Jordan | Passions of Tourism

Cause

Written by Li He

From the first 'ahlan wa sahlan' welcome we received in Jordan, we knew that this country was to become a lifelong friend. On the 24th of August 2015, we, a group of 25 undergraduate students from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, started our Summer School as part of our second year course Passions of Tourism. We visited Jordan for one week and discovered many extraordinary places, people, and traditions in this wonderful country. As a group of undergraduate Honours College students, we were tourists, students, and researchers. Before starting this trip, we did adequate preparation. The course 'Passions of Tourism' offered us the most important theories and practical information about how to explore such a tourist place. The truth is, this trip was really unique and unparalleled for everyone. We visited many monuments, such as Roman amphitheatres and Christian mosaics, which have fascinated many travellers before us in search of antiquity, and the origins of faith and religion.



The Group at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Amman

When we first heard of this destination – perhaps not surprisingly – safety and security came to our minds as the most important factors to consider. Because of Jordan's location in a troubled area, people easily have an image of wars and chaos. In fact, Jordan is the Good Samaritan in this region, welcoming and caring for one million refugees thus far – from Palestine, Iraq and most recently Syria. In order to help these refugees, Jordan and non-governmental organizations (NGO) are working on many projects.

One of those NGOs is the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Youth Centre in Zaatari Refugee Camp, which is supported by the European Union and UNICEF. We are honoured to become a small part of this project, by donating all the profits we generate from selling this magazine at the Petrus Camper Festival and through social media channels. This money will be used by the Youth Centre to provide classes in tailoring, male hairdressing, beautician arts, electrical wiring, welding, office management, and ICT courses.

When young people are provided with the opportunity to study, the impact extends far beyond that individual, it gives them a purpose, and it also brings hope to their families and communities. By offering the children a more stable life and a better future, they will have the ability to support their families themselves. This project helps these young people get out of insecure circumstances and gives them the power to change their lives. It is our aim with this project and the magazine to raise awareness about the need to support young people in regions of turmoil. We also want to inspire more people to support NRC's Youth Centre project to help meet the goal of expanding support to young refugees and their families.

In this brochure, we present Jordan from our own perspective and provide travel information. Our itinerary shows the places we visited and all the fun activities in which we engaged. It is followed by articles which give detailed descriptions of these places. Moreover, we approach Jordan from multiple perspectives, such as conflict area, feminist perspective, religion, and the economy of Jordan, amongst many others which we invite you to discover. You will find articles in this brochure on the following topics: itinerary, hospitality of the people, history, places, nature, dark tourism, economics, religious sites, and fun facts. These are accompanied by pictures taken by ourselves that showcase the topics discussed.

We trust and hope that this brochure will help you to love Jordan at least as much as we do. Let us start our journey through Jordan and enjoy this country with its amazing culture and traditions.

5 days in Jordan

Make them count

Written by Klara Hillmann

Our recommendation for a short five-day trip: Check-in in Jordan's capital Amman. Why Amman? It has an international airport and it is located in the centre of the country. From here, day trips to Jordan's other sites are easily arranged. For a well-rounded trip we suggest this five-day itinerary.

Day I: Amman City Tour & Jerash

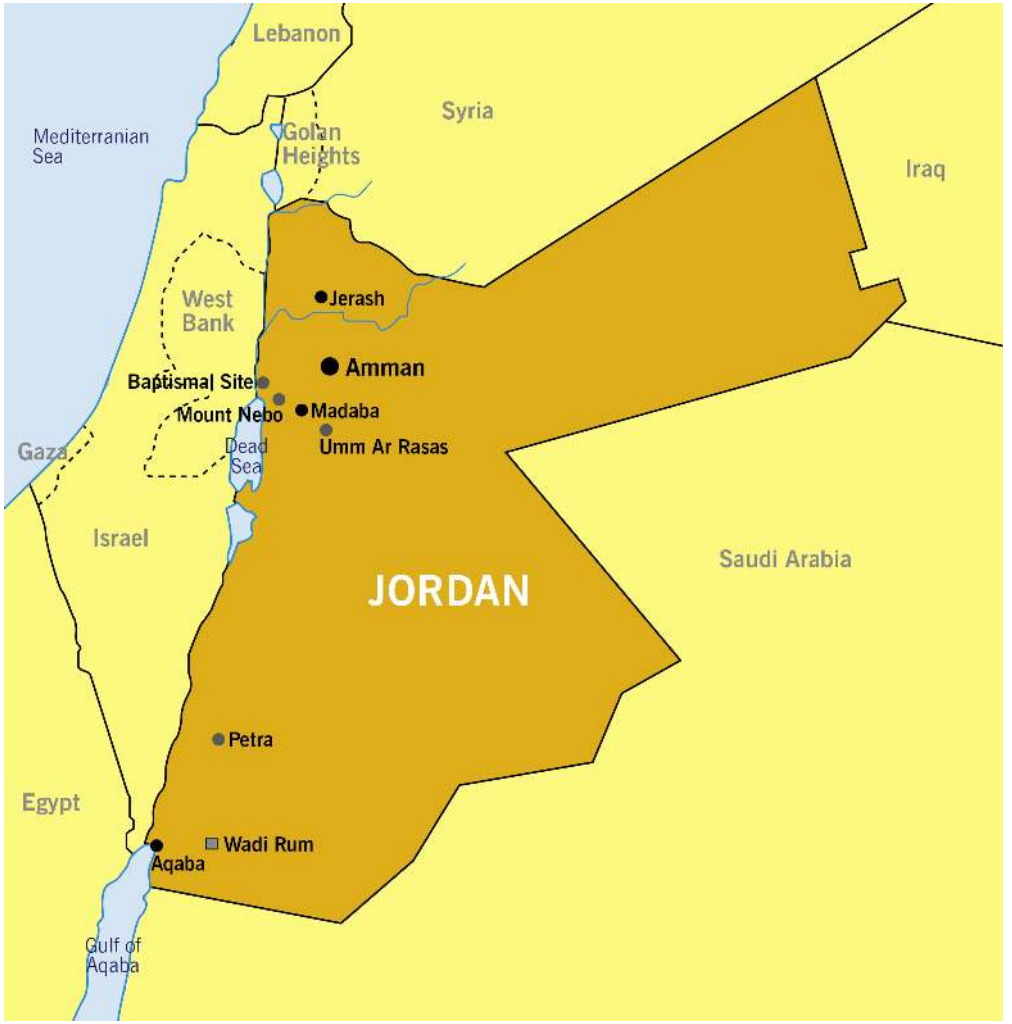
AMMAN Start your journey through the beautiful Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in its most vibrant City, the capital Amman. Discover the city with a tour, or by yourself. The ancient yet modern city is rich in historical archaeological sites, art galleries, and shops. Allow about three to four hours for the Amman city tour. Make sure to visit:

- The Citadel (Jebel al-Qala) This site presents thousands of years of historical development under the occupation of the Romans, Byzantines, and Umayyads. At the Citadel's entrance you find the city's historical names – Rabbath Ammon, Philadelphia, and Amman. Stroll through the Bronze Age Citadel and admire its ancient ruins, including the impressive Umayyad Palace of 720 A.D. The Archaeological Museum at the site exhibits interesting artefacts, the famous Dead Sea scrolls and 6500-year- old statues.

- The King Abdullah I Mosque This landmark with its blue dome is the Ottoman-style Mosque that marks a grand monument of modern times. It is the only mosque in Amman that openly welcomes non-Muslim visitors outside of prayer time. Women are required to cover hair and bare skin for which headscarves and abeyyas are provided at the entrance. Shoes must be taken off before entering the prayer hall. The mosque site also houses the Islamic Museum that exhibits a small collection of photographs and personal effects of King Abdullah I as well as shards of ancient potter and coins.

- The Roman Theatre This impressive remnant of Roman Philadelphia is a highlight for many tourists in Amman. It dates back to the 2nd century A.D.

