

The ancient Arab kingdoms in Jordan

The ancient Arab kingdoms in Jordan arose due to the migration of Arab tribes from the Arabian Peninsula.

Reasons for the migration of Arab tribes from the Arabian Peninsula:

1. Shift in trade routes away from southern Arabia.
2. Increase in population with limited pasturelands and water sources.
3. Frequent wars between Arab states and tribes.
4. Collapse of the Marib Dam due to neglect of maintenance and restoration.

The migration of Arab tribes towards the north began around 3500 BCE.

The most important kingdoms that emerged in Jordan include:

- Kingdom of Edom.
- Kingdom of Ammon.
- Kingdom of Moab.
- Kingdom of Nabateans.

Kingdom of Edom

Time period of its appearance:

The second millennium BC (2000 BC).

Place of origin:

In the region of Shara, south of Jordan, extending from Aqaba in the south to Wadi Hassa in the north.

Their most famous cities:

Bserah (near Tafilah), which they made their capital.

System of governance:

Each tribe has a sheikh, and the elders choose the strongest among them to be the sheikh of sheikhs.

Their most famous kings:

Qaus Jabbar, the king of Edom.

Their religion:

They worshiped the god Edom, and among their most famous gods were Baal, Ashtar, and Qos (the god of war).

The archaeological evidence that indicated their existence:

- Mines and copper smelting furnaces in Wadi Arabah.
- Discovery of seals.
- Discovery of pottery fragments.
- Discovery of a number of their temples.

The Kingdom of Moab

Period of its appearance:

800 - 2000 BC

Place of origin:

In the Moab region (Al-Karak), their influence extended from Wadi Al-

Hesa in the south to Wadi Al-Mujib in the north.

Famous cities:

Dibon (south of Madaba), which they made their capital.

System of government:

Monarchy.

Famous kings:

King Mesha, son of Kamoshit.

Religion:

They worshiped the god Kamosh.

Evidence of their existence:

A stone known as the Dibon Stone, also known as the Mesha Stele, was found, on which their deeds and wars were recorded.

Importance of the Mesha Stele (historical value):

It is considered the oldest historical inscription found in Jordan.

The Moabites were unable to extend their influence to the northern cities (the reason) because they were under the control of the Arameans.

The Moab region later became a part of the Assyrian state.

After the fall of the Assyrian state, Nebuchadnezzar invaded the region, and Moab came under the control of the Babylonians.

Kingdom of Ammonites

Time period of its appearance:

(1500 BC).

Place of origin:

The lands located northeast of the Moab region, extending from the Zarqa River in the north to the Mujib Valley in the south.

Their famous cities:

Rabbat Ammon (meaning the king's house), which they made their capital.

The evidence indicating their achievements:

A bronze jar was found in Tell Siran within the premises of the University of Jordan, with inscriptions depicting the deeds of one of their kings.

Civilizational aspects:

They used pottery tools. They made daggers and arrowheads from bronze.

They made decorative tools from iron and bronze.

Evidence was found of their ability to start fires and conduct early agricultural experiments.

Their relationship with neighboring civilizations:

They were influenced by neighboring civilizations such as the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Canaanites, and Babylonians.

They attempted to form an alliance with the Moabites and Edomites to fend off Assyrian attacks, but the Assyrians defeated them in the

village of Yabneh (south of Gaza).

The Nabatean Kingdom

Origin of the Nabateans:

Arab tribes migrated from the Arabian Peninsula in the 6th century AD and settled in southern Jordan in Wadi Musa.

Regions included in the Nabatean Kingdom:

Their territory reached north to Damascus, south to Madain Salih, west to the Mediterranean coast, and east to Wadi Sirhan.

The Nabatean Kingdom included the territories of the Moabite, Edomite, and Omani kingdoms, and they extended their influence over Hauran, Sinai, Damascus, Balqa, Madinah, and Hijaz.

Their most famous cities:

Petra, which they made their capital for the following reasons:

- Its fortified location among the mountains.
- Its location on trade routes.
- Availability of water.

System of governance:

Monarchical and hereditary.

Their most famous kings:

Aretas I, who defeated the Jews in the Battle of Qaranta on the shores of Lake Tiberias.

Aretas III, who seized control of Damascus and minted Nabatean coins

to commemorate his entry into the city.

The cultural landmarks of the Nabataean state

Architecture

They carved their city, Petra, in the rock and dug channels to transport water to it.

Landmarks of Petra:

The Treasury, The Monastery, The Tombs, The Theater, The Amphitheater, Qasr al-Bint, The Court, The Altar.

One of the sites that commemorated them is Khirbet al-Tannur (northeast of Tafilah).

Landmarks of Khirbet al-Tannur:

The Victory Statue, The Winged Tayki Statue, The Eagle Statue (the Nabataean emblem), The Sela Castle southwest of Tafilah.

Language and Writing

They used the Aramaic language as a trade language and wrote in the Nabataean script.

The oldest inscription that reached us is the Namara Inscription (328 AD), written in the Nabataean script, and it is believed to be a witness to the tomb of Imru al-Qays, one of the kings of the Kindah.

Religion

They worshipped Al-Lat (representing the sun), Manat, and Dhu al-Shara (the chief of the gods).

Economic Life:

Agriculture and Irrigation Systems:

Petra is located in semi-arid regions.

The Nabateans focused on agriculture to provide springs and wells.

The Nabateans excelled in water engineering and irrigation systems, such as:

- They invented a system to preserve rainwater.
- They developed techniques for water collection, building pottery and stone channels, and constructing dams along riverbeds to benefit from rainwater and protect the city from floods.
- They built reservoirs and wells throughout the kingdom.

They cultivated various grains and fruit trees such as grapes, pomegranates, and figs.

They took care of animal husbandry, especially camels.

Industry:

- They minted coins from bronze and silver.
- They used bronze for sculpting and jewelry making.
- They were skilled in weaving, textiles, pottery, bows,
- Extract iron and copper from the area of Finan (Tafilah).
- The Nabateans built ships in the port of Ayla on the Red Sea.

Trade:

Petra was a center for importing spices, incense, and perfumes.

The Nabateans extracted bitumen from the Dead Sea and traded it with the ancient Egyptians for use in mummification.

Since the 4th century BCE, Petra became a major trading city, aided by several factors:

Its location on caravan routes, as it connected the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabian Gulf, southern Yemen, northern Levant, Egypt, and the port of Gaza.

Their ships brought goods from Yemen through the Red Sea and transported them to Egypt.

The Nabateans built stations along the trade routes and provided them with necessary facilities such as caravanserais.

They ensured security for the trade caravans through military escorts and the establishment of watchtowers, including Umm al-Jamal.

The commercial importance of the Kingdom of Nabatea declined in the second half of the first century AD for the following reasons:

- Trade routes shifted away from it.
- The Romans understood the importance of seasonal winds and controlled the Red Sea ports.
- The Ptolemies in Egypt controlled the northern route to Damascus, depriving the Nabateans of the financial benefits of this route.
- The maritime route shifted from the port of Ayla on the eastern coast of the Red Sea to the western coast under the control of the Ptolemies.

The fall of the Kingdom of Nabatea:

In 106 AD, the Roman Emperor Trajan conquered Petra and put an end to the Nabatean state.