

Karak: A Journey Through Time and Civilization

Narrative of Human and Place



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The Origin of the Name Karak :

Various scholars and historical texts suggest that the name Karak has Aramaic roots, dating back to the fourth or fifth century BC. The establishment of the city and its castle is attributed to King Mesha' of Moa'b during the period of BC 860 - 840 .

Some sources link the name to ancient references such as Kir Moa'b, which translates to "fortress." The Old Testament mentions it in several variations: Kir Hareseh, Kir Hares, or Kir Hereseh. The first part (Kir) signifies fortress or castle, while the latter one has been subject to numerous interpretations until 1868.

Following the discovery of the Mesha' inscription, housed in the Louvre Museum in Paris, the Hebrew term (Hares) was understood to correspond to its Moa'bite equivalent, meaning "a high hill." This led to the conclusion that the name denotes a fortified city situated on elevated ground.

The term Alqasaba refers to a fortified castle built on a high location, as noted in al-Zubaidi's glossary, Taj al-Arus, under the entry for QASAB. Some historians trace the name to an Aramaic origin, specifically (Karkha) as referenced in the Mesha' inscription, which later evolved into (Al-Karak). This Aramaic term translated to "the walled city," with some scholars suggesting it is a variation of the Aramaic word (Karko), meaning "the castle." Others have linked it to the Aramaic word (Rakath), which also transformed into Al-Karak, retaining the meaning of "the fortified city" or "castle."

Al-Karak is referred to in Latin sources by the same Aramaic name and appears in French as Lecrach, Crac, or Krac, and in English as Karak or Kerak. This indicates that Al-Karak has its roots in the Aramaic or Syriac language, likely derived from a variation of the term Karkha or Karko, which conveys a similar meaning.

Some historians suggest that the Latin Crusaders used this Aramaic term to describe any fortified location situated on a high mountain, akin to Al-Karak. For instance, Karak was referred to as Karak Moa'b, Shobak as Karak Shobak, and the Kurdish fortress in Homs was named Karak Al-Fursan. Additionally, Zion Castle was known as Karak Zion. However, some Franks and later Western historians referred to Karak as Karak Al-Sahara to distinguish it from Karak Al-Fursan or Karak Hisn Al-Akrad.

In Arabic sources, Karak is identified by various names, including Karak Moa'b in Jordan and Karak Noah, named after the Prophet Noah, who is believed to be buried in a location between Ba'albek and Damascus. Al-Qalqashandi noted in Subh Al-A'sha that there was a place called Kork on the coast of Cyprus, while Yaqut described Karak in the Dictionary of Countries as an unusual term for a fortified castle located at the edge of the Levant in the Balqa region.

Regarding the towns of Karak, some historians, based on their documents, assert that the name of Southern Mazar is Jira. However, the current name is relatively modern, attributed to the presence of the shrines of the Companions who were leaders of the Battle of Mu'tah.

Mu'tah:

Historical texts and linguistic references indicate that Mu'tah derives from the term (Ma'at), which translates to (death). Ibn Asakir noted it as one of the attributes of a person called Ahsa bin Mu'tah. The term Mu'tah is also associated with meanings such as fainting and madness. Additionally, some Byzantine documents refer to it as (Ha Mu'tah), interpreted as a variation of the original Arabic term.

Arrabbah:

Known as Maab or Ma'ab, the area eventually adopted the name Rabbat and (Ar Moa'b). The Old Testament indicates it as (Ar Moa'b) which faced destruction in a single night. The prefix (Ar) is a Semitic term meaning city. Arrabbah was also referred to as (Ard Eber), while the Greeks named it (Ariopolis) in homage to their love deity, Ares, while the Romans associated it with Mars, the god of war. The image of Mars was depicted on currency discovered in Arrabbah, which signifies the goddess in both Canaanite and Aramaic, serving as the principal city and capital of Moa'b. Trestiram described it as the goddess of Moa'b, a city recognized by Greek and Roman historians, with its name stemming from the combination of (Ar, Abeh), meaning morning star.

AlQasir:

This location is named after a Nabataean palace, dating back to the second century AD.

