

LEVELED BOOK • N

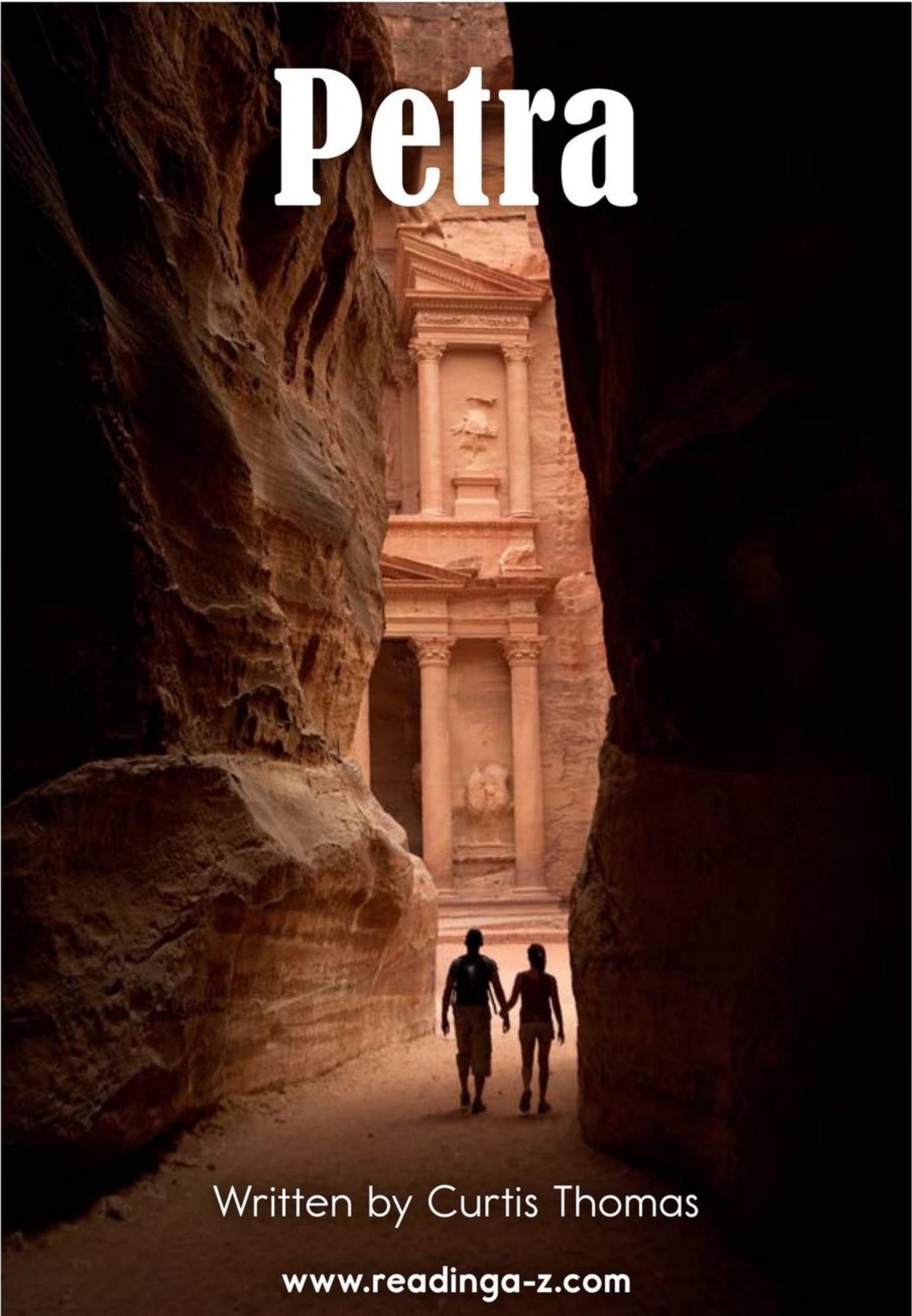
Petra



Written by Curtis Thomas

www.readinga-z.com

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Focus Question

Where is the city of Petra, and why
do people visit it?

Words to Know

carve
discovery
earthquake
empire
Middle East

sandstone
structures
tombs
treasury

Front cover: Sandstone cliffs rise over the Monastery.

Title page: Visitors make their way through the steep canyon walls of the Siq.

Page 3: A mosaic from the floor of the ancient Christian church shows a fish.

