

Petra Great Temple

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Entry tags: Nabataea, Religious Place, Jordan, Rome, Arabian Religions, Religious Group, Roman Religions, Temple

The capital of the Nabataean kingdom was the city of Petra. In the heart of Petra lay the Great Temple, an enormous complex for worship and community gatherings. Given its prominent location in the center of Petra's main valley, the Great Temple was the dominant building in the city's skyline. While the use of the Great Temple remains at the center of on-going debate, the various phases of building show the integration with the cultural and political development of the city and her people from the height of independent Nabataea to its annexation by Rome. Theories about the Great Temple range from a purely religious center for worship to the palace for the king, as well as many combination of the two options. Archaeological excavations have added more questions than they have answered, but destruction and rebuilding layers have shown that the Great Temple was in use for over 400 years. Given that Nabataea was highly dependent on foreigners for trade and the kingdom's economic prosperity, it stands to reason that the Great Temple played at least a moderate role in the bureaucratic regulation of the state and its markets. Located directly next to the Pool/Garden complex or "lower" market area, as well as the "middle" and "upper" markets, the Great Temple was uniquely positioned to provide structure and support to the activities taking place in the center of the city. This is not to say that it did not have a religious function as well. In many polytheistic societies, religious practice is intertwined with daily political and economic decisions. As such, the worship of Dushara, the Nabataean high god, was linked to the Propylaeum and the burning of incense and prayer would have been clearly visible to visitor and passerby. However, "Nabataean religion" included many practices were scattered across the city to various sacred areas. Triclinia, both public and private, indicate feasting on small and larger scales. Sacrifices were particularly conducted in the sacred high places in the mountains around Petra. The Propylaeum areas for worship, then, may indicate that the Great Temple was a space for the king, as Dushara is a patron deity of the monarchy of Nabataea.



Date Range: 100 BCE - 200 CE

Region: Petra Great Temple in Nabataean Capital

Region tags: Arabian Peninsula

Though debate continues about its function, the Great Temple is the largest free-standing structure in the capital city of the Nabataean Kingdom. Sitting near the colonnaded thoroughfare of the city and connected to grandiose free-standing complexes, this building dominated the landscape of the city center.

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

General Variables

Sources and Excavations

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Martha Sharp Joukowsky, "The Petra Great Temple: A Nabataean Architectural Miracle," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Vol. 65, No. 4, *Petra: A Royal City Unearthed* (Dec., 2002), pp. 235-248
- Source 2: Martha Sharp Joukowsky and Joseph J. Basile, "More Pieces in the Petra Great Temple Puzzle," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, Nov., 2001, No. 324, *Nabataean Petra* (Nov., 2001), pp. 43-58
- Source 3: Joseph J. Basile, "Two Visual Languages at Petra: Aniconic and Representational Sculpture of the Great Temple," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Dec., 2002, Vol. 65, No. 4, *Petra: A Royal City Unearthed* (Dec., 2002), pp. 255-258
- Source 1: Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, "A New Plan of Petra's City Center," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Dec., 2002, Vol. 65, No. 4, *Petra: A Royal City Unearthed* (Dec., 2002), pp. 251-254

Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/Petra/temple/temple.html
- Source 1 Description: The official website of the Brown University archaeological dig at the Great Temple.
- Source 2 URL: <https://nabataea.net/explore/petra/petra-the-great-temple/>
- Source 2 Description: A website dedicated to all things Nabataean - run privately but accepting submissions and edits from the membership, which includes academics and enthusiasts from all specialties.

Has this place been the focus of excavation (pre-modern, illicit, or scientific):

Answer 'Yes' for each period or type of excavation.

– Yes



Type of excavation:

– Scientific

Notes: "The Petra Great Temple was first explored by R. E. Brünnow and A. von Domszewski in the 1890s; but it was W. Bachmann, in his 1921 revision of the Petra city plan, who postulated the existence of a "Great Temple." No structures were evident before the Brown University 1993 excavations under the direction of Martha Sharp Joukowsky, and the precinct which is constructed on an artificial terrace was littered with carved architectural fragments toppled by one of the earthquakes which rocked the site." -from https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/Petra/temple/temple.html



Years of excavation:

– Year range: 1993 to 2006



Name of excavation

– Official or descriptive name: Brown University Excavations The Great Temple

Topographical Context

Is the place associated with a feature in the landscape

– Other [specify]: N/A

Does the place involve human-made features besides structure:

Other features might be ground clearing, terracing, other modifications of the local environment.