Ader:

There are various theories regarding the origin of its name. Some attribute it to Emperor Hadrian, who is believed to have passed through the area, while others suggest it derives from the Syriac language, meaning the threshing floor. Alternatively, the name may have Canaanite roots, signifying glory or shining brilliance.

Muhai:

Dr. Sultan Al-Ma'ani suggests that the linguistic origin of Muhai is (Ma Ha W), which relates to the concepts of erasure and the fading of traces.

Kathraba:

Dr. Sultan Al-Ma'ani connects the Arabic term (Kafr) to Akkadian origins (Kafram), suggesting it may also be Canaanite or Aramaic (Kafr). It is likely that the name is derived from Aramaic, combining two words (Kafr Rabba), which gradually evolved into (Kathraba), meaning the principal city.

Aynun:

Yaqout indicates that Aynun is a Hebrew term; however, Dr. Sultan Al-Ma'ani, on the other hand, traces its origins to Canaanite or Aramaic, suggesting that in Canaanite, it signifies spring or eye, while in Aramaic, it translates to small eye.

Faqou':

The name Faqou' dates back to 1868 when the French orientalist De Saulcey visited the area and referred to it by this name. Dr. Sultan Al-Ma'ani asserts that its roots are Canaanite or Aramaic, meaning a low-lying area.

Sarfa:

Travelers such as Steizen, Burckhardt, Musil, and Palmer have referred to it with names similar to Sarfa. The term is of Canaanite origin, derived from the root (Sarp), which means to repeat, purify, or melt. Yaqout also associates Sarfa with the Aramaic term (Serapa), which denotes a place of education and coin minting.

Imra':

Burckhardt and Musil noted this location without I, while Gluck referred to it as Mara'a. The name is derived from Canaanite or Aramaic, meaning the grass of pasture.

Al-Hussainiya:

Historically, this area was known as Rajm Al-Sakhri.

Al-Khalidiya:

Previously, it was called Umm Zubayr, referring to the small hills.

Al-Umariya:

This location was formerly known as Idliqa

Al-Tayyiba:

Its earlier name was Khinzira, Khan Zira, or Khan Zina.

Al-Hashimiya:

This area was once referred to as Al-Duwaikhla.

Rakin:

Rakin is an Aramaic term meaning slope, possibly linked to Raqouqin, associated with the Battle of Mu'tah.

Ay:

The name Ay appears in the Madaba mosaic map. Dr. Sultan Al-Ma'ani notes that Ay corresponds to the ruins of ATA, as referenced in William Bury's work.

Marwad:

According to Dr. Sultan Al-Maani, Marwad's name relates to a place of wandering and roaming, potentially connected to the Battle of Mu'tah or the concept of sourcing water.

Al-Yarout:

Dr. Sultan Al-Ma'ani conducted a study on the morphological structure of the name Al-Yarout, concluding that it has Semitic origins.

In terms of geographical position, contemporary researchers assert that the present site of Karak city is situated in the mountainous area adjacent to the castle walls, with urban development extending eastward. Currently, Karak governorate is

bordered by Wadi Mujib to the north and Wadi Al-Hasa to the south, flanked by the Dead Sea to the west and the Hijaz Railway to the east.

It is positioned between longitude 30° 45' 25" and latitude 20° 8' 31", that cover an area of approximately 2,850 square kilometers, with an average elevation of 1,100 meters above sea level, while descending to about 400 meters below sea level at the Dead Sea.

Karak is notable for its four prominent mountains: Jabal Al-Dhabab, which rises to 1,300 meters near Al-Taybeh and overlooks Wadi Al-Hasa; Jabal Shihan at 1,063 meters, located near the villages of Al-Amro and Al-Hamaida, overlooking Wadi Al-Mujib; Jabal Al-Habashneh at 1,093 meters, situated west of Rakin; and Jabal Al-Ras, which reaches 1,236 meters west of Al-Taybeh.