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World Landmarks
Level N Leveled Book
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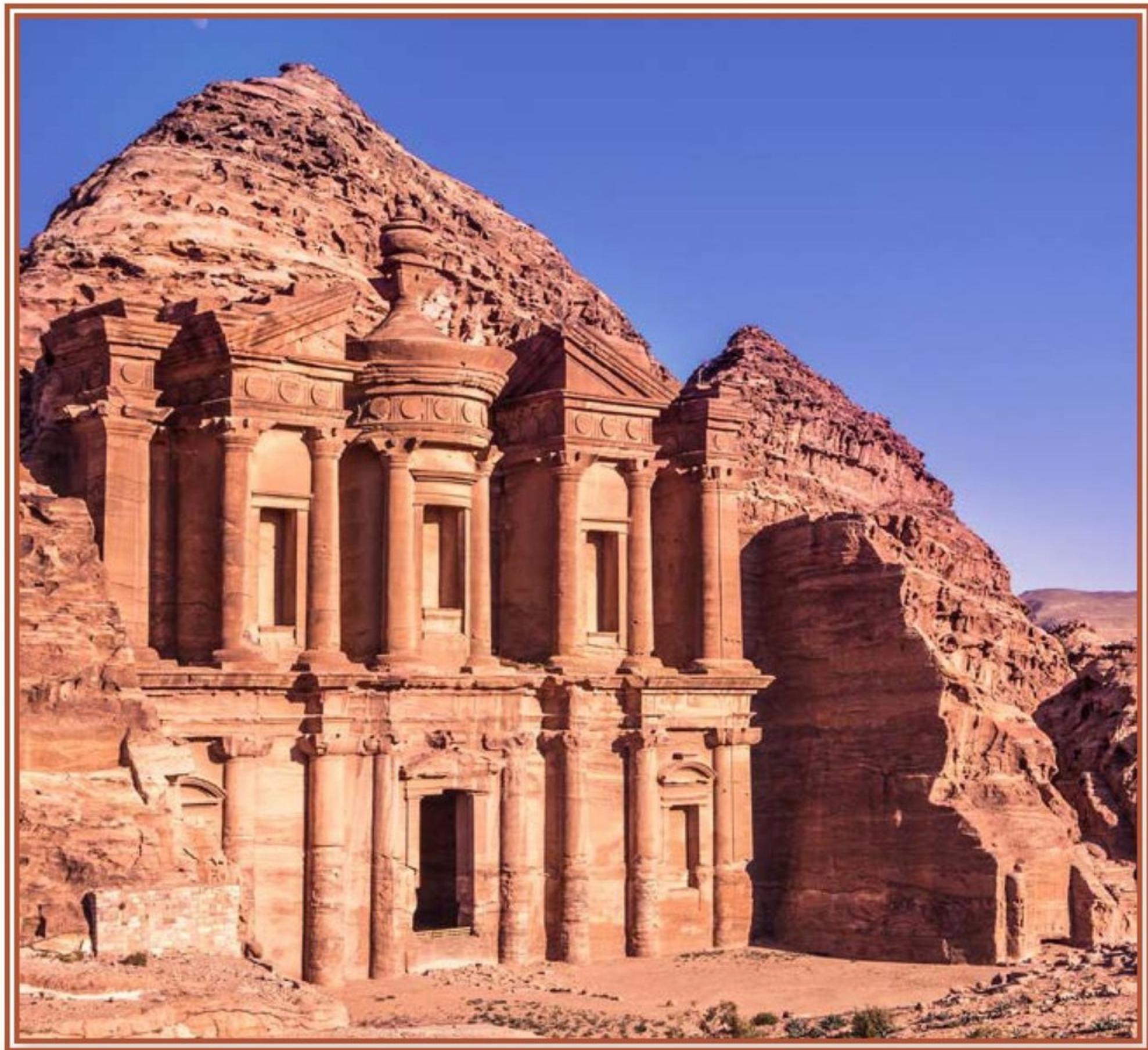
Correlation

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Petra's nickname, the Rose City, comes from the color of the rock.

Rock City

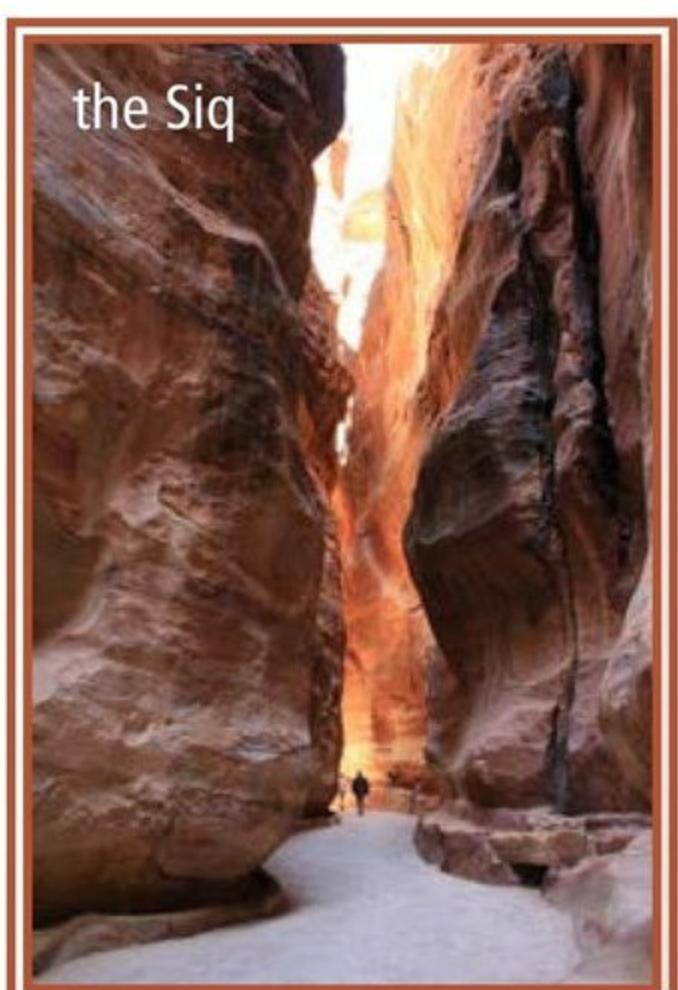
More than two thousand years ago, a group of people built an amazing city in the **Middle East**. They used special tools to **carve** buildings out of mountains. These people were the Nabataeans (nab-uh-TEE-uns). Their beautiful rock city was Petra.

