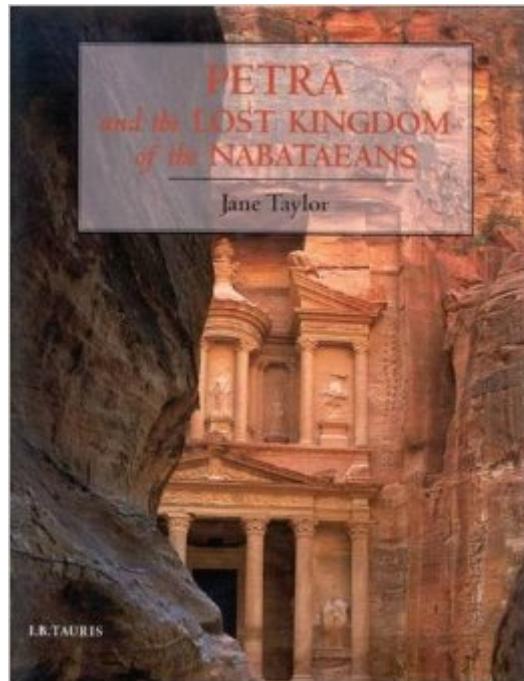


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Petra And The Lost Kingdom Of The Nabataeans



Synopsis

The Nabataean Arabs, one of the most remarkable peoples of the ancient world, are today known only for their hauntingly beautiful rock-carved capital - Petra. Here, in the wild and grand landscapes of southern Jordan they created some of the most prodigious works of man - an entire city hewn out of the mountains. Although their civilization was ignored and almost lost for 1500 years, the Nabataeans were famous in their day and their power extended over great areas of the Biblical Middle East. Though seen most clearly at Petra, vivid traces of Nabataean creativity and control also appear in the Hejaz region of Arabia, among the wild rock formations of Wadi Rum, along trade and pilgrimage routes in the Sinai, and in towns and temples throughout Jordan and into Syria. The Nabataean flame was snuffed out by the masters of realpolitik of the day - the Romans. But the afterglow of their genius continued to illuminate succeeding generations, long after their name and their kingdom disappeared and Petra ceased to be a major city. This richly illustrated book recounts the story of a remarkable but lost civilization, and the capacity of its people to adapt and diversify their skills as necessity demanded. It tells of their nomadic origins, the development of their multifaceted culture, their relations with their more famous neighbours and the demise of their kings and kingdom. It also looks at their continued, if nameless, survival as Christians and farmers in the Byzantine Empire.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: I.B.Tauris; Reprint edition (November 13, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1848850204

ISBN-13: 978-1848850200

Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 0.5 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.9 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #362,282 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 inÂ Books > History > Middle East > Jordan #94 inÂ Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Essays #2048 inÂ Books > History > Ancient Civilizations

Customer Reviews

Taylor's book is a fine introduction to Petra and the Nabataeans. It is full of reliable information, and written so clearly that it will appeal to just about everyone. The photographs, taken by the author

herself, are breathtaking. The book is organized chronologically, with separate chapters on Petra, religion, language, and the Babatha archive. I wish the book had even more coverage of Petra, since that is the one Nabataean site that most people visit. Unfortunately, the paperback edition of this book is so poorly bound that, in my copy at least, many of the pages actually separated from the binding, after turning them only once or twice. Since this is a book that most readers (including me) will want to keep and refer to again, I do recommend that you buy the hardback version, unless you are willing to put up with loose pages in your book. Nevertheless, just about anyone who is interested in the Nabataeans, or visiting Jordan, will want to have this book in their library (loose pages and all).

This book's appearance and title are deceptive. It is in fact beautifully illustrated with the author's photographs, but there the resemblance to a coffee table book ends. It is a serious popular history of the Nabateans, with good notes and bibliography. I suspect that the impetus for the rather "Harry Potter-ish" title came from the publisher, rather than the author, in the attempt to give the book more popular appeal. This is not a guide book for Petra; there is in fact a just one chapter dealing specifically with Petra - in context with its role in the history of the Nabateans. After speculating on the origins of the Nabateans in the early part of the first millennium BCE, the narrative starts at the time of Alexander the Great and expands on the first documented accounts of the Nabateans - from Hieronymus of Cardia and the Zenon Papyri. The Nabateans' transformation, during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, from nomads and spice traders into a kingdom controlling large parts of the Hejaz, much of what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, and the Negev westward to the Mediterranean can only be deduced from the contrast between the earliest accounts and the later archaeological and historical record. The first archaeological evidence comes from an inscription dated to 168 BCE found in Elusa (Halutsa) - just south west of Beersheba - one of the 6 cities that the Nabateans built in the Judean Negev. The role of the Nabateans in the subsequent history of the region - their various alliances and rivalries first with the Hasmonean rulers of Judea and then with Herod the Great and his successors - is well documented in the apocryphal books of 1 and 2 Maccabees, and in the writings of Josephus Flavius. For one more accustomed to seeing the Nabateans as "bit players" in the history of Judea, reading their history was a refreshing shift of perspective. After maintaining its independence for more than 150 years after the rest of the Near East had become part of the Roman empire, the Nabatean kingdom was finally absorbed into the empire during the time of Trajan in 106 CE. It is not clear whether this happened peaceably or not; the author may not have used the most recent scholarly conclusion, that the military camp at Oboda (Avdat) is in fact

Roman - not Nabatean, in citing it as evidence for the former. None the less, subsequent archeological and literary sources show the Nabateans as active citizens of the empire, and their capitals at Petra and Bostra soon became important Roman cities. The kingdom may have been "lost", but the author recounts the history of the Nabateans through the Byzantine period and into early Muslim period; she even speculates on their possible survival into recent times as a tribe of Bedouins. For most people - among them, certainly this reader - this book will tell them everything they ever want to know about the Nabateans.

Having visited similar places in the Middle East I found this book very interesting in that it presented information that was new to me. I recommend it to any one who is interested in history of the middle east

Petra and the Lost Kingdom of the NabataeansÂ Before you go to Petra, or even if you can't go in person, read this book and get acquainted with the remarkable people who built it. It reads a little like a mystery novel. Discover the source of the wealth that made Petra important, and how they used diplomacy to survive and prosper. Enjoy the gorgeous photographs of this rugged desert country. This is a book to read before and after travel. It's heavier than I like to carry with me.

Typeset is very small making it difficult to read. The "storyline" is disjointed making it difficult to follow. There are many ancient place names mentioned but no maps to guide the reader.

Window film solved a problem for me. Yes, the size available was a little too large but that's why God made scissors. Installation would have been easy for a younger person but a bit of a struggle for we "seniors". I strongly recommend the product and the supplier but if you're old like methink about who's available to help you with installation if it requires climbing or bending. Price seemed high until I saw the results and it's worth every penny!

Outstanding overview of this remarkable ancient site.

Lovely book, historically accurate

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