The relatively flat regions of the Karak Plateau have preserved their red soil, facilitating the cultivation of grains. However, moving westward reveals a rugged terrain characterized by valleys, trenches, and expansive gorges prone to hazardous rock slides. The Karak Plateau's inclination towards desert areas extends approximately 30 kilometers, allowing rainwater to flow eastward before redirecting westward through valleys and watercourses that lead into the Dead Sea.

The natural characteristics of the Karak region make it an ideal location for constructing numerous dams to capture the thousands of cubic meters of water that currently go unused. The soil in this area exhibits a range of types, including calcareous, yellow, red, and sandy to semi-salty clay flats found in the southern Jordan Valley, with various trees such as tamarisk, doum, acacia, and nitraria bushes. Recent studies have demonstrated that the lands bordering the Dead Sea can be effectively utilized for agriculture if modern irrigation techniques are applied. In certain areas of the plateau, the soil is lighter and primarily supports the cultivation of wheat and some grains. In the semi-desert regions, drought-resistant crops like barley are grown due to limited rainfall.

Historical sources indicate that much of Karak region was once densely forested, but extensive lumbering by local inhabitants and the destruction caused by the Turks during the construction of the Hijaz railway significantly diminished these forests.

Karak is home to several valleys, including Wadi Mujib, Wadi Karak, Wadi Al-Ghuwair, Wadi Al-Nawaisa near Ainun and Al-Harithiya, Wadi Salila, Wadi Al-Hanu in Muhi, and others such as Al-Muwaira, Al-Habis, Ghazwan, Al-Faj, Nakhl, Al-Hafayer, Al-Shaqiq, Wadi Ibn Hammad, Wadi Abu Al-Ajeel, Wadi Umm Khashaba, Al-Zaghira, Wadi Hamduna, Wadi Ain Al-Amal, Wadi Wahida, Wadi Al-Dabbah, Wadi Itwi, and several streams including Sayl Jadira, Sayl Namirah, and Sayl Al-Qarahi.

The region is also rich in water springs, such as Ain al-Ifranj in al-Shahabiyyah, Ain Sarah, Ain al-Sitt in Karak, Ain al-Hajjaji near Faqu', Ain al-Bula' north of al-Samakia, and the springs of Iraq (al-Maghaisil, al-Qala'a, and Falaha), as well as the springs of Al-Ayuna (al-Yahudiyyah and al-Maghaisil), Ain al-Lajjun near the site of al-Lajjun, Ain al-Mar'i, located west of Sarfa, Ain Muslim, near the town of Katharba, are notable springs in the region.

Additionally, the springs of Wadi al-Karak, including al-Safsafa, Umm Bajaj, and al-Kalab, along with the springs of al-Tayyiba, Jawza, the villages of al-Kharsha, and Rakin, contribute to the area's hydrological richness.

In terms of mineral resources, Karak region is particularly renowned for its deposits in the Dead Sea, which is rich in valuable minerals such as potash and salt. The Potash Company is actively working to harvest the salts and minerals of the Dead Sea, including magnesium, potash, bromine, sodium, and sulfur. There are also the marble quarries found in significant quantities in the Baddhan area.

The climate in Karak is characterized by an annual average temperature ranging from 8 to 23°C, indicating predominantly sunny weather throughout the year. The rainy season spans from September to mid-April, with the highest precipitation occurring in December, January, and February. This time frame includes the forty days of winter, between December 20 and February 3, a period recognized by the residents of Karak and Jordan for its severe cold and substantial rainfall and snowfall. Spring in Karak is notably beautiful, with a brief period of greenery. Summers are typically dry, while autumn presents a variable climate, fluctuating between dry spells, cold temperatures, dust storms, and occasional rainfall.

Karak in Historical Context

Introduction:

The artifacts unearthed in various locations within Karak suggest that the region's history extends further back than what is documented in existing historical sources. This assertion is related to the insights and evidence derived from these archaeological findings.

Historical sources indicate that the discoveries in Karak can be traced back approximately to three thousand years BC. Ongoing archaeological investigations in multiple sites across Karak have revealed the existence of a sophisticated agricultural civilization dating to around 2400 BC, which subsequently vanished for a period before re-emerging around 1800 BC.