JERASH About 45 km north of Amman lies the ancient city of Jerash. It is one of the best-preserved Roman cities in the world



Source: GeoServices, Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen

and a good example of the Roman urban settlements in this region. The ruins present a grand public square, columned streets, former great temples, a theatre, and the former city walls. Allow about two hours to explore Roman remnants in Jerash.

Day II: Madaba & Mount Nebo & Um Rassas

MADABA About 40 km south of Amman lies the town of Madaba, which is known for its mosaics, especially the Byzantine-era mosaics. Most famous is the historical biblical mosaic map on the floor of St George's Church. Madaba presents itself as a very tolerant, intercultural, traveller-friendly, and relaxed town. Its streets, cafés, and shops, are best explored on foot. Allow about three hours to explore Madaba.

UMM AR-RASAS 30 km southeast of Madaba lies Umm ar-Rasas. This site displays the magnificent Byzantine mosaics



View of Amman from our Hostel

in impressive condition and colours. They have been uncovered in two formerly church sites of the 6th and 8th century. Allow about one hour here.

MOUNT NEBO 12 km southeast from Madaba locates the religious site of Mount Nebo. Here Moses is believed to have stood on the summit of Mount Nebo and viewed the Promised Land. On a clear day, visitors can view the same panorama: the Dead Sea, the Jordan River valley, Jericho, Bethlehem, and the distant hills of Jerusalem. Allow about one hour here.

Day III: Baptismal Site & Dead Sea

BETHANY BEYOND THE JORDAN – THE BAPTISMAL SITE About 40 km west of Amman lies the Baptismal Site at the Jordan River. The stretch of the river acts as the border between Jordan and Israeli/ Palestine. The Baptismal Site is a recently reconstructed site, recognized as the authentic site where Jesus is believed to have been baptized by John the Baptist. Make sure also to visit the Jordan River and look across where you can wave to tourists in Israel/Palestine. Allow about two to three hours here.

DEAD SEA Driving south, 10 km and further, you will find the Dead Sea. Here you can spend a relaxing day, floating on the sea's salty surface, and enjoying a self-applied mud-mask at the beach; check-in into one of the luxurious resort hotels with swimming pools, and spa facilities.

Day IV: Petra & Wadi Rum

PETRA About 245km south of Amman you can visit the world heritage site Petra, one of the New 7 World Wonders. It is one of the world's richest and largest archaeological sites being built and carved in red sandstone rocks. Standing out most famously is Petra's Treasury, Al Khazaneh in Arabic. The Monastery, Ab Deir, is another impressive monumental building that is located further inside Petra. Petra is a magnificent place to walk through while admiring the ancient landscape and architecture. Local Bedouins give the site a more touristic flair that includes souvenirs and camel rides. This site can take up to a whole day to fully explore. Allow at least 5 hours to enjoy most attractions. You can make it a full-day Petra trip and return to Amman for the night.

WADI RUM After your visit to Petra, you can drive to the Wadi Rum desert in about 2 hours (allow time to arrive and find your site). Staying the night at the desert is an unforgettable experience. You can opt between bed & breakfast, luxury desert camps, or 'wild-campsites.' This is a great opportunity to watch a sunset in the desert.

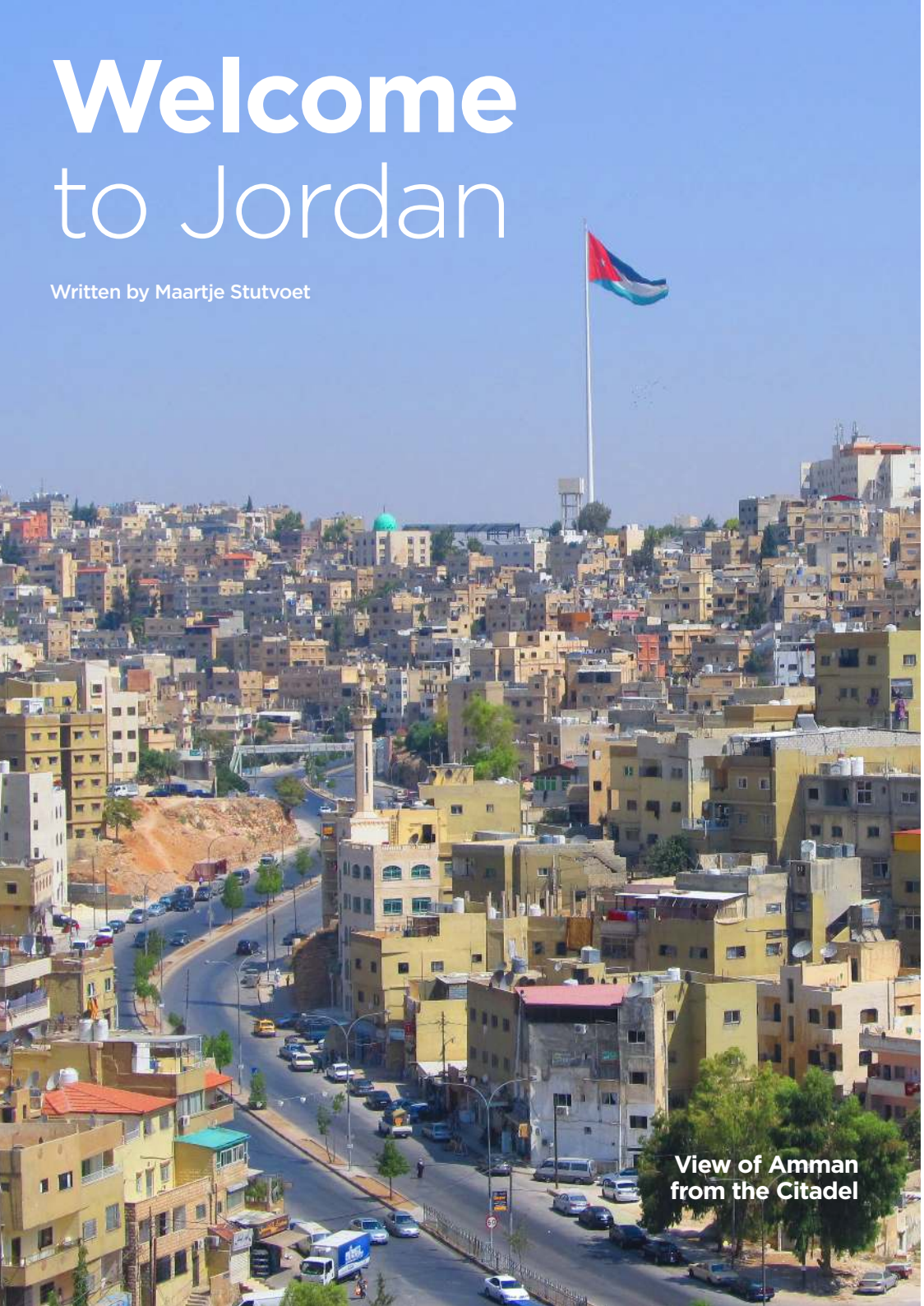
Day V: Wadi Rum & Aqaba

If you stay the night in the desert, you can further explore it the next day and then head to Aqaba in about an hour. If you stayed the night back in Amman, you can drive to Wadi Rum in about 4 hours or directly to Aqaba. The distance between Amman and Aqaba is 345km. WADI RUM Wadi Rum is a great choice on a short five-day trip because it offers one of the easiest and safest glimpses of the desert in the region. You can discover Wadi Rum on a jeep-, camel- or horse-ride. Especially the jeeps can take you easily to the best scenic sites and local Bedouin campsites. For more adventurous and full-day explorers, go for climbing and trekking options.

AQABA At the Gulf of Aqaba the city welcomes you back to urban city-life. This city is, compared to Amman, more a spot of relaxation and seaside-adventures like diving and snorkelling. With its local scene of an 'on-holiday' atmosphere, Aqaba is definitely worth to stay longer if you have more than 5 days on your trip. From Aqaba you can also cross the border to Egypt or Israel and the Palestinian Territories to expand your exploration of the region.