Petra



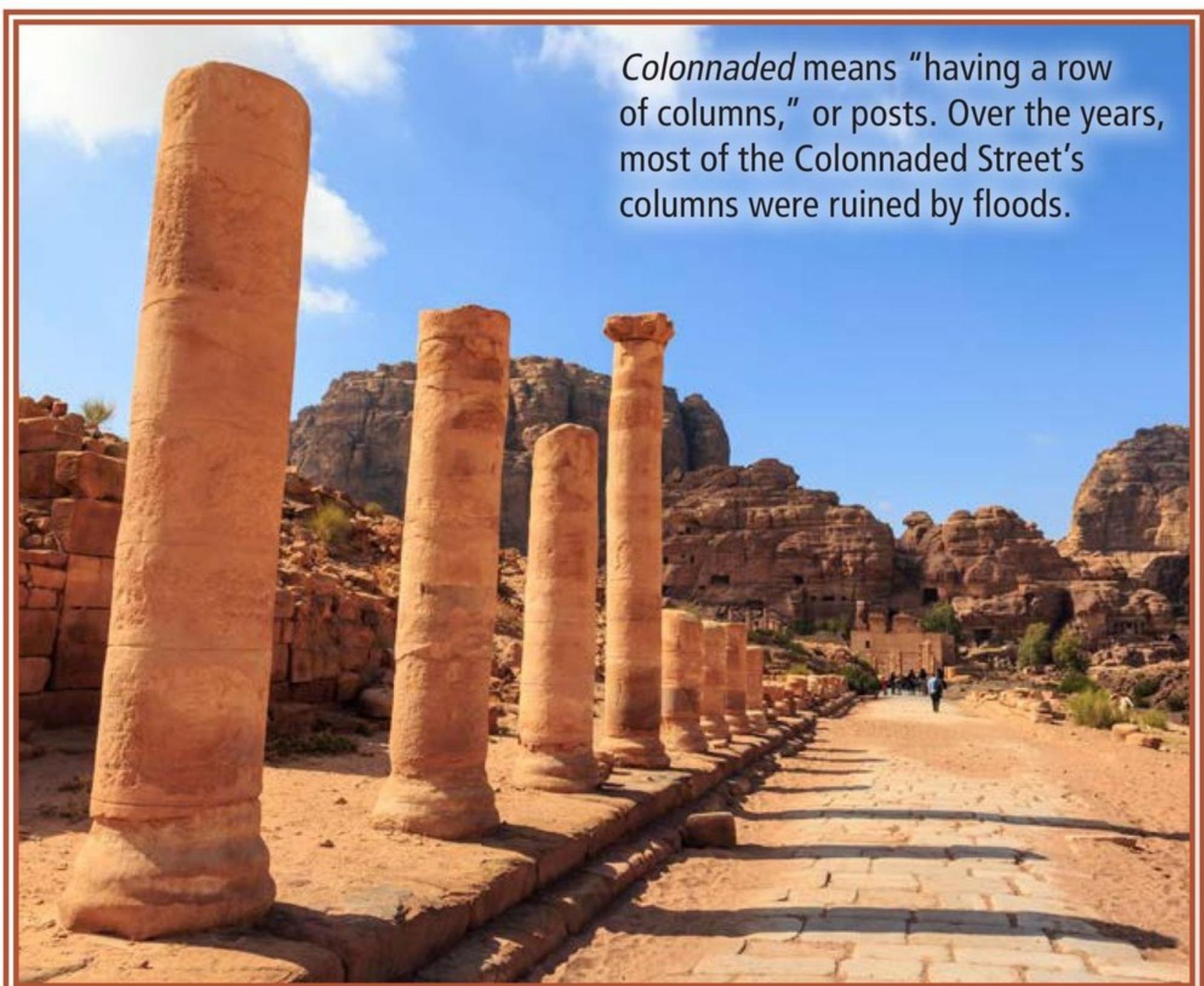
City in the Desert

Petra is in the country of Jordan, in one of Earth's driest deserts. Red sandstone cliffs and canyons are all that can be seen for many miles. A canyon called the Siq (SEEK) leads to Petra. It is the main way to reach the city.