– Yes



Type of feature

– Leveling of ground

– Terracing

– Clearing

– Other [specify]: According to Martha Joukowsky, main archaeologist at the Great Temple, "In the very earliest phase before any buildings graced site, major earth moving operations as well as the manipulation of the bedrock for the temple platform, subterranean canalization system, and cisterns had to take place" ('The Petra Great Temple: A Nabataean Architectural Miracle' pg 237).)

Is the place situated in an urban or significantly urbanized area:

– Yes



Is there a distinct boundary between the place and the urban fabric:

– No



Is the place located significantly within the urban fabric:

Is the place centrally located, or at the crossroads of significant pathways?

– Yes

Notes: The Great Temple is located immediately off of the main colonnaded street which runs through the middle of the city.

Is the place situated in a rural setting:

– No

Is the place situated far removed from non-religious places of habitation:

– Yes

↳ Is there an established route of travel connecting it to a wider transportation network:

– Yes

Notes: The main road through Petra connects the city as a whole to a larger network of trans-desert highways linking major cities on the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, and the Levant. In addition, few people lived in Petra proper - most inhabited the hinterland.

Structures Present

Are there structures or features present:

Instructions: Answer once for each structure/feature or group that can be differentiated.

– Yes

↳ A single structure

– No

Notes: There were several building layers (as well as rebuilding and additions) for the structure of the Great Temple. As such, it makes more sense to understand the "building" as a group of structures all working together, but also identifiable separately.

↳ A group of structures:

– Yes

↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:

– No

Notes: There are 15 phases on construction from before the 1st century BCE to the modern day. The majority of building took place from 1st century BCE to the collapse of significant sections at the end of the 2nd century CE (without rebuilding). Phase 4 is part of the "grand design" in which the Great Temple was conceived as part of the Pool/Garden Complex, the Upper Market, as well as other features. See Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, "A New Plan of Petra's City Center," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Dec., 2002, Vol. 65, No. 4, *Petra: A Royal City Unearthed* (Dec., 2002), pp. 251-254.

↳ A group of features:

– No

↳ Is it part of a larger place/sanctuary:

– Yes

Notes: It seems that the Great Temple was part of several complexes (including the Pool/Market Complex) as a city-center of sorts. However, there is no literary evidence to support this interpretation of the archaeological remains.

↳ What is the function of the structure/feature or group:

Answer "Yes" once for each distinct function

- Other [specify]: It seems that this group of structures played multiple roles for the Nabataeans - likely political, religious, as well as social functions were conducted here.

↳ Is the structure/feature finished:

- Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature intended to last beyond a generation:

- Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature modified through time:

- Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature destroyed:

- Yes

↳ How was the structure/feature destroyed

- Collapsed

Notes: Earthquakes in 106 (or 113/114) CE and in 363 CE and after 551 CE - with abandonment of site interspersed.

↳ Was it destroyed deliberately:

- Other [specify]: No

↳ Was it destroyed by accident/natural phenomena:

- Natural phenomena

Notes: Earthquakes in 106 (or 113/114) CE and in 363 CE and after 551 CE - with abandonment of site interspersed.

↳ Has the structure/feature been reconstructed:

- Yes

↳ In antiquity

- More than once

Reasons for Creation/Construction/Consecration

Is the place used for the worship of/communication with non-human supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Dedicated to a supernatural being:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: While my inclination is to say yes - because evidence of the worship of Dushara (the high Nabataean god) were found in the Propylaeum, this is a difficult question to answer thoroughly as debate continues about the use of the building. While many scholars believe it was a center of cultic functions, it was likely also used for political events. Moreover, no dedicatory inscriptions or literature remain to explain the exact usage nor if it was specifically dedicated to Dushara (or the rest of the pantheon).