Welcome to Jordan

Written by Maartje Stutvoet



View of Amman from the Citadel

In 2012 I, had already been to Jordan with my parents. However, when I heard about the possibility of visiting the country again as part of the Honours College course 'Passions of Tourism', I did not have the slightest doubt – I wanted to go! This desire was not caused by a wish to see the fascinating Petra, to float for a second time in the Dead Sea, or to visit Amman this time, although I did not mind at all engaging in these activities. The longing to visit Jordan once again was a result of the warm feelings I felt towards the country after my first stay there in 2012.

Like no one else, the Jordanians know how to make you feel welcome in their country. 'Welcome to Jordan!' is something that you will hear often. It does not matter where you go or what you do, everywhere you will be greeted warmly by the Jordanians. Even upon leaving Jordan via the Queen Alia Airport in Amman, my fellow travellers and I were told 'Welcome to Jordan!

Most of all, I cherish the memory of the first night in Jordan in the summer of 2015. Together with some other students I slept in the Jordan River Hotel in Amman in anticipation of the start of the summer school the following day. That evening we strolled through Amman to look for an attractive place to eat our dinner while admiring our surroundings. We ended up in a local restaurant. The five of us did not go unnoticed with our western European appearance and this resulted in having a number of children welcoming us by giving us a piece of paper with their names and the famous sentence 'Welcome to Jordan' written on it.

At first they kept their distance, but as we were writing our responses they gathered around us one by one, giggling excitedly. This hospitality is the big strength of Jordan. The owner of a carpet shop explained to me that I should not feel weighed down by entering his store, drinking tea with him, and leaving without buying anything. The repeated 'welcome' that you hear from all around while walking down the street is not meant to be obtrusive. The aim of the greeting is not to sell more products. It seems to be derived from a deep feeling of kindness combined with pride of their country. By being hospitable, the Jordanians can show that they are doing well in their country, that visitors are welcome. One might say that the Jordanian hospitality is not totally without underlying motives. For many people, tourism is an indispensable source of income, which makes the image of Jordan abroad essential. Moreover, the extent of the hospitality is not the same for each tourist depending on the country of origin. In a shoarma shop in Madaba another costumer offered us free drinks as gratitude for all things the Netherlands has done for Jordan.

Thinking back, a smile appears on my face. I wish everyone the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful warmth of the Jordanian people to form a more complete and nuanced image of the region – an image not only based on the stories in mass media.

Face to face with Jordanian history

Written by Jara Gerrits



In Amman Citadel

The current country of Jordan owns a rich history, but only in the twentieth century it emerged as a modern state. The area has been inhabited since 50.000 B.C. and belonged to the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. Roman excavations can still be found in for example Amman and Jerash. You can also still find a Roman theatre in Petra, besides its famous 'Treasury – Al-Khazneh'. In Umm ar-Rasas, there are remains of the Roman military camp Kastron Mefaa. It was very beautiful to walk amongst the remains, seeing the arches, high walls and small huts. The Church of Saint Stephen in Umm ar-Rasas contains a wonderful mosaic floor with representations of Palestinian and Jordanian cities.

Christian influences

With the conversion of Constantine the Great, Christianity started making its way into this region. This is still evident in the Church of Saint George in Madaba, where you can find a big mosaic floor with a map indicating the pilgrimage routes. The mosaic is 6 by 15,5 meters and depicts de most important Biblical places. The map is unique, because it is the oldest map of the region. Large parts of the mosaic have disappeared over time, but it was very nice to recognize a few places we had already visited on the colourful map and some places we still planned to visit for our Summer School.

The coming of the Arabs, Ottomans and British

The Arab followers of the prophet Mohammed invaded the borders of the Byzantine Empire from the south. In this way, the current territory of Jordan came to be ruled by various caliphates. Later, the area was conquered by the Mamluks and the Ottomans. Rising nationalism weakened the Ottoman Empire, and after the First World War, new borders were drawn. Syria and Lebanon ended up under French mandate and Palestine and Iraq ended up under British Mandate.

In 1923 Transjordan seceded from Palestine, and in 1946 it gained official independence as a kingdom, with Abdullah being its first king. His grandson Hussein made an end to the British military presence during the first years of his reign. This, however, did not mean the end of ongoing turmoil in the area. Conflicts in countries such as Israel/ Palestine, Iraq and Syria have led many refugees to come to Jordan. These events have caused the Jordanian population to redouble and made Jordan the country with the highest number of refugees in the world, when compared to its own population. Despite theongoing unrest in the region, Jordan is seen as a beacon of peace internationally but also by its own population.

Because of the coming of the Arabs, Islam is now the main religion in Jordan. We got to see some of this part of Jordanian history and culture by visiting the King Abdullah-mosque and the Islamic Museum in Amman. During our visit to the Citadel in Amman, we saw a beautiful representation of the history of Jordan, in the form of three stones showing the different names given to the city of Amman over time.

Bedouins

In Petra and Wadi Rum, we have encountered many Bedouins. Bedouins are a seminomadic group and original inhabitants of the Arabian and Syrian deserts. They roamed the desert and lived in tents made of goat or camel hair. Their nomad existence has, to a great extent, come to an end. The wells in the desert have dried up and the herds enlarge the danger of extreme drought by overgrazing. Special projects, set up by the government, assist Bedouins to develop other ways of life. Most of them are now farmers or work in the tourism industry. The traditional Bedouin habits and hospitality attract many tourists. Since UNESCO declared Petra as World Heritage in 1985, the authorities decided that Bedouins were no longer allowed to live in the mountain caves. Now, they are only allowed to be in the gorges during daytime. They are, however, the only Jordanians who are allowed to trade in Petra. With our group we, of course, visited Petra, and you can read more about our experience in Petra in the entry "Petra: City of stone".



Byzantine Mosaic in the Church of Saint George, Madaba

Religion in Jordan

Written by Bregje Tingen

Before visiting a country it can be useful and interesting to get acquainted with at least the basics about the culture and religion of that place. You can use this knowledge to adapt your behaviour in a way that will be respectful towards the inhabitants of that place - in this case Jordan. Islam is the main religion in Jordan. 94% of the population follows Sunni Islam and a small percentage Shia Islam. Besides Muslims, there are also Christians living in Jordan. They comprise around 6% of the population. This percentage used to be higher; in 1950 the Christian minority made up 30% of the population.

Another aspect you may also want to consider is what kind of clothes you will bring with you. This applies for both men and women, but perhaps it may be perceived as being a bit stricter for women.

When I visit a country with a warmer climate (like Jordan), I normally just pack some clothes, shoes and toiletries a few days before departure. But that was not the case for this trip. Jordan is a moderate Muslim country and I did not know what would be appropriate to wear as a European woman. I wanted to have a comfortable stay, but at the same time I did not want to offend the local people, their culture and religion. I searched online for some practical tips, and I learned that you should cover up over the knee and up to the elbows. Another important aspect is that your clothes should not be too tight.

However, when we were in Jordan I discovered the clothing rules are not that strict. As a female tourist I would recommend wearing trousers or a skirt that covers up over the knee, but it is definitely not necessary to cover your arms or hair when are on the streets or in tourist places. A normal short-sleeve t-shirt will be fine! When visiting a mosque it is mandatory to cover up, but there will be clothing you can borrow over there. So this should not be a problem. However, I would recommend bringing a scarf to cover your hair if you are visiting a mosque. In other places it is not necessary to cover your hair.



Greek Orthodox Church at the Baptismal Site



The Complex of King Abdullah I Mosque in Amman





Jordan from a **feminist perspective**

Written by Ginger van Breukelen

One of the things on which I wanted to focus during my trip to Jordan was the possible presence of gender differences. Since I am a strong proponent of equal rights for men and women, I have always been interested in feminism. Feminism was generally a political movement first and academic theory second. The goal has always been to identify, understand, and dismantle inequalities between men and women. [1]

Over the years, feminists therefore have tried to highlight and challenge the persistence of inequalities between men and women. Work – what it is, who does it, and where – in particular has been a key area of struggle. [2]

While an over-all rise in female participation in waged labour has been noticeable, there is still a lot of geographic variation. Unfortunately, the rates of female participation in Christian and Islamic countries are nowadays still relatively low. [3]

Since I was aware of this information, I wanted to observe Jordan's working-life, and it struck me that almost everywhere all the employees were men. Our tour guide told me that, in his culture, it is accepted, probably even desired, for the woman to stay at home, and for the man to work and provide for his family. The woman is supposed to be taken care of. In Arab societies it is more common for women to be considered in their main functions of caring for and nurturing the family. Jordanians do not consider women in their country to be suppressed: in their opinion, they are respected in their value and dignity.