These sources affirm that human activity in Karak can be traced to the Iron Age, beginning around 1200 BC, with the earliest known inhabitants being Amorites, followed by Moa'bites.

Pre-Moa'bite Era 2400 BC:

A consensus among various historical sources suggest that the region of Moa'b, encompassing Karak, came under the dominion of the Amorite Kingdom. This kingdom emerged as the Amorites migrated from Mesopotamia to Syria and subsequently expanded southward into Moa'b. Among the Amorites were the Emites, whose emergence coincided with the Moa'bites, who also migrated from Syria, as recounted by certain sources.

The Emites were primarily nomadic tribes, focused on securing grazing lands for their herds. Some historians suggest their presence was concentrated around a region referred to as Emia. Over time, the Moa'bites melted with the Emites, forming a unified group, with the

Moa'bites eventually becoming the more populous and intellectually advanced faction. This development marked the rise of Moa'bite Kingdom

Kingdom of Moa'b (1200-646 BC) served as a crucial link between the Levant, Egypt, and Hijaz, functioning as a significant route for both trade caravans and military incursions. The zenith of Moa'b's influence occurred during the reign of King Mesha', who is renowned for his notable achievements inscribed on a obelisk artifact known as the Mesha' Inscription, dated to 842 BC.

Mesha' was decisive in constructing the Royal Road, a vital thoroughfare that traverses the Mujib Valley, linking the northern and southern regions of Jordan. The Mesha' Inscription proclaims, "I am Mesha', son of Kemoshet, king of Moa'b, the Dhibanite. My father ruled over Moa'b for thirty years, and I succeeded him, erecting pyramids for Kemoshe. I emphasize this because Kemoshe aided me in vanquishing all the kings." . Additionally, Mesha' is credited with the establishment of Karak Castle in 860 BC, which spans an estimated area of 25,300 square meters.

During the period (646-586 BC), the city of Karak faced assaults from both Assyrian and Babylonian forces. The initial attack was led by Assyrian King Banial in 646 BC, followed by a Babylonian offensive under Nebuchadnezzar, who negotiated treaties with eastern kingdoms to facilitate trade caravan passage.

In response to the Moa'bite alliance with Egypt against Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar launched a campaign to dismantle this coalition, securing all routes to Egypt and capturing Jerusalem in 586 BC. Subsequently, he advanced against the Moa'bite and Ammonite kingdoms, deporting some of their inhabitants to Babylon while others sought refuge in Egypt. By the close of the sixth century BC, the Kingdom of Moa'b had vanished from historical records, with its territories occupied by the expanding Nabataean Kingdom.

The Nabataeans in Karak (586 BC - 106 AD):

Karak played a significant role in the Nabataean civilization, particularly noted for their victory over the invading Greek forces during the battle in Mu'tah region in 87 BC. The area remained under Nabataean rule, as evidenced by the discovery of various Nabataean artifacts, including statues and pottery, within Karak Castle.

To the south of Karak lies the town of Dhat Ras, which is characterized by its Nabataean heritage and archaeological sites, notably the Temple of the sanctum, referred to as Qasr al-Bint. The name Dhat Ras signifies its association with the mountain deity Dhu al-Shara, with "Ras" that means mountain.

The presence of the Nabataeans in Karak is further substantiated by the unearthing of numerous Nabataean coins within the castle's walls.

Among these coins, one side features an image of Emperor Trajan adorned with a laurel crown and his titles, while the reverse depicts a female figure symbolizing the Arab alongside a camel. The inscription beneath this image serves as evidence of the Arab presence, indicating the existence of Nabataean archaic locations such as Rabbah, Al-Qasr, Al-Samakiyah, Nakhl, and Umm Hamat.

The Roman and Byzantine Era (100-636 AD):

Prior to Roman dominion, the region experienced incursions from Persian and Greek forces, which the Nabataeans successfully repelled. Recognizing the strategic significance of the eastern territory, which was centrally located and rich in resources, the Romans sought to establish control over it by both land and sea, ultimately seizing Karak region in 100 AD.