↳ Dedicated to more than one supernatural being:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: This is a difficult question to answer thoroughly as debate continues about the use of the building. While many scholars believe it was a center of cultic functions, it was likely also used for political events. Moreover, no dedicatory inscriptions or literature remain to explain the exact usage. However, several indications of gods in addition to Dushara (such as a relief of a sword wielding deity and reliefs of Tyche-Fortuna) have been uncovered, indicating the interest in multiple deities by artists/stonemasons and worshippers.

Is the place used for the worship of a semi-divine human being:

– No

Notes: While there is a Nabataean king who was deified (Obodas the god), there is no evidence of his worship in the Great Temple.

Is the place used for the worship of non-divine ancestors:

– Field doesn't know

Was the place commissioned/built by an official political entity:

A political entity is a local power structure that leverages a workforce.

– Field doesn't know

Notes: It is very possible that the construction of this building was instigated and completed at the behest of the Nabataean monarchy. However, this remains speculation as no evidence to confirm or deny exists.

Were the Structures built by specific groups of people:

– Field doesn't know

Was the place thought to have originated as the result of divine intervention:

– No

Was the place created to mark or commemorate the birthplace of a supernatural or human being:

– Field doesn't know

Was the place created as the result of an event:

– No

Notes: Apart from the growth of Petra as a major site for trade and administration of the growing Nabataean kingdom, no.

Was the creation of the place sponsored by an external financial/material donation:

– Field doesn't know

Was the establishment of the place motivated by:

– Other [specify]: To impress and possibly overwhelm visitors. As Joukowsky stated, "No doubt a Nabataean king constructed the Great Temple intending to send a powerful message to those who visited it" ("The Petra Great Temple: A Nabataean Architectural Miracle," 242). What that message was, though, is unknown.

Was the place built specifically for housing scriptures/sacred texts:

– No

Design and Material Remains

Overall Structure

Is the place made up of multiple built structures:

– Yes

↳ Are any of the structures attached to or associated with a landscape feature:

– Yes

Notes: A cave structure lies below, but its purpose in direct connection to the Temple is unknown.

↳ Are any of the structures attached to other structures:

– Yes

Notes: The later Roman/Byzantine bath structure is attached to the East side of the structure, but was a much later addition. So-called "residential quarters" are also attached to the NE corner of the temple.

↳ Is there a hierarchy among the structures:

– No

Is monumental architecture present:

Monumental architecture is defined here as a built structure that surpasses average human proportions and in general is larger and more complex than is necessary to fulfill the structure's utilitarian function(s). Examples of monumental architecture include Mesopotamian Ziggurats, Egyptian Pyramids, Greek and Roman temples, Mesoamerican Pyramids, North American and Aegean burial mounds, etc.

– Yes

↳ In the average place, what percentage of area is taken up by built monuments:

– I don't know

↳ Footprint of largest single religious monument, square meters:

Please add dimensions in the comments, if known.

– Square meters: 7560

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

– Height, meters: 39

Notes: The Petra Great Temple is the largest freestanding structure in the city. Its hypothetical reconstructed height is 19m (57 ft). But the Khasneh/Treasury is 39m tall.

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:

– I don't know

↳ Height of average monument, meters:

– I don't know

Is the structure/feature made out of natural materials:

Answer [Yes] for each material type

– Yes

↳ Earth

– No

↳ Sand

– No

↳ Clay
– No

↳ Plaster
– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:
– I don't know

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:
– I don't know

↳ Wood
– No

↳ Grass
– No

↳ Stone
– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:
– Yes

Notes: Some of the stone was sourced locally, but marble facing and decorative elements were imported. Limestone paving stones also were likely imported for the floor slabs.

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:
– No

Notes: The answer here is complicated by the main different types of stone used for construction and decoration - both yes (for decorative elements) and no (for base building materials).

Is the structure/feature made out of human-made materials

– No

Decoration

Is decoration present:

– Yes

↳ Is decoration part of the building (permanent):

– Yes

↳ On the outside:

– Yes

Notes: There is significant decoration on the buildings - included painted plaster, relief sculpture, and elaborate column capitals (such as the famous elephant head capitals).

↳ On the inside:

– Yes

Notes: Painted plaster and religious iconography (specifically betyls and niches) were found within the building.