This also made me think differently about an experience that we had one day during our trip, when we visited a mosque. This day, actually only a few hours of it, we had to wear the hijab. In the Netherlands I always disliked hijabs because they gave me the feeling that women have to hide. But being surrounded by a culture in which women wearing hijabs are highly respected and appreciated made me feel a lot more comfortable. For once I could feel the beauty of it; not being looked at all the time because some man in European countries simply think it is okay to approach you. My own experience made it easier for me to look at some characteristics of Islam, and to have a better understanding of this culture and religion.

1 J. pollard, 'Feminism and Work' (2009, Elsevier Ltd.) Newcastle University, page 29
2 J. pollard, 'Feminism and Work' (2009, Elsevier Ltd.) Newcastle University, page 29
3 J. pollard, 'Feminism and Work' (2009, Elsevier Ltd.) Newcastle University, page 30



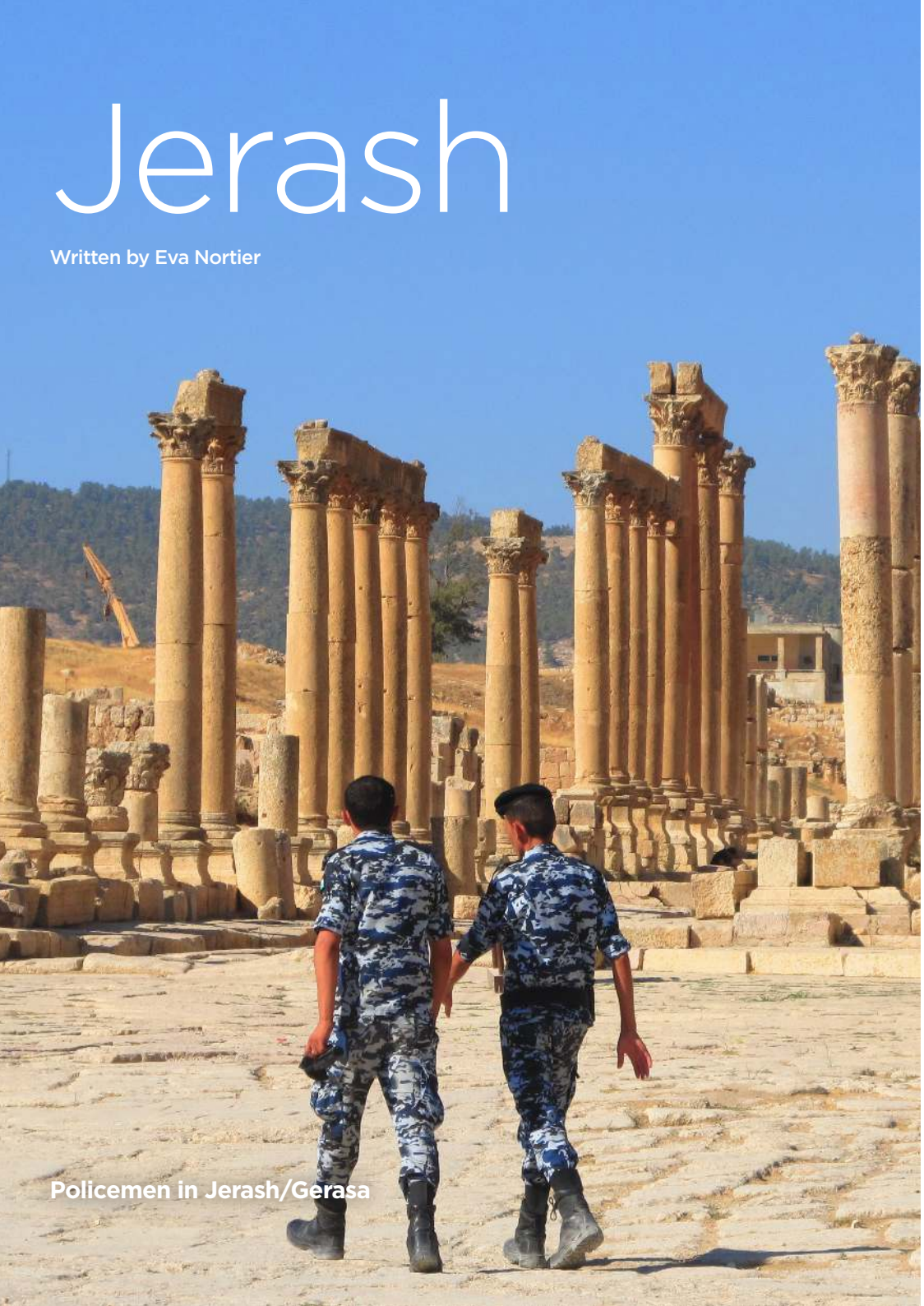
Two Students at King Abdullah I Mosque in Amman



Jordanian Dolls

Jerash

Written by Eva Nortier



Policemen in Jerash/Gerasa

What a contrast: two modern day Jordanian tourist policemen wearing contemporary uniforms patrolling between the Roman ruins of the city of Jerash. They are in uniform, sleeves rolled up, hat in hand, casually walking; the police discipline is a bit milder under 40 degrees Celcius sun. In the background we see the ancient ruins, the colour of sand, the crumbling row of pillars, sometimes hastily restored. Their uniform matches the blue sky, the skin of their tanned arms matches the sandstone. Nobody's there but them, well, except for the photographer. And us, of course, the small group of Honours College University of Groningen students going tourist. To me, this photograph represents the state of tourism in Jordan at the moment, August 2015.

Many are the reasons to travel to Jordan!, it says in just about every travel guide. My reason to visit are the visible remains of Ancient History. Jordan has seen Roman, Assyrian, Hellenistic andPersian influences and cultures. It is quite hard to imagine what those times and cultures must have

been like, to see history come to life. In the preserved city of Jerash (formerly Gerasa), history becomes tangible. The city was embellished for the coming of emperor Hadrian in the year 129 CE. The wealth of the area can be seen clearly in Gerasa, making it nowadays an excellent place for tourism. On the south side of the city we find an enormous gate with three passages, giving entrance to the city. Underneath the middle passage we enter the archeological park, quite the dramatic entrance! To our left, the remains of the giant hippodrome, where horse racing was held. The building was a staggering 245 meters long, but sadly not much of the building remains. The authentic feeling of the hippodrome now comes from a horse, standing underneath one of the ornamental arches. Its owner is taking a nap in the shade. The Roman main street of the city, the cardo, is colonnaded. The remaining pillars that flank the street are really a sight to behold. At the cross section where the two main streets meet, a perfect four-gated arch remains. You can almost hear the music coming from the theatre, which still remains in perfect state. Two crumbling giant temples dominate the landscape in the distance. It will never be like you are actually walking in a city in the second century AD, but the beautiful site of Gerasa makes it just a little bit less difficult to imagine doing so.

While walking through to the sandstone structures, I look around wondering. What is wrong with this site? It cannot be the ruins, even Rome itself does not have so many monuments so well preserved, not so easily accessible. And then it hits me. What this (archeological) tourism heaven is missing are tourists. We are literally the only ones there! Returning to the image of the two policemen walking through the ruins. They are the image incarnate of the state of tourism in Jordan. The beautiful country with its beautiful sites is being overshadowed by the turmoil in the region. The threat is imminent, always tangible, in the background. It just shows that two policemen are apparently needed at a (very quiet) tourist site. To us they do not seem to be doing much, even their pace is slow and lacks all military alertness, but they are there nonetheless. Maybe they tell a different story. Those two policemen with their rolled up sleeves, casual walking, and beret in hand. Maybe the weather is just too hot for any sightseeing.