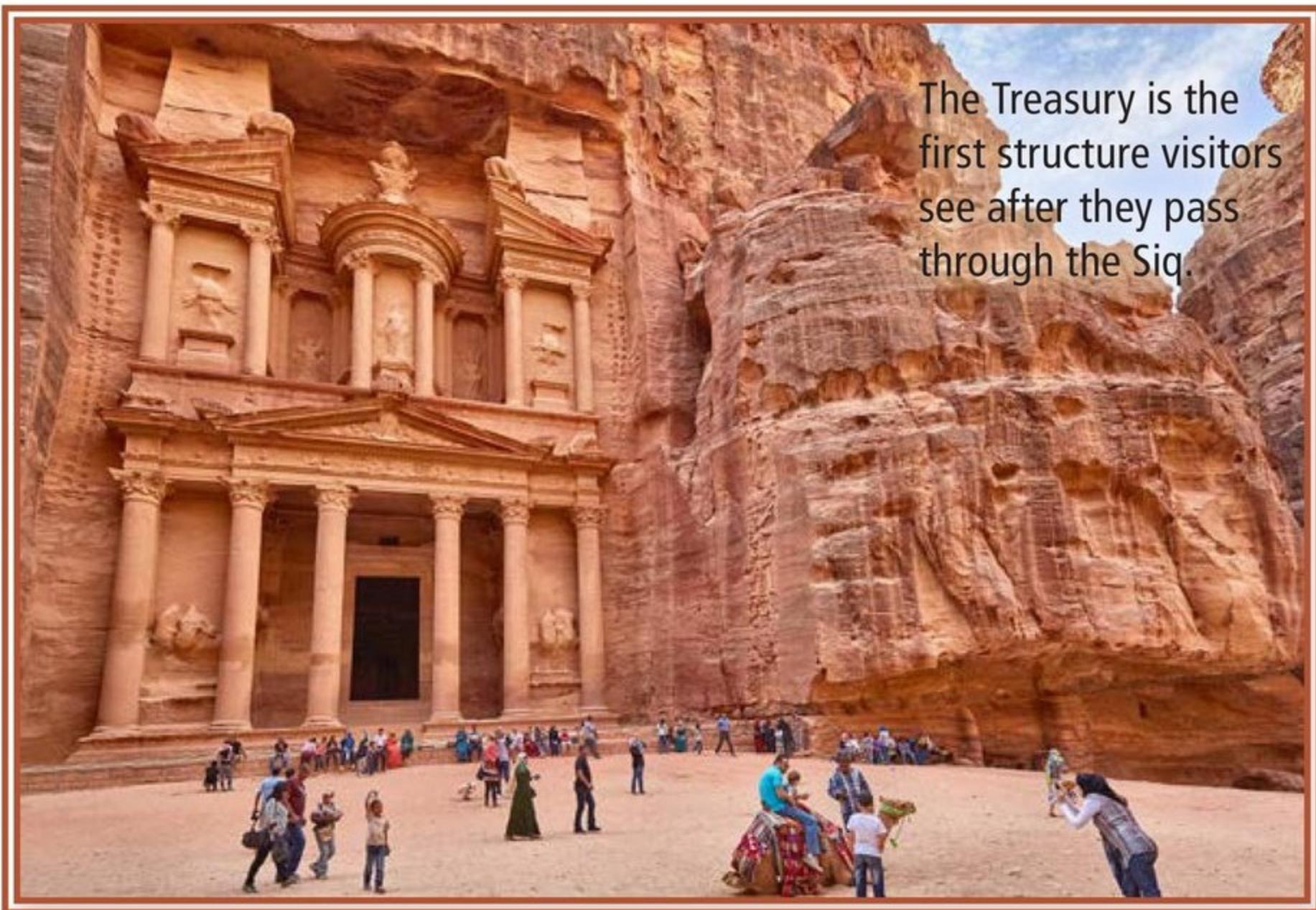


Buried City

The city of Petra is 264 square kilometers (102 sq. mi.). The downtown area is 6 square kilometers (2 sq. mi.). The city has hundreds of **tombs** and other **structures**. Most of Petra is still buried under the ground. Scientists find more structures as they dig it up.



Colonnaded means “having a row of columns,” or posts. Over the years, most of the Colonnaded Street’s columns were ruined by floods.



The Treasury is the first structure visitors see after they pass through the Siq.

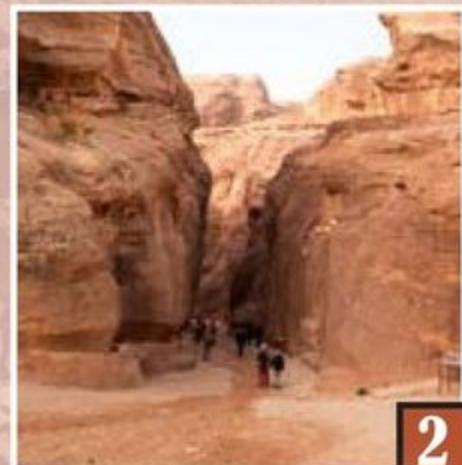
The Treasury is Petra's best-known structure. The Royal Tombs are where they buried their kings. Other famous structures include the Theatre, Petra Museum, and the Monastery. Many structures are over 30 meters (100 ft.) tall.

The Nabataeans also made many structures to collect, store, and carry water. They could not have lived in such a dry place without a way to get and hold water.