In 130 AD, Emperor Hadrian inaugurated the Victory Road, which connected Syria to Aqaba through Karak. This route later became known as the Trajan Road or the Kings' Road.

During the Ghassanid period, the city maintained its status as a crucial defensive stronghold for the Byzantine Empire, with Ghassanid forces concentrated around Karak. The Battle of Mu'tah, in the eighth year of the Hijra,

or 629 AD, serves as a testimony to the area's strategic importance and its people.

Karak in the Islamic era (the Rashidun caliphs and the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates from 629 AD-VIII Hijri-923 Hijri-1517 ad)

During the Islamic era, encompassing the Rashidun, Umayyad, and Abbasid Caliphates from 629 AD (8 AH) to 923 AH (1517 AD), the Battle of Mu'tah marked a pivotal moment. This battle is recognized as the onset of the Islamic period that would later encompass the entire Levant.

Following the decisive victory at the Battle of Yarmouk, the region was fully integrated into this historical epoch. Historical sources indicate that the companion Abu Ubaidah Amir bin Al-Jarrah passed by Karak and Rabbah area en route to Yarmouk, where he received peaceful allegiance from the local populace.

However, during the Umayyad period, Karak experienced a decline, becoming somewhat neglected, although remnants of some princes, including their graves and palatial structures, have been uncovered. Archaeological investigations in the Al-Hawiyah town, located south of Karak, have unearthed a tomb belonging to an Umayyad prince. These excavations, carried out by the Department of Tourism and Antiquities at Mutah University, also revealed an Umayyad palace in the western Shaqira area, adjacent to the town of Dhat Ras.

Notable findings at this site include a marble crown, granite and marble columns, and a mosaic floor from the southern hallway of the palace, which overlooks Wadi Al-Hasa. It is well-documented that the Rashidun state existed from 11 AH to 41 AH (631-662 AD), followed by the Umayyad Caliphate from 41 AH to 132 AH (662-750 AD), and the Abbasid Caliphate from 132 AH to 750 AH (750-1258 AD).

Karak during the Fatimid Era (909-1171 AD):

Historical research indicates that the Fatimid dynasty was the first to show significant interest in the shrines dedicated to the Companions located in the southern region, in addition to constructing their own shrines. Evidence of this can be found in stone plate housed at Mu'tah University and the Islamic Museum within the shrine.

These sources also note that Baltekin, a Fatimid commander of Turkish descent, established Karak Castle as his fude in the year (372 AH, 982 AD).

Karak in the Crusader Era (492-670 AH, 1090-1291 AD):

The Crusader incursions into the Levant and the Euphrates region commenced in 492 AH (1099 AD), culminating in the establishment of a kingdom in Jerusalem. This led to prolonged hostilities with the Abbasid state, which was represented at the time by the Seljuqs, the Fatimids, and various other political entities in the region.

The Crusaders expanded their influence across much of the Levant, successfully instituting a feudal system in Shobak, while simultaneously directing their attention towards Karak. This focus intensified following the rise of the Zengid Atabeks in northern Iraq and Syria, prompting the Crusaders to monitor Zengid advancements into the Levant. In 537 AH (1142 AD), King Anjou ordered the occupation of Karak, delegating the task to the governor of Shobak, Pagan Pincerna.

As a result, Karak Castle and the surrounding area east of the Dead Sea came under Crusader control, leading to the designation of the region as the Barony of Karak. One of Pagan initial actions was to reconstruct the castle and fortify it to protect the Franks. Karak subsequently became a focal point of conflict between the Crusaders and the Fatimids, Zengids, and Ayyubids, until it was liberated from the rule of Renauld du Chattoien following the Battle of Hittin in 1187 AD.

It is worth noting that the military campaign to Hittin had been launched from Karak.

Karak under the Rule of Ayyubids:

The Ayyubid Emirate of Karak (1188-1262 AD) was founded in the aftermath of the Battle of Hittin, with King Al-Adil initiating efforts in 1188 AD to strengthen the emirate by restoring and fortifying Karak Castle. This effort gained urgency following the occupation of the city of Acre by German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1191 AD, which marked the onset of the Third Crusade.