Nature

Written by Josine Rawee

Apart from all the cultural, religious, and archaeological highlights, Jordan also has a lot of beautiful nature to offer. Take the Dead Sea or the beautiful Wadi Rum desert for example. For the active and sportive types, there is also the majestic Wadi Mujib, a canyon where you can hike, climb, and slide from natural water slides.

The Dead Sea

The Dead Sea, which is with 430 meters below sea level the lowest point on earth, is a beautiful and interesting place in Jordan. It is known for its high salinity level, which means you can float on it and even read a book while doing that. The mud that comes from the bottom of the Dead Sea is said to improve the skins natural processes, ease rheumatic pains, relax muscles, and provide inner calmness and tranquillity. Unfortunately, the water level of the Dead Sea is reducing vastly. The prime reason for this is the higher evaporation and lesser inflow from the Jordan River.

Wadi Rum

The Wadi Rum desert is a valley in the south of Jordan, with a size of about 720 square kilometres. It is characterized by its rock formations and sand dunes. There are a lot of camps that will let you experience the style of living of the original inhabitants, the Bedouins; you can read more about the Bedouins in 'Face to Face with the Jordanian history'. This means, amongst other things, sleeping in tents made of woven goats' wool and cooking meat in a hole under the sand. At night thousands of stars will be visible, and by day you can explore the desert by camel or jeep.

Wadi Mujib

Wadi Mujib is a canyon in the mid-west of Jordan with a river (River Arnon) flowing at the bottom. Here you can hike through the river, climb small rocks, and jump from higher rocks into the water. It is one of the few places in Jordan where you can swim in fresh natural water. You can spend a day in the canyon climbing and playing in the water. The beautiful orange walls in combination with the clear blue water make it a breath-taking place to be. You start walking upstream until you reach a big waterfall. On your way back, all the rocks you climbed on the way there you can now slide down.



Valley in Wadi Mujib







Dead Sea fun



Wadi Rum Explorations

Visiting a **conflict area?**

Written by Julia Doornbos

Jordan is located in an area of ongoing socio-political troubles, think for instance about the neighbouring Syria, Iraq, or the West Bank in Palestine. In spite of political instabilities in neighbouring countries, Jordan itself is often considered as the 'Switzerland of the Middle East'. Thus, the country is often seen as a safe haven and many refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have settled in the area.

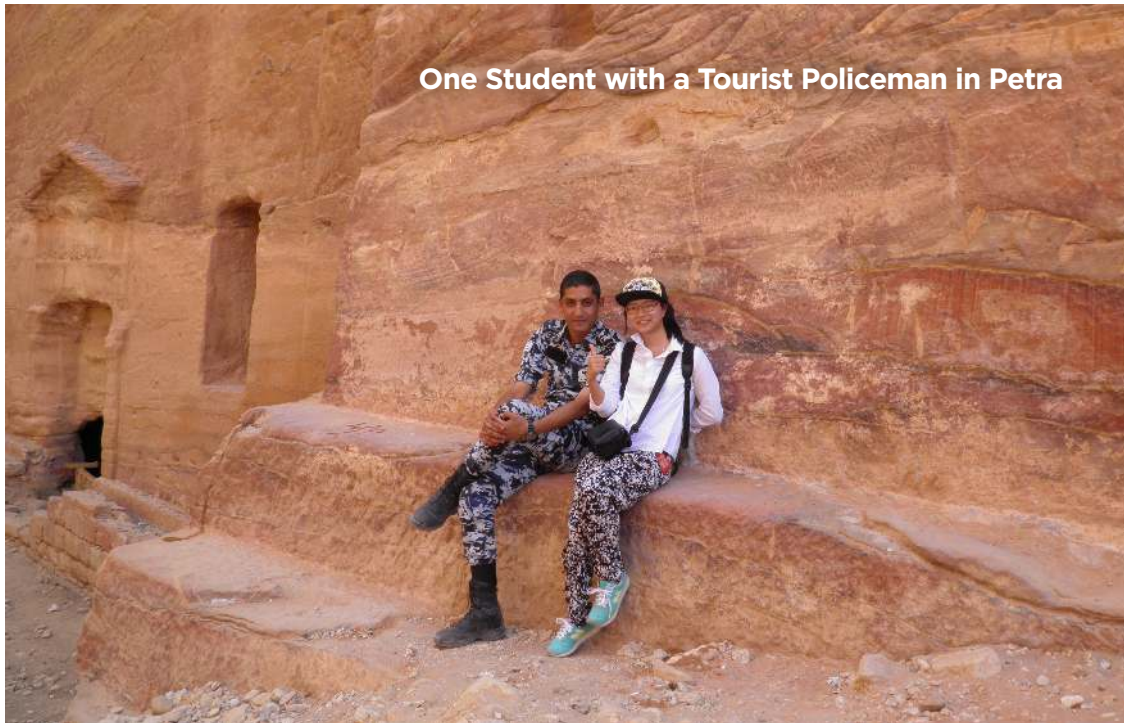
Examples of such flows are the Palestinians. In 1917, the British minister of Foreign Affairs, Arthur Balfour, proclaimed support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The number of Jewish people in Palestine rose, and after the Second World War conflicts broke out between Israelites and the neighbouring Arab countries. As a result many Palestinians fled to Jordan, causing the Jordanian population to almost double. Also, since the expulsion of Saddam Hussein in 2003 over half a million Iraqis fled to Jordan. In the summer of 2012, the first Syrian refugees came to Jordan. The number of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan has increased to over half a million. This has resulted in enormous refugee camps in the Northern parts of the country. These events made Jordan, one of the countries with the highest number of refugees in the world in comparison to its own population. When visiting Amman the differences between the inhabitants were also apparent. Many Muslim women only wore a headscarf, while others were fully dressed in a burka. Our guide, Omar, explained that this showed the differences in background: Jordanian Muslim women are often dressed more modern, while most Iraqis and Syrians are more conservative. Despite the ongoing unrest in the region, Jordan is considered as a beacon of peace, by its own population. But for economically developed countries in Western Europe or North America the whole 'Middle East' is often considered unsafe, through which many people are deterred to visit. So, for some, safety is a prerequisite for travel, while others are not scared off by socio-political, sometimes violent, instabilities, and can even be enticed by it. This form of tourism is known in the literature as dark tourism, meaning travel to a location for symbolic or actual encounters with death and disaster. This is not a new phenomenon. Perhaps the oldest and most striking examples are the gladiator fights in the Roman Colosseum. Consider also the concentration camps, terror houses, and places of terrorist attacks across the world that have become tourist attractions.

Dorina Buda, a researcher at the University of Groningen researches the connections between tourism, safety, and conflict. She explores why people travel to areas of conflict and more importantly, what they feel when they are in these places, and the dynamics between tourists, locals and places. She conducts longitudinal ethnography, that is, she goes on multiple fieldworks in Jordan and the West Bank, in which she interviews local tour operators, tour guides and tourists. Buda recently published a book about the subject, called 'Affective Tourism: Dark Routes in Conflict' (2015). A possible way to understand these tourism dynamics is that visiting such places brings forth certain emotions of fear, fun, desire and attraction. These emotions are usually not expressed freely in daily life, and in touring these places we have the possibility to feel them and reflect upon such feelings when back in our home countries.

When reflecting on our own visit in Jordan, I can relate to this. Before visiting many of us were scared and questioned whether it would be safe. But during the trip, for me, this feeling was transformed in a certain thrill: the feeling of being in a country so close to an area that is a daily part of the news. For instance hearing about Jordan's border with Syria at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Amman, was not as abstract anymore because it was so near.

For me, these experiences made 'breaking news' reports more real and tangible. Another example is the visit to Bethany Beyond the Jordan – the Baptismal Site, where Jesus is believed to have been baptised. On the other side of the river, a few meters further, soldiers stood guard at the Israeli/ Palestinian side of this tourist attraction.