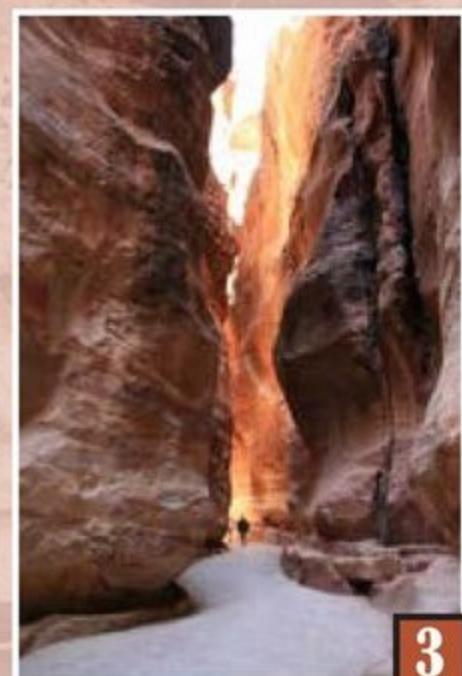
A Journey Through Petra



Visitor Centre



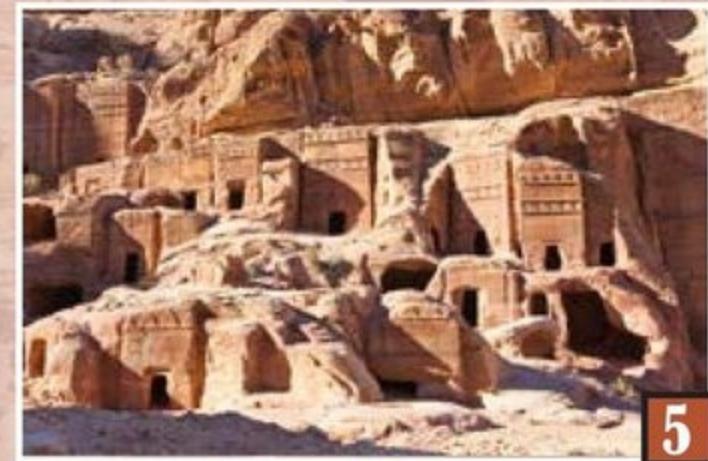
Entrance to the Siq



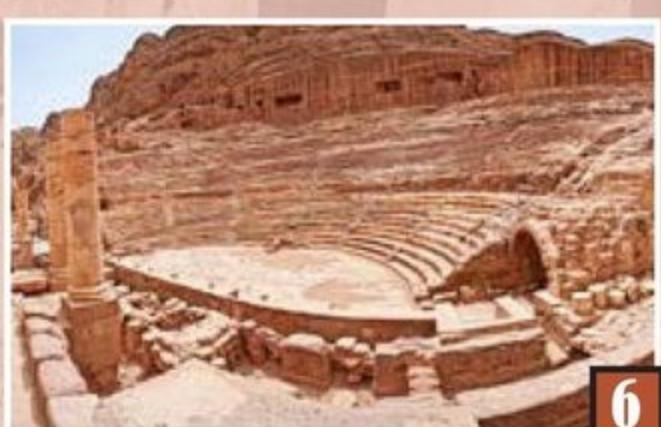
Path through the Siq



Treasury



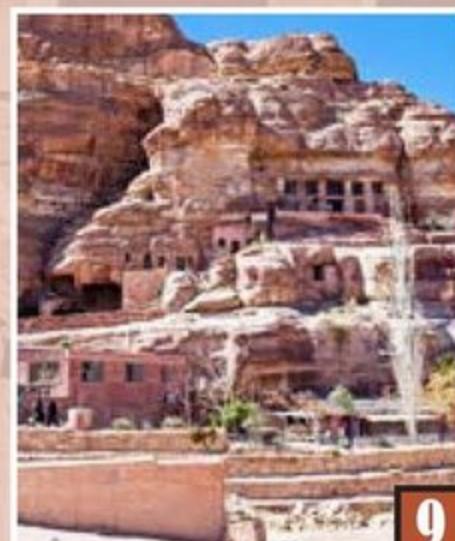
Street of Facades



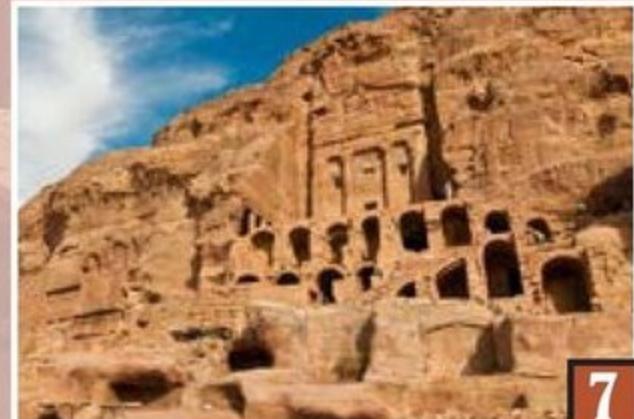
Theatre



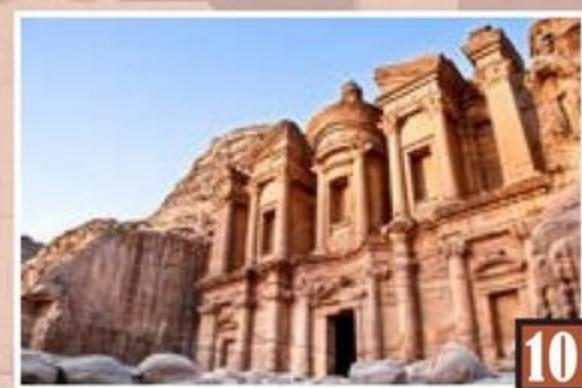
Colonnaded Street



Petra Museum

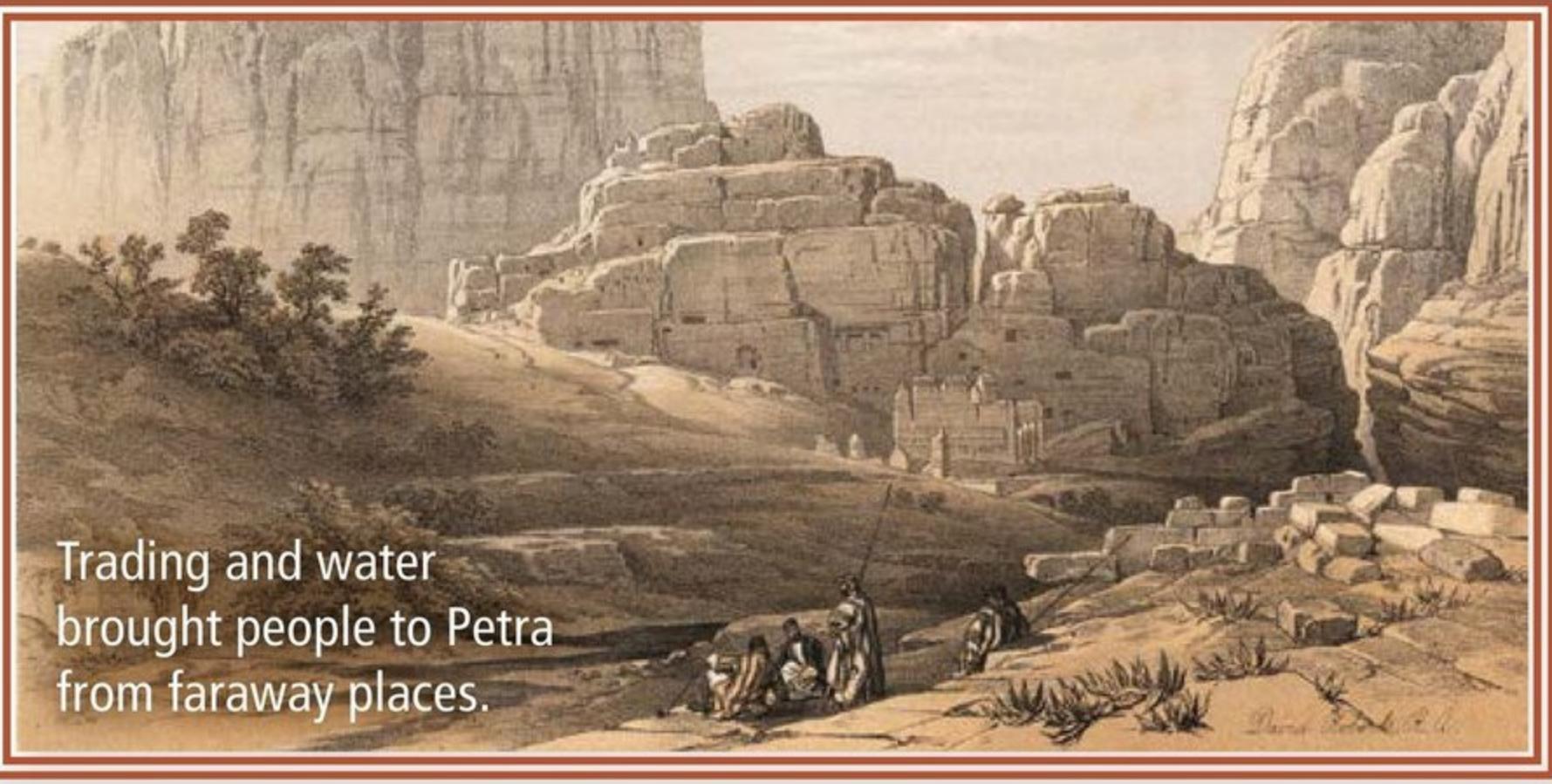


Royal Tombs



Monastery

