

About Jordan

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Jordan

Country

Jordan, officially the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is an Arab kingdom in the Middle East, on the East Bank of the River Jordan, and extending into the historic region of Palestine.

Capital: Amman

King: Abdullah I of Jordan

Currency: Jordanian dinar

Population: 6.181 million (2011) World Bank

Government: Unitary state, Parliamentary system, Constitutional monarchy

Official language: Arabic Language

Jordan (pron.: /ˈdʒɔrdən/; Arabic: EADY Al-'Urdunn), officially the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Arabic: 44eilgll 444591 48Leall g/-Mamlakah al-'Urdunniyyah al-HaSimiyyah), is an Arab kingdom in the Middle East, on the East Bank of the River Jordan, and extending into the historic region of Palestine. Jordan borders Saudi Arabia to the south and east, Iraq to the north-east, Syria to the north and Israel to the west, sharing control of the Dead Sea with the latter.

The desert kingdom emerged out of the post-World War I division of the Middle East by Britain and France. In 1946, Jordan became an independent sovereign state officially known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan. After capturing the West Bank area of Cisjordan during the 1948—49 war with Israel, Abdullah I took the title King of Jordan and Palestine, and he officially changed the country's name to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1949.

History

Main articles: History of Jordan and Timeline of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Roman Oval Piazza in the ancient city of Jerash.

In antiquity, the present day Jordan became a home for several ancient kingdoms including: the kingdom of Edom, the kingdom of Moab and the kingdom of Ammon. Throughout different eras of history, parts of the country were laid under the control of some regional powers including Pharaonic Egypt during their wars with the Babylonians and the Hittites; and for discrete periods of times by Israelites. The Mesha Stele recorded the glory of the King of Edom and the victories over the Israelites and other nations. The Ammon and Moab kingdoms are mentioned in ancient maps, Near Eastern documents, ancient Greco-Roman artifacts, and Christian and Jewish religious scriptures. 8

Classical Transjordan

Due to its strategic location in the middle of the ancient world, Transjordan came to be controlled by the ancient empires of Persians and later the Macedonian Greeks, who became the dominant force in the region, following the conquests of Alexander the Great. It later fell under the changing influence of the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire from the North and the Parthians from the East.

The Nabatean kingdom was one of the most prominent states in the region through the middle classic period, since the decline of the Seleucid control of the region in 168 BC. The Nabateans were most probably people of Arabian ancestry, who fell under the early influence of the Hellenistic and Parthian cultures, creating a unique civilized society, which roamed the roads of the deserts. They controlled the regional and international trade routes of the ancient world by dominating a large area southwest of the fertile crescent, which included the whole of modern Jordan in addition to the southern part of Syria in the north and the northern part of Arabian Peninsula in the south. The Nabataeans developed the Arabic Script, with their language as an intermediary between Aramaean and the ancient Classical Arabic, which evolved into Modern Arabic.

The Nabateans were largely conquered by the Hasmonean rulers of Judea and many of them forced to convert to Judaism in the late second century BC. However, the Nabataeans managed to maintain a sort of semi-independent kingdom, which covered most parts of modern Jordan and beyond, before it was taken by the Herodians and finally annexed by the still expanding Roman empire in 106 AD. However, apart from Petra, the Romans maintained the prosperity of most of the ancient cities in

Transjordan which enjoyed a sort of city-state autonomy under the umbrella of the alliance of the Decapolis. Nabataean civilization left many magnificent archaeological sites at Petra, which is considered one of the New Seven Wonders of the World as well as recognized by the UNESCO as a world Heritage site.

Following the establishment of Roman Empire at Syria, the country was incorporated into the client Judaeen Kingdom of Herod, and later the Iudaea Province. With the suppression of Jewish Revolts, the eastern bank of Transjordan was incorporated into the Syria Palaestina province, while the eastern deserts fell under Parthian and later Persian Sassanid control. During the Greco-Roman period, a number of semi-independent city-states also developed in the region of Transjordan under the umbrella of the Decapolis including: Gerasa (Jerash), Philadelphia (Amman), Raphana (Abila), Dion (Capitolias), Gadara (Umm Qays), and Pella (Irbid).

With the decline of the Eastern Roman Empire, Transjordan came to be controlled by the Christian Ghassanid Arab kingdom, which allied with Byzantium. The Byzantine site of Um er-Rasas is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Middle Ages to World War I

In the seventh century, and due to its proximity to Damascus, Transjordan became a heartland for the Arabic Islamic Empire and therefore secured several centuries of stability and prosperity, it needed which allowed the coining of its current Arabic Islamic identity. Different Caliphates' stages, including the Rashidun Empire, Umayyad Empire and Abbasid Empire controlled the region. Several resources pointed that the Abbasid movement, was started in region of Transjordan before it took over the Umayyad empire. After the decline of the Abbasid, It was ruled by several conflicting powers including the Mongols, the Crusaders, the Ayyubids and the Mamluks until it became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1516.⁴⁴

The Umayyad caliphs constructed rural estates such as Qasr Mshatta, Qasr al Hallabat, Qasr Kharana, Qasr Tuba, and Qasr Amra. Castles constructed in the later Middle Ages including Ajloun, Al Karak, and Qasr Azraq were used in the Ayyubid, Crusader, and Mamluk eras.

In the 11th century, Transjordan witnessed a phase of instability, as it became a battlefield for the Crusades which ended with defeat by the Ayyubids. Jordan suffered also from the Mongol attacks which were blocked by Mamluks. In 1516, Transjordan became part of the Ottoman Empire and remained so until 1918, when the Hashemite Army of the Great Arab Revolt took over, and secured the present day Jordan with the help and support of Transjordanian local tribes.

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Arab Revolt Tribal Cavalry — Tribes of Jordan and Arabia, c. 1918.