At that moment I was not scared as such, but a feeling emerged of being on the front line of a conflict area. Reflecting on this after the trip, it feels like I indeed admit to have enjoyed looking at soldiers, guns, and other such examples of the regional conflict. It is not as simple as that. I think it is a feeling that many people experience, and can even attract them to visit sites of death and disaster. For myself, it was definitely a new experience and certain emotions came up that I would never admit of having before this experience. As for the future, I would never intentionally and consciously gaze upon other people's misery, but feeling the tension without seeing the actual victims in Jordan definitely had an unexpected effect on my emotions.



One Student with a Tourist Policeman in Petra



Boutique

Economy of Jordan

Written by Maaike Schoonejans

'Were you also a bit nervous to come to Jordan?' is a question I have answered often during my stay. Some students from the Honours College decided not to apply for the summer school to Jordan with this thought in mind. Those students in Groningen are, unfortunately, not the exception.

Tourism in Jordan accounted for 10 percent of the GDP in 2015. Because of its location in between war-zones, tourism in Jordan has decreased severely. The revenue from tourism has fallen 15 percent during the first four months of 2015. Hotels near Petra are closed and souvenir shops see their revenue decrease monthly. Possible tourists doubt whether they would like to visit Jordan. As I study economics and I used to live for 18 years in a tourist city (Amsterdam), I raise the following questions: How do tourists fearing to travel to Jordan affect the country? What are the main sources of income in Jordan? How do Jordanians keep their economy running despite this decrease in number of international tourists?

Resources

Jordan owns very few mineral resources. As a country where 90 percent is classified as desert, it only has potassium and phosphate, hence, sand. With Saudi Arabia as the neighbouring country with which it shares the longest border, one could think that Jordan had a large collection of oil. Unfortunately, it only possesses shale oil, which is very costly and complex to extract. Although investment plans are created, oil is currently still imported from Iraq. Because of their lack of mineral resources, 70 percent of domestic demand for goods needs to be imported.

Solution?

Jordan lacks mineral resources and tourism is decreasing. With all the needed import, how does Jordan keep the economy running? Jordan has joined several trade agreements, such as with the European Union in 1999; Jordan joined the World Trade Organisation and is currently discussing a free trade agreement with the European Free Trade Association.

It has signed a free trade agreement with the US as well. Besides, Jordan receives a lot of help from foreign organisations such as the USAID, which is a U.S. government agency that invests in the historical sites of Jordan. Hence, foreign countries invest considerably in Jordan. Why? What does Jordan has to offer?

Although Jordan is located in the middle of a region in socio-political turmoil, Jordan is politically stable. This country is also called a 'safe haven in a region in conflict'. Every organisation, even the Dutch embassy where we have been, every tourist guide, every random Jordan inhabitant that we have met mentioned the safety of Jordan.

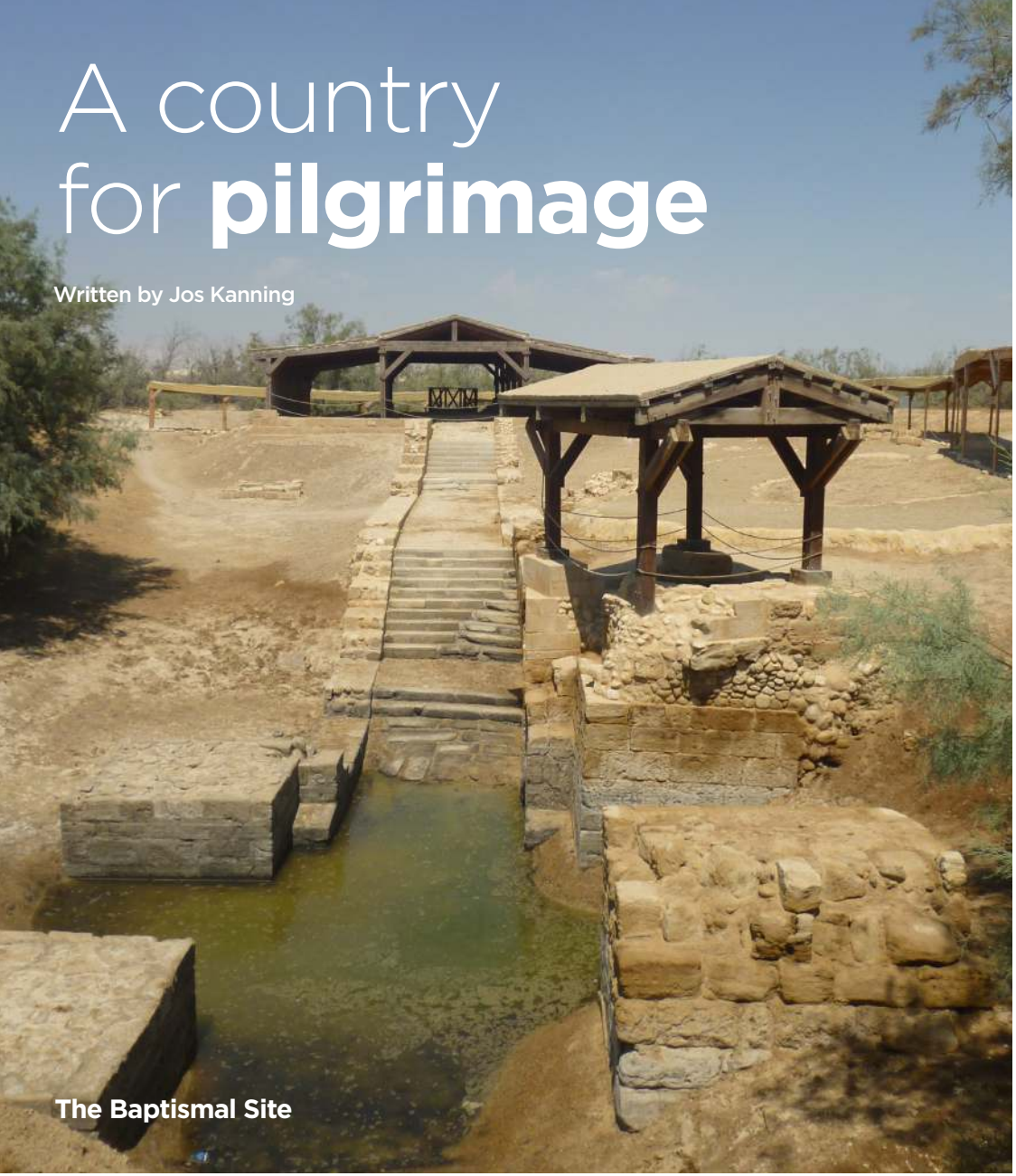
By offering help, foreign countries build a relationship of trust and alliances with Jordan. Because of the location of Jordan in the middle of a troubled area, this may be of great value for both parties involved, especially if the regional conflicts intensify.

Conclusion

Because of the free trade agreement, Jordan is able to keep the economy running despite the great necessity to import products. Moreover, the historic and tourist sites are being renovated, which increases the odds for tourism to increase in the future. Moreover, the attention towards Jordan as a safe country, also by foreign parties such as USAID, can contribute to a future increase in tourism. These are all positive aspects of the development of the economy of Jordan towards these alliances.

A country for **pilgrimage**

Written by Jos Kanning



The Baptismal Site

Whoever travels through the Jordanian landscape will be impressed by the sheer amount of religious structures. From imposing domed mosques to Eastern Orthodox churches to ancient Roman temples, Jordan is a treasure trove for anyone even remotely interested in religion and spirituality. Although Jordan hosts a vast array of religiously significant sites, two specific sites stand out in particular for any practitioner or enthusiast of the Judaic-, Christian- and Islamic faith(s).