↳ Is decoration attached to the building, i.e. movable reliefs or tapestries

– Field doesn't know

↳ Is the decoration figural:

A figural representation is defined here as one that contains the depiction of discernible human, anthropomorphic, animal, or zoomorphic forms. In general, it differentiates between animate and inanimate beings, as well as between narrative compositions and still life, landscapes, abstraction, etc. Answer [Yes] for each type of figure depicted

– Yes

↳ Are there gods depicted:

– Yes

Notes: Through aniconic betyls and figural reliefs.

↳ Are there other supernatural beings depicted:

– Yes

Notes: There may be a maenad depicted in one relief according to Joseph J. Basile, "Two Visual Languages at Petra: Aniconic and Representational Sculpture of the Great Temple," *Eastern Archaeology*, Dec., 2002, Vol. 65, No. 4, Petra: A Royal City Unearthed (Dec., 2002), pp. 256

↳ Are there humans depicted:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: A statue of a nude male figure was found in the Propylaeum; however, whether it depicts a divine or mortal man is unknown.

↳ Are there animals depicted:

– Yes

Notes: Elephants on capitals

↳ Are there animal-human hybrids depicted:

– No

↳ Is the decoration non-figural:

– Yes

↳ Is it geometric/abstract

– Yes

Notes: Limestone paving stones created a geometric pattern on the floor of the chapel

↳ Floral motifs

– Yes

Notes: Wreaths have been found in relief, as well as pinecones, vines, and other vegetal decoration.

↳ Is it writing/caligraphy

– No

↳ Other [Specify]

–Other [specify]: Cornucopiae were found. Red and White or Yellow and White paint remnants were also found on plaster, but their decorative patterns remain unknown.

↳ Is the decoration hidden or restricted from view:

– No

↳ Are there statues present:

– Yes

↳ Cult statues:

– Yes

↳ Statues of gods/supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Statues of humans:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are there reliefs present:

A relief as opposed to sculpture carved on the round is a work of sculpture in which the figures project from a background support, generally a flat surface. Reliefs can be carved out of stone, clay, or a similar material.

– Yes

↳ Reliefs representing the god(s) worshipped at the place:

– Yes

Notes: "The Great Temple is tetrastyle in antis (having four columns at the front) with widely spaced (about seven meters) central columns at the entrance and two end columns located about five meters to the east and west. Beyond these are anta walls-square pilasters with relief sculptures of the Greek goddess Tyche-Fortuna, the patron deity and the protector of the city, who is carrying a cornucopia. These columns and walls were stuccoed and painted in two colors, red and white or yellow and white" (Joukowsky, "The Petra Great Temple: A Nabataean Architectural Miracle," 242)

↳ Reliefs representing mythological narratives:

– No

↳ Reliefs representing human/historical narratives:

– No

↳ Are there paintings present:

– Yes

↳ Are they panel paintings [movable]:

– No

↳ Are they wall paintings:

– Yes

↳ Type

–Other [specify]: Wall paintings on architectural plaster show that the walls were

painted a wide variety of colors and designs - red, yellow, green, blue, purple, and even gilded

↳ Paintings representing the gods worshipped at the place:

– No

↳ Paintings representing mythological narratives:

– No

↳ Paintings representing human/historical narratives:

– No

↳ Are there mosaics present:

– No

↳ Are there inscriptions as part of the decoration:

– No

↳ Other type of decoration:

– I don't know

Iconography

Are there distinct features in the places iconography:

– No

Notes: The most distinctive thing is the cross-cultural depiction of influences - specifically the mix of aniconic and figural decoration, alongside the unique use of elephant heads on the capitals.

Beliefs and Practices

Funerary Associations

Is this place a tomb/burial:

– No

Is this a place for the worship of the dead:

– No

Is this a place for treatment of the corpse:

– No

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

Co-sacrifices are animal/human sacrifices prompted by the death of the primary occupant of the tomb/burial.

– No

Are grave goods present:

– No

Are formal burials present:

– No

Supernatural Beings

Is a supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: The high god of the Nabataean pantheon is Dushara (also Dousares), a male sky god often depicted through aniconic rectangular stones known as betyls. These betyls can sometimes include stylized eyes on one side. At the Great Temple, a room with a typical betyl and some small indications of incense burning have been found. This would indicate that worship of Dushara (and possibly his female counterpart Al 'Uzza) took place here, in at least one of the rooms.