Walking east to west from the Visitor Centre to the Monastery takes about twenty minutes at a normal pace. Most visitors take much longer, though, as they stop to look at each new place.



Trading and water brought people to Petra from faraway places.

A Busy Trade Center

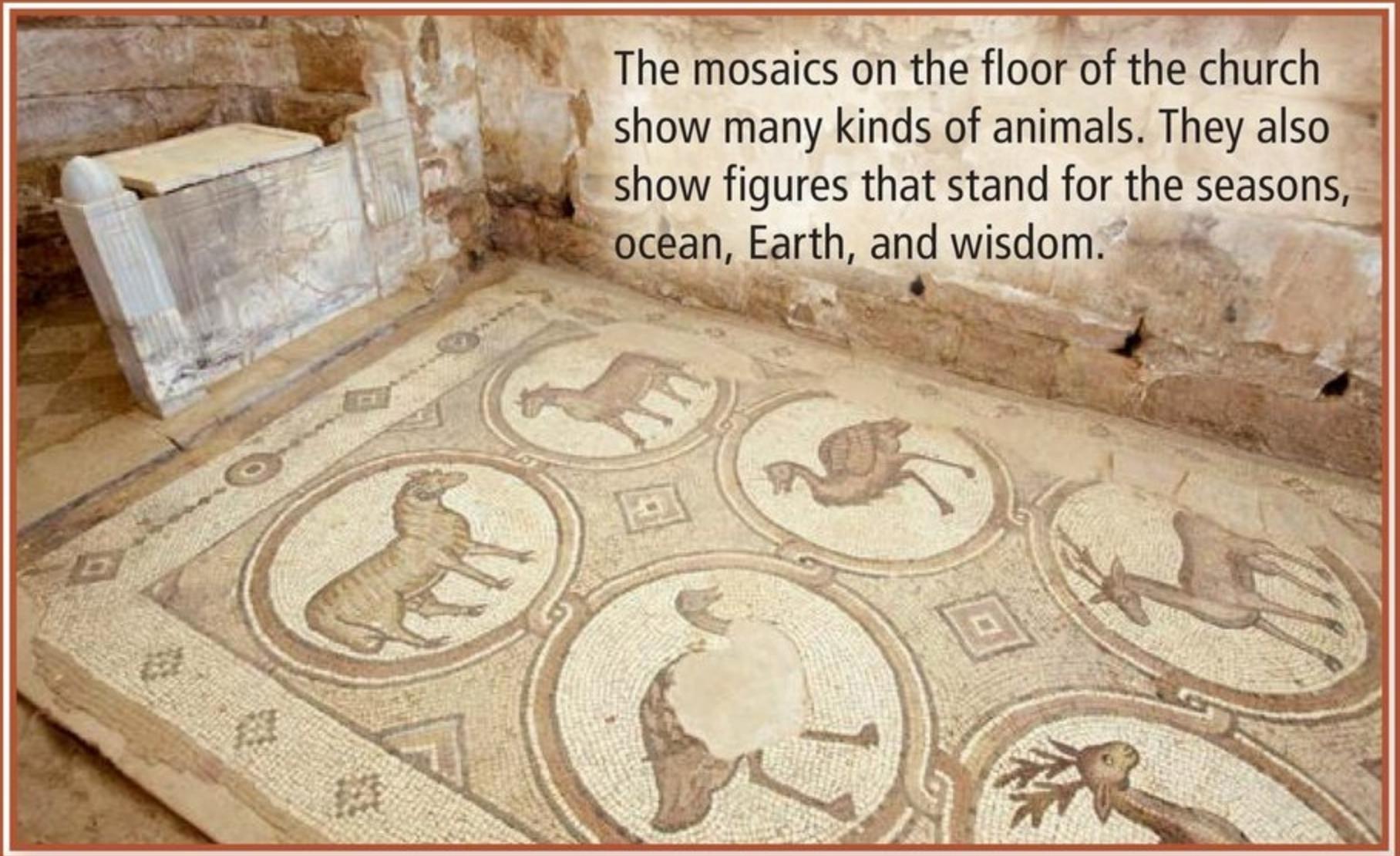
Long ago, people from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa crossed the desert to trade with each other. They traveled through the land where the Nabataeans lived.