Mount Nebo – Moses' Death- and Burial Site

Just a few kilometres from the Wadi Rum Valley stands the ridge known as Mount Nebo. It is here, according to the Old Testament, that Moses saw his first and last glimpse at the promised Holy Land before he died. Although his exact place of burial is subject to conjecture, many prominent scholars agree that he is buried somewhere around this area. The significance of the place was further emphasized when Pope John Paul II visited Mount Nebo in 2001, deeming it a Holy pilgrimage site for Christians.

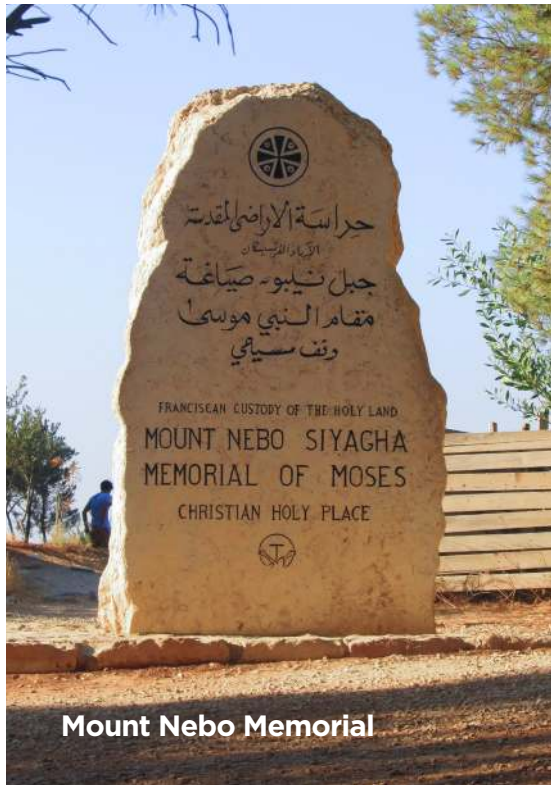
Besides the obvious religious importance of the site, it should not be neglected by those who are less religiously inclined. The top of the ridge offers a stunning panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. Even a view of Jerusalem is possible on a clear day. The same peak also houses a typical Byzantine church, constructed to commemorate Moses' burial site. Inside, it is filled with beautiful mosaics depicting an elaborate assortment of exotic animals and hunting practices.

Bethany Beyond the Jordan – The Birthplace of Christianity

"Then Jesus came from the Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John" (Matthew 3:13). It almost seems difficult to imagine that at this humble site along the Jordan River, one of the main religions of the world saw its birth. It is here, according to archaeologists and important religious leaders alike, that John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ, thereby ushering the Christian faith. It is also generally assumed to be the place where the Prophet Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire.

Anyone intending to visit the Baptismal site will not be in bad company, for the site has been visited by a total of three Popes (and other religious leaders) and a significant number of royalty from all over the world. When Pope John Paul II visited the baptism site, he deemed it "One of the five official Jordan Pilgrimage sites" thereby validating the religious significance of the Bethany Beyond the Jordan.

Although the previous sections have addressed the religious significance of the site, it should be noted that anyone will be able to appreciate the quiet solitude of Bethany Beyond the Jordan. Sit at the Jordan River, dip your feet into the refreshingly cool water, and wave colloquially at the opposing Israeli riverbank; You'll be sure to receive a warm response.



Mount Nebo Memorial

Petra
City of stone

Written by Sybrand Zeinstra

The city of Petra is arguably Jordan's most famous tourist site. Located at lucrative trade routes, bringing frankincense and spices from the east, the city served as capital of the Nabataean Empire from the 3rd century BC. In 4th century AD an earthquake and changes in trade took their toll. The city was deserted, except for the Bedouins living in the area. What is left today are theatres, temples, and tombs, a lot of which are hewn from the rocks. In 2007 the site was voted one of the seven wonders of the modern world.

If you plan to visit Petra, do come prepared. If you want to get a good look at the many structures on the site, you will need to spend a good time walking. Therefore, good hiking shoes are recommended, especially if you want to visit the Monastery at the end of the main trail. But even if you don't want to or cannot walk that much you can still see a lot of the city, as you can take a ride for a few dinars.

A narrow gorge leads you into the city of stone. At the end of the gorge lies the Treasury, an impressive 40-metre high mausoleum carved completely from the sandstone rocks. Petra was a crossroad of cultures; the Hellenistic influence is clearly visible in the columns, friezes, and Corinthian capitals. The Treasury gets its name from the urn on top, which, according to legends, is said to contain a treasure.

With part of the group we went up to see the Monastery. With its 48-metre height it is taller than the Treasury. The Monastery was used as a temple for one of the Nabataean gods but it derives its name from the crosses carved into the walls when it served as a church during Byzantine times.

As mentioned before, good hiking shoes are recommended, since the Monastery is located a few hundred meters above the rest of the ruins. Along the trail you will find many places with a beautiful view of the surrounding landscape. Be sure to bring along plenty of water as the weather in Jordan can be quite hot.

Around Petra you will encounter locals. As a small piece of advice: do not promise to buy anything on the way back, unless you are really planning to do so. You will come back the same way you came and the locals do not forget your promise.

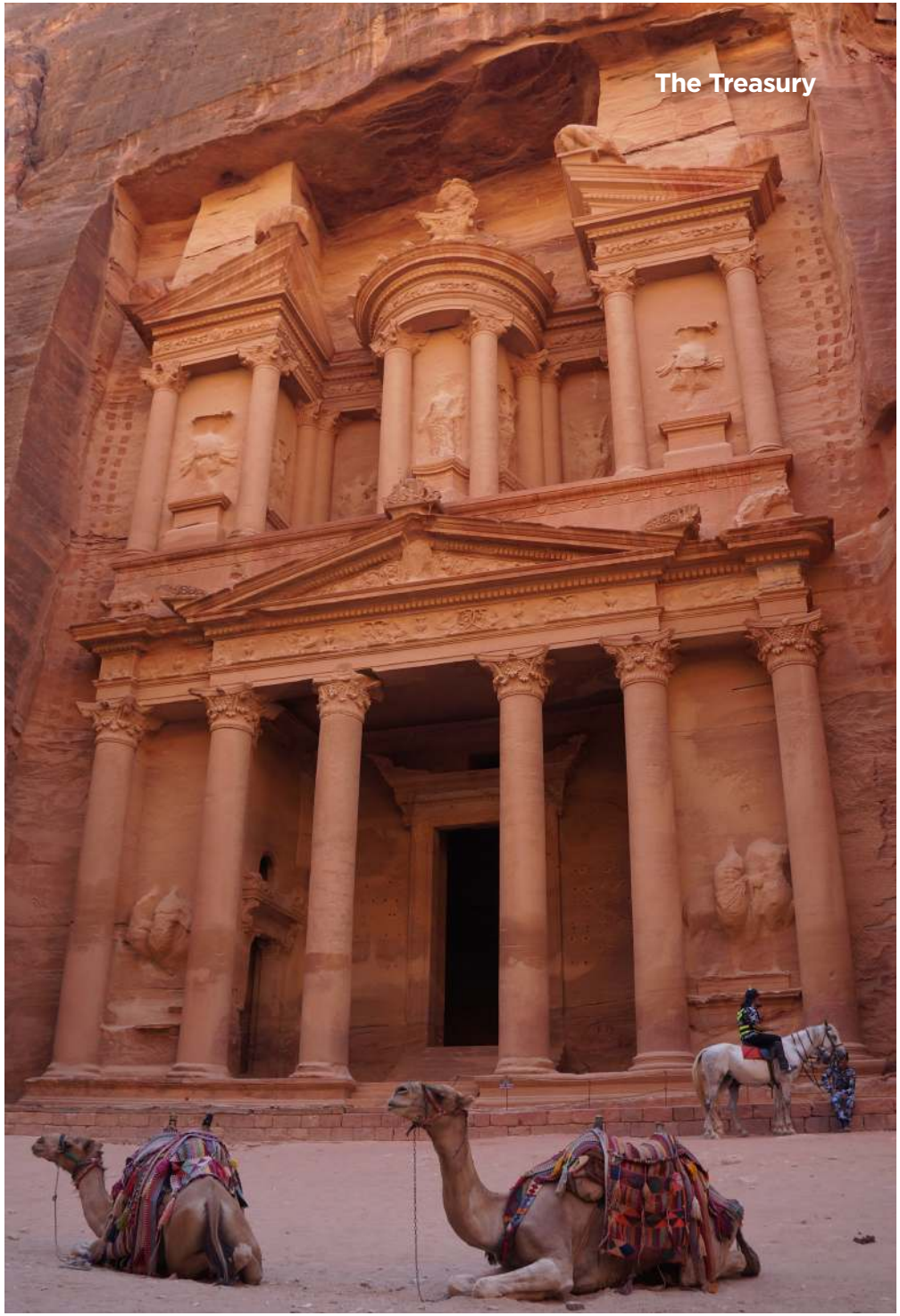
Petra is a grand and impressive city, and is certainly worth paying a visit.