↳ Are they anthropomorphic:

– No

↳ Are they sky deity:

– Yes

↳ Are they chthonic (underworld)

– No

↳ Are they fused with king/kingship role (king = high god)

– No

↳ Are they the monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– No

↳ Are they kin relation to elites:

– No

↳ Are they other type of loyalty or connection to elites:

– Yes

Notes: Dushara is considered to be the (patron) god of the king and is invoked alongside the king's name both within and beyond the borders of the kingdom.

↳ Are they unquestionably good:

– Field doesn't know

Does the supreme high god communicate with the living at this place:

– Field doesn't know

Are previously human spirits present:

– Field doesn't know

Do human spirits communicate with the living at this place:

– Field doesn't know

Are nonhuman supernatural beings present:

– Field doesn't know

Do nonhuman spirits communicate with the living at this place:

– Field doesn't know

Are mixed human-divine beings present:

– Field doesn't know

Do mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living at this place:

– Field doesn't know

Is the supernatural being/high god present in the form of a cult statue(s):

– Yes

↳ Is the cult statue visible:

– Yes

Notes: "One passes through this formal entrance-a two-story building that encloses the front of the precinct [the Propylaeum]-to reach the temple forecourt on the second terrace level. The visitor also has the option of mounting the steps of a smaller west stairway into the Propylaeum where, built into the west wall, there is a shrine with aniconic Nabataean double standing stones-enshrined here are finely sculpted white limestone depictions venerating the supreme Nabataean god, Dushara. The niche and the Dushara blocks, also known as betyls (sacred non-representational stones) house the spiritual essence of the deity. A horned altar associated with these blocks clearly indicates that the Propylaeum entry had a cultic use. This shrine with its sacred stones in the Propylaeum suggests a direct connection between the religious nature of the entry and the Great Temple itself" (Joukowsky, "The Petra Great Temple: A Nabataean Architectural Miracle," 238)

↳ Is the cult statue hidden:
– No

Supernatural Interactions

Is supernatural monitoring present:

– Field doesn't know

Do visitors communicate with the gods or supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: In that this is a sacred space in which cultic offerings and worship likely took place - yes. However, that was not the only function of the building (though the additional functions continue to be under debate).

↳ Do visitors communicate with gods:
– Yes

↳ Do visitors communicate with other supernatural beings:
– Field doesn't know

Ritual and Performance

Sacrifices, Offerings, and Maintenance

Are sacrifices performed at this place:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: There is no evidence of sacrifice here and as sacred high spaces retain altars and evidence of animal sacrifice, the answer is likely no.

Are there self-sacrifices present:

– No

Are material offerings present:

– No

Is attendance to worship/sacrifice mandatory:

– Field doesn't know

Is maintenance of the place performed:

– Yes



Is it required:

– Field doesn't know



Is there cleansing (for the maintenance):

– Field doesn't know



Are there periodic repairs/reconstructions:

– Yes

Notes: 15 phases of building and reconstruction (particularly following earthquake damage) have been identified - Martha Sharp Joukowsky, "Highlights of the Brown University Excavations at the Petra Great Temple, (1993–2006)," in *KOINE: Mediterranean Studies in Honor of R. Ross Holloway*, edited by Derek B. Counts and Anthony S. Tuck (Oxbow Books).



Is the maintenance performed by permanent staff:

– Field doesn't know

Pilgrimage and Festivals

Are pilgrimages present:

– Field doesn't know

Is this place a venue for feasting:

– Field doesn't know

Are festivals present:

– Yes



Frequency of festivals

– specify: unknown

Notes: The attached Pool Complex may have "served for the ancient Middle Eastern water festival known as the Maioumas when water games were held (Segal 1995, 23)" (Joukowsky, "Highlights," 172).