The Nabataeans took care of camels, goats, and sheep. At first, they wandered from place to place. Later, they grew rich, settled down, and built Petra. Scientists think the Nabataeans built the Rose City around 300 BCE. Over time, it became a busy trade center.

Not much is known about the Nabataeans, but it is known that they worshipped the Sun. Scientists know this from studying Petra's most important structures. On certain days of the year, the Sun lights up special parts of these structures. The Nabataeans must have built them on purpose so the Sun would shine on them that way.



This picture was taken at sunset on the shortest day of the year. The Sun is shining on a special part in the middle of the Monastery.



The mosaics on the floor of the church show many kinds of animals. They also show figures that stand for the seasons, ocean, Earth, and wisdom.

The Romans had a big **empire** based in Italy. Romans took over Petra in 106 CE. People's lives mostly stayed the same. They built new structures that looked more like Roman structures.

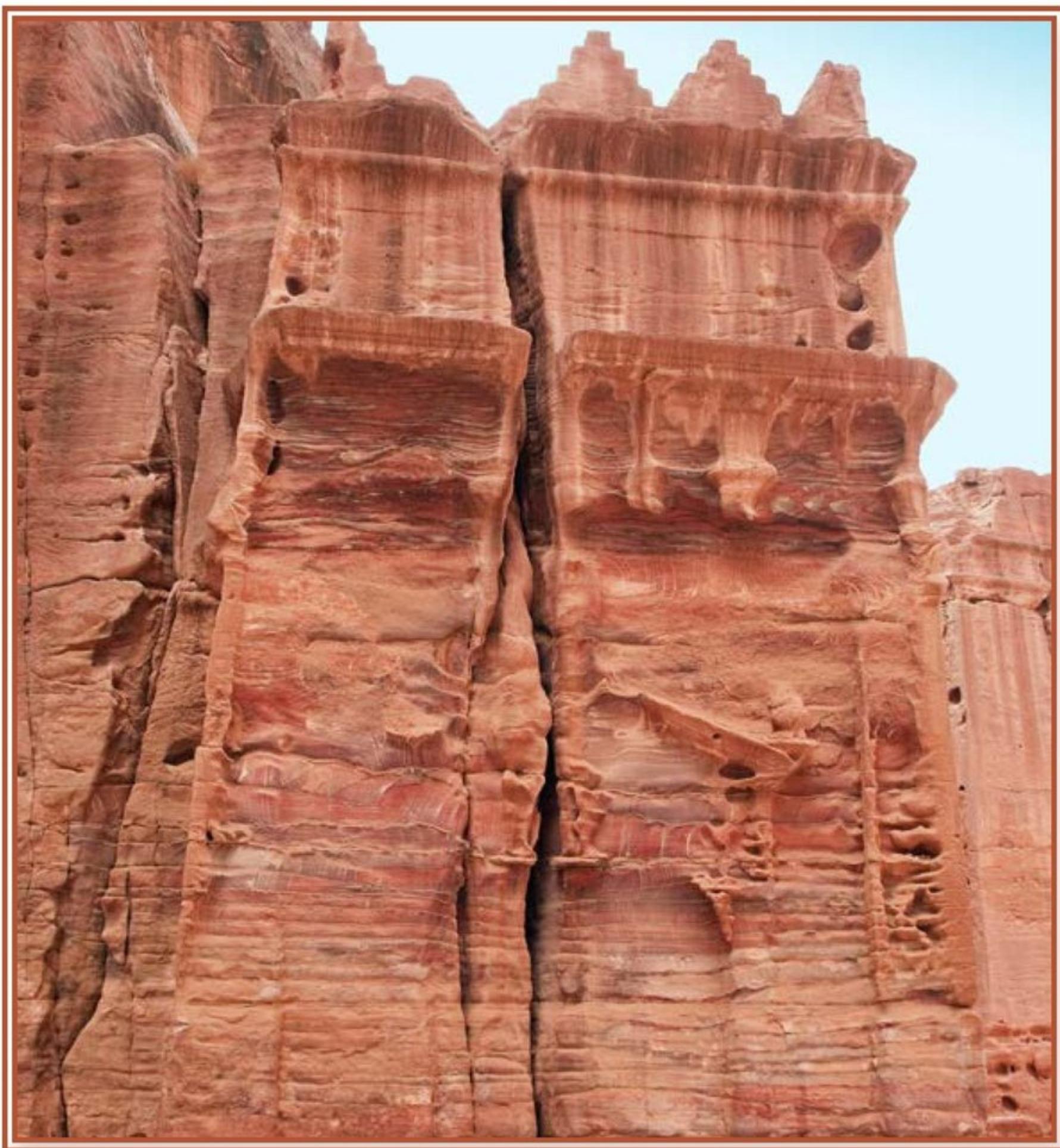
A huge **earthquake** in 363 CE broke Petra's water system. People started leaving the city at that time. Another big earthquake happened in 551. Arabs took over Petra about a hundred years later. The last people left Petra soon after.

Building Petra

Many of Petra's structures are carved right into the mountains. Others are built from sandstone taken from the mountains. A few structures use both methods.

Scientists are certain that Petra's carved structures were made from the top down. They know this because some structures were never finished. They are only carved at the top.

No one knows for sure how the Nabataeans made the carved structures. Some scientists think they removed large blocks of sandstone, leaving huge rock steps. Carvers would have stood on the steps as they worked up high.