View from the Siq
On the way to the Treasury




The Monastery


The Treasury

Fun to **know**

Written by Rasyida Noor & Christina Verbruggen



Portraits of the Royal Family in the Roman Theatre in Amman

Everyone loves the King and his family! When entering the capital city, many are surprised by how often they could find the posters or gigantic pictures of the King in almost every corner. Apparently it is common to praise the King in public, as everything was seemed to be "thanks to God and the King".



Petra

One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the city of Petra, was literally carved into the surrounding rock 2000 years ago. It was not until the 19th century that Petra was discovered by a 27-year-old Swiss explorer called Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. Interestingly, its rose red-collored rocks change colours depending on the sunlight exposure during different times of the day, leaving a stunning impression for the visitors.



Mud Bath at the Dead Sea

The Dead Sea lies 402 meters below the sea level, which is also the lowest point on earth. It is called the Dead Sea because only small amounts of specialized bacteria can survive its high salinity level. Its salinity is about nine times that of the oceans.



Jordan River

Jordan is also famous for its religious and pilgrimage tourism. The baptism site by the Jordan River is one of modern biblical archaeology's most notable discoveries. It is believed that this area is where John the Baptist resided and was the baptism place of Jesus Christ.



Amman

Amman, the capital of Jordan is originally constructed across seven hills also known as "Jabbals". Nowadays, the city spans nineteen of them. In the city, there is no "east side" or "west side". The directions are given based on these "Jabbals". When visiting Amman, one must notice that the buildings and landmarks are more or less identical. This is because almost every single constructions and buildings in Amman is made of stone or concrete with white limestone slabs.

Overcoming **prejudices**

Written by Sophie Lammertink

Whenever one thinks about places and countries in the world, certain aspects considered 'typical' or 'representative' of a certain country will come to mind. For example, a lot of people think of windmills, tulips, and marihuana when visualizing the Netherlands; of baguettes, wine, and fashion when thinking about France; Germany seems to be all about beer, bratwurst, and Oktoberfest. These features are usually part of the stereotyping views most of us have. Before I travelled to Jordan in August 2015, as part of the Passions of Tourism Summer School, I carefully thought of what I considered typical of this country in the 'Middle East'. In my imagination Jordan consisted of endless deserts and turbulent cities, existing out of all these small streets where there would be people selling herbs, tea, and scarves in very colourful shops. I expected the country to be strongly male-dominated and oriented towards Muslim values and traditions. Moreover, I assumed there would be tensions, considering the turmoil currently happening in the area surrounding Jordan.

This stereotype view upon the "unknown" can be troublesome. As a matter of fact, the tensions between people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds can often be explained based upon stereotypes. When people act upon their negative stereotypes and prejudiced beliefs, it can result in discrimination. [1]



Jordanian Bedouins

Some stereotypes, indeed, could represent a certain truth or reality. But mostly these stereotypes are based upon the differences people think exist between them and others of different ethnicity, race, gender, or culture. In their minds, these differences become more significant, and this can lead to perceiving the differences as greater than they are, while there is no focus on similarities. In the Netherlands, discrimination is an important societal problem, affecting large numbers of individuals, especially the ethnic minorities.

But there is hope in changing these stereotypes, and this hope partly is due to travel and tourism. Nowadays it is much more acceptable to acknowledge that knowledge is not neutral, but very nuanced and situated. This new way of judging knowledge is often referred to as postmodernism, which arose with the discovery that there were others who had different versions of the truth; this began to challenge the opinions of the majority (like the feminists, homosexuals, ethnic and racial minorities, and the like). Hence, we came to realize that knowledge is produced by humans, it is socially constructed and developed from different views. This is important in tourism because, if we think about tourism as the study of social life, not just as an analysis of leisure, this may help us to better understand our world, knowledge, and most importantly: each other. [2]

The differences in cultures also arise from different views of the world. To enhance reciprocal understanding, it is important for people to realize that their view might not be indisputable. If we learn to understand that there is more than just our own truth, we are open to other people's way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. In this way, tourism can contribute to resolving conflicts and misunderstandings between cultures by connecting people from different backgrounds.

A lot of tourists, but also local people, learn to reconsider some of the thoughts and stereotypes they had of each other when they encounter culture and people in real life. This theory is based upon the contact hypothesis, a strategy for making groups 'get along better'. This thoroughly researched principle states that bringing members of conflicting groups together will reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations. [3]

Upon our visit in Jordan, we were in contact with the local people as well. During the first days of the trip, you could detect some hesitation among the group to engage with the locals. As the days progressed, however, we started talking more with local people, and we became more open towards their habits and beliefs. Among our group, we discussed that we started feeling more relaxed in this country that some of us had feared. We generally liked the people that we met, and we had some really nice experiences with the Jordanian culture. Slowly but steadily, the students in our group started to realize that some of the



Bedouin and his Camels in the Wadi Rum Desert

stereotyping views that we held before arriving in Jordan were actually not even close to the truth.

For example, women did not have to feel threatened by the culture at all. Even though Jordanian public spaces are obviously dominated by men and Muslims, I, as a white, Christian woman from a Western European country, never felt discriminated for not being a man or Muslim. Moreover, I experienced at the Christian holy sites that we visited (Mount Nebo, Bethany beyond the Jordan, Madaba, etc.) that there is a tolerant attitude towards other religions, in spite of Islam being the main religion in this country.

Furthermore, the norms for dressing were not as strict as we expected them to be. Besides, I actually liked wearing a headscarf and wearing clothes that cover most of your skin, as I felt that my appearance was much less important than it is in the Netherlands. Therefore, I noticed that I also look differently at the Muslim women I have encountered in the Netherlands after my visit to Jordan, with more acceptance and respect for their traditional way of dressing themselves. Before I visited Jordan, I often considered their appearance to be a result of the oppressive attitude I assumed Islam imposes on women. Now, I realize that it is much more than that, and that most women probably feel more comfortable this way. So in a way this also enhanced my understanding of these kinds of traditions. (For more details see the article on Religion)

Also, people generally liked to talk to us and to get to know us. As soon as I got to know the culture a bit, I realized that there was not much misunderstanding to overcome with the Jordanians, as they are in many ways more similar to most Europeans than I expected. In this way, our visit to Jordan was a beautiful example of how bringing groups together that are not familiar with each other's norms and values can reduce stereotyping opinions and enhance understanding. So, if you identify with my initial stereotyping views and expectations of Jordan and the 'Middle East', I would recommend visiting the country. In this way you can explore what is out there and perhaps even enrich your knowledge and understanding of the world. Overcoming these stereotypes and prejudices can ultimately lead to making the world a better more peaceful place.

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Traditional Tea-making

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Chief of Party USAID

Kamil Sawalha
Nebo Tours

Jelle Maarten de Vries
Designer

Participants of the summerschool

Julia Doornbos
Jara Gerrits
Eva Nortier
Josine Rawee
Maaike Schoonejans
Jos Kanning
Sybrand Zeinstra
Li He
Klara Hillmann
Maartje Stutvoet
Bregje Tingen
Ginger van Breukelen
Rasyida Noor
Sophie Lammertink
Christina Verbruggen
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