



■ The Nabataeans, an ancient Semitic people, established the city of Petra as their capital. The civilization incorporated sophisticated water systems throughout the city, located in southern Jordan, to ensure a year-round water supply in the hot, dry desert climate. Cisterns, such as those that can be seen below this temple, were located underground to keep the water cool and prevent evaporation. Larry W. Mays/Arizona State University

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Petra, located in a canyon bordered by mountains, occasionally experiences severe storms that cause flooding. The Nabataeans could have settled in this area because of this flash flooding, said Glenn Corbett, associate director of the American Center of Oriental Research (Amman, Jordan). They used cisterns to “harness and capture the powerful runoff,” he said.

Read more from Corbett in the *WEF Highlights* article, “Ancient Nabataeans Used Sophisticated Water Technologies To Create a Thriving Desert City,” at bit.ly/DesertWater. Larry W. Mays/Arizona State University



The Nabataeans designed a system of reservoirs to hold water. The inhabitants of Petra relied on this supply for themselves and their animals throughout the year. Larry W. Mays/Arizona State University

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