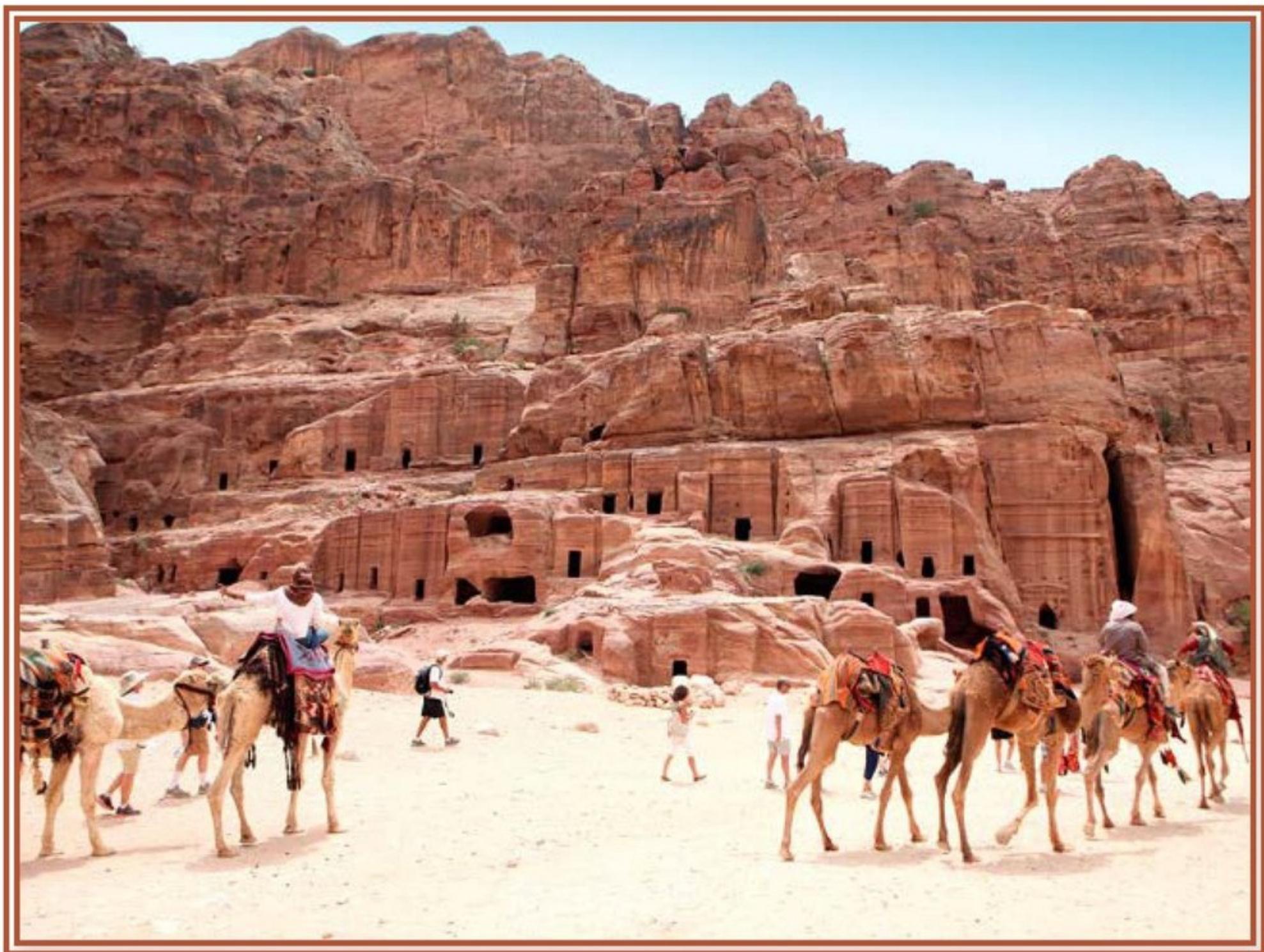


The unfinished monuments have helped scientists understand how the rocks were carved at Petra.

Other scientists think the carvers put strong pins into the rock. Then they rested a wooden board on the pins. They would have stood on the board while they worked. Scientists hope to learn more as they keep studying Petra.

Seeing Petra

More than four hundred thousand people visit Petra each year. No cars are allowed, so many people walk through the Siq to get there. Others ride a horse, donkey, or camel. Visitors walk around Petra on their own. It can take up to five days to see everything!



Visitors ride camels and walk by a part of Petra where many tombs are carved into the mountainside.



The entrance to the Garden Hall opens to an amazing view outside.

New Discoveries

Scientists learn more about Petra all the time. Not long ago, they found pools, gardens, and fountains. Every **discovery** shows more about how smart the Nabataeans were. They figured out how to bring water to a very dry desert. Long ago, people came to Petra because of water. More than two thousand years later, they come to see a beautiful rock city.

Glossary

carve (<i>v.</i>)	to make something, such as a sculpture, by carefully cutting and shaping wood or stone (p. 4)
discovery (<i>n.</i>)	the act of finding or uncovering something for the first time (p. 15)
earthquake (<i>n.</i>)	the shaking of Earth's crust (p. 11)
empire (<i>n.</i>)	a collection of nations or people ruled by one person or government (p. 11)
Middle East (<i>n.</i>)	a region of southwestern Asia and northern Africa that includes the Arabian Peninsula (p. 4)
sandstone (<i>n.</i>)	a type of soft rock made up of small pieces of sand and minerals stuck together (p. 5)
structures (<i>n.</i>)	things built from collections of parts (p. 6)
tombs (<i>n.</i>)	holes, rooms, or buildings where the bodies of dead people are kept (p. 6)
treasury (<i>n.</i>)	a place or building where money or valuables are kept (p. 7)

Petra

A Reading A-Z Level N Leveled Book
Word Count: 640

Connections

Writing

Write an acrostic poem about Petra.

Use the name Petra as the acrostic.

Each letter should begin a line of
your poem.

Social Studies

Research to learn more about Petra.

Create a brochure that includes
information visitors would want
to know about the city.

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