

The Three Wise Men Visited Petra...And So Should You

Calgary, AB (December 15, 2005) — The holiday season is a perfect time to discover Glenbow's current international exhibition *Petra: Lost City of Stone*. The ancient city of Petra, located in the sandstone desert of Jordan, was undoubtedly on the route travelled by the Three Wise Men on their way to Bethlehem over two thousand years ago.

At the time of Christ's birth, Petra, located approximately 350 kilometres from Bethlehem, was the trade crossroads for Greek, Roman, Near Eastern and Egyptian civilizations. The Nabataeans, the indigenous people of Petra, controlled the camel trade route for spices, gold, iron, copper, textiles, sugar, medicine, ivory and animals. But by far the Nabataeans' dominant trade item was frankincense —an aromatic gum resin from trees used for healing and religious purposes, preserving food, and protecting against insects. It is believed by some scholars that the Three Wise Men bought the gold, frankincense and myrrh in Petra to deliver to Jesus.

Transporting frankincense from deep in the Arabian desert, the only place on earth where it grows, to commercial sites along the Mediterranean, was a logistical challenge. At Petra, the Nabataeans offered water and a safe haven for trade merchants, but they also collected a fee for their services and a customs tax on goods passing through their kingdom resulting in one of the most prosperous cities in ancient times; reaching its height from the 1st B.C. to the 3rd century A.D.

Holiday visitors to Glenbow Museum have a rare opportunity to see and learn about this ancient city and its people. In addition to the stunning and authentic cultural artifacts travelling from Jordan for the first time, there awaits a comprehensive line up of programming including tours, talks, hands-on activities and screenings. *GSI: Petra* invites the young and old to play the role of archaeologist in our hands-on archaeological field station. Movie buffs can take in a screening of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* where the mythical quest for the Holy Grail results in the final scene being filmed at Petra. Visit www.glenbow.org for a full list of programs and events.

To accommodate expected holiday crowds for *Petra: Lost City of Stone*, Glenbow Museum is offering special extended hours over the holiday season.

December 26 to December 30	9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
December 31	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
New Year's Day	Noon to 5:00 p.m.

Petra: Lost of Stone is on at Glenbow Museum until February 20, 2006.

The exhibition is organized by Cincinnati Art Museum and American Museum of Natural History in New York, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Air transportation generously provided by Royal Jordanian.

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