Upon the death of his brother Salah al-Din al-Yubi, King Al-Adil assumed control of the Emirate of Damascus and appointed his son, King Al-Muazzam Issa, as his deputy in Karak in 1195 AD. Al-Muazzam focused on maintaining water sources, enhancing agriculture practices, settling nomadic populations, and attracting artisans and goldsmiths back to the city. He also ensured the upkeep of the castle, its towers, and walls, safeguarded trade routes following the Crusaders' departure, and prioritized security within the region.

The castle served as a secure repository for financial assets and the possessions of the Ayyubid rulers. Subsequently, King Al-Nasir Dawud inherited the Emirate of Karak and confronted numerous Crusader incursions. The inhabitants of Karak rallied behind King Al-Nasir during these conflicts, particularly in the effort to reclaim Jerusalem.

Under his leadership, Karak emerged as a center for scholars, poets, and writers, hosting intellectual and literary gatherings that included notable figures such as historian Sabt Ibn al-Jawzi, Sheikh Abdul Hamid al-Nahwi, and Jamal al-Din Ibn al-Hajib. The Ayyubid Emirate of Karak encompassed the territories of Karak, Shobak, Salt, and Balqa.

Following the death of King Nasser Dawoud and the decline of Ayyubid authority in Egypt due to the Mamluks, King Al-Mughith Omar bin Sultan assumed control in 1250. When the Bahri Mamlouk knights sought defeating Mua'zzid Mamlouks in two military campaigns in 1257 and 1258, though these efforts ultimately proved unsuccessful.

During this period, Karak emerged as a refuge for rebels mobilized to resist the Mongol incursions following the fall of Baghdad and Damascus. The forces from

Karak played a significant role in the Battle of Ain Jalut in 1260 AD. As a result of this engagement, the Karak Emirate came under the authority of the Mamluks in Egypt. By 1262 AD, the Ayyubid rule of Karak ended, with King Al-Zahir Baybars succeeding King Al-Mughith.

Kingdom of Karak (1262-1382 AD):

In 661 H (1262 AD), King Al-Zahir Baybars captured Karak and mandated the enhancement of the castle's defenses, the restoration of its towers and educational institutions, and the appointment of the Sultan's deputy as the Emir of Karak. Following the death of Al-Zahir Baybars in 1277 AD, his son, King Al-Saeed, ascended power. The region experienced a turbulent period marked by conflicts among the Mamluk rulers and princes both within the kingdom and in Egypt. In 1288 AD, King Saeed and King Masoud found themselves in conflict with Sultan Al-Mansur Qalawoun. Despite these internal crisis, Karak flourished in educational pursuits, castle maintenance, and efforts to expel the Franks from Acre during Sultan Al-Ashraf Khalil's reign in 1291 AD.

Subsequently, King Al-Nasir Muhammad assumed the sultanate in 1292 AD after the assassination of his father, Sultan Al-Ashraf Khalil. Due to his youth, he was temporarily deposed and governed from Karak until 1308 AD. Throughout his sultanate from 1310 to 1340 AD, King Al-Nasir Muhammad focused on the welfare of Karak, particularly the castle and the shrine of Jaafar. In 1326 AD (727 H), Bahadur Al-Badri, the deputy of Sultan Al-Nasir Muhammad in Al-Karak and Al-Shoubak, undertook the reconstruction of the shrine of Jaafar, commemorating his efforts with a stone plaque affixed to the entrance of the Islamic museum in Almazar.

The Kingdom of Karak experienced significant political turmoil during the period of the Bahri Mamluks (1382-1340 AD). Following the demise of Sultan Al-Nasir Muhammad and his successors, the populace of Karak rallied behind Sultan Al-Nasir Ahmad, facilitating his return to the Sultanate in Egypt.

In the context of the Circassian Mamluk State, which reigned from 1382 to 1516 AD, Karak received considerable attention. When Sultan Barquq was ousted and subsequently exiled to Karak, he encountered a profound sense of

loyalty and support from its inhabitants. They not only backed him but also accompanied him to Cairo in his quest to reclaