

## Al- Khazneh

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The Treasury (Arabic: al-Khazneh), the most magnificent of Petra's monuments. One of the most elegant remains of the ancient world, it is carved out of solid rock and stands over 40 meters high.

The Treasury was probably constructed in the 1st century BC. As its design has no precedent in Petra, it is thought that it was carved by Near-Eastern Hellenistic architects.

The purpose of the Treasury remains something of a mystery. One thing that is fairly certain, however, is that it was not a treasury. In reality, the Treasury is generally believed to be a temple or a royal tomb, but neither conclusion is certain.

The tomb/temple got its popular name from the Bedouin belief that pirates hid ancient pharoanic treasures in the tholos (giant stone urn) which stands in the center of the second level. In an attempt to release the treasure, Bedouins periodically fired guns at it — the bullet holes which are still clearly visible on the urn.

When the first Western visitors arrived at Petra in the 19th century, a stream ran from Siq and across the plaza. The stream has since been diverted and the plaza leveled for the sake of tourists.

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