Do all members of the society participate in the festival(s):

– Other [specify in comments]

Notes: Unknown



Are festivals a defining element in the construction/decoration of the place:

– Field doesn't know



On average, how many participants gather at this place:

– number: Unknown



Is feasting part of the festival(s):

– Field doesn't know

Divination and Healing

Is divination present:

– Field doesn't know

Is healing present/practiced at this place:

– Field doesn't know

Do rituals occur at this place:

Rituals are visibly enacted behaviors by one or more people for the purposes of religious observance.

– Yes



Do large-scale rituals take place:

– Field doesn't know



Do small-scale rituals take place:

– Yes

↳ On average how many participants are present in large-scale rituals:

– specify: Unknown

↳ How often do these rituals take place:

– specify: Unknown

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are there synchronic practices:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are there intoxicants used during the ritual:

– Field doesn't know

Institutions and Scriptures

Religious Specialists

Are religious specialists present/in charge of this place:

Religious specialists are individuals whose primary duties within a population group are not concerned with subsistence or craft production but the maintenance of the religious landscape and culture of the group.

– Field doesn't know

Does this place incorporate a living space for religious specialists:

– Yes

Notes: An area attached to the NE corner of the temple has been named the "Residential Quarters" - "eleven rooms of two interconnecting caves appointed with columns and arched walls. Here we recovered rotating grain mills, indicating agricultural activities, and masses of unpainted and figuratively painted Nabataean ceramics ranging in date from the first century BCE to the first and second centuries CE. At this point we cannot ascertain if, or how, the cave complex was integral to the Great Temple precinct, although it is clear that it was in use during earlier and later building phases" (Joukowsky, "The Petra Great Temple: A Nabataean Architectural Miracle," 241-242).

Is this place used for the training of religious specialists:

– Field doesn't know

Are there formal institutions for the maintenance of the place:

Institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders

– Yes

Notes: Building was done on a massive scale and with large-scale restorations taking place over the course of several centuries, definitely suggesting an organized, institutional interest in maintaining the Great Temple.

Bureaucracy

Is there a formal bureaucracy present at this place:

A bureaucracy consists of a hierarchical system of accounting and rule maintenance primarily concerned with material wealth.

– I don't know

Notes: The connection between this building and the bureaucratic structures of Nabataea may have been. As such, we cannot rule out that the political structure of Nabataea was present in this location - however, there is no clear, unequivocal evidence to support this theory either. For arguments supporting a royal/secular function of the Great Temple, see E. L. Schluntz, "From Royal to Public Assembly Space: The Transformation of the "Great Temple" Complex at Petra, Jordan." Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1999.

Does this place control economic resources (land, goods, tools):

– Field doesn't know

Notes: While tools, such as grain mills and ovens, have been found in the complex, there is no indication that they were used by more than a small population within the "Residential Quarters" or local complex.

Public Works

Does this place serve as a location for services to the community:

– Yes

↳ Public food distribution and/or storage:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Place for civic functions (census, elections, others):

– Yes

Notes: While the debate is on-going, it seems that there were secular services/functions performed in this space.

↳ Place for the practice of justice (trials, executions, etc.):

– Field doesn't know

↳ Function for water management:

– Yes

Notes: Cisterns make up part of the complex. A Pool Complex, connected to the Great Temple is also a central feature of Petra, demonstrating wealth and power over the local environment. As Leigh-Ann Bedel describes, "Excavations revealed a monumental pool complex and an elaborate hydraulic system that transported water from the nearby hills down to the pool and onto a large unbuilt earthen terrace that presumably housed a garden. Similar gardens with pool complexes are known in association with late Hellenistic palaces and the palaces of Herod the Great of Judaea. The identification of a pool complex prompts a reexamination of the long-held interpretation of Petra's city center and, in particular, its relationship to the neighboring Great Temple, with which it is closely associated. The Petra Pool Complex played an important role in the sociopolitical life of Petra during the Nabataean and Roman periods" (Bedel, "A Pool Complex in Petra's City Center," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 324, Nabataean Petra (Nov., 2001), pp. 23-41).

↳ Part of the transportation network:

– Field doesn't know

Writing/Scriptures

Is non-religious writing stored at this place:

Economic documents, records etc.

– Field doesn't know

Notes: None have been excavated.

Are there scriptures associated with this place:

– No

Bibliography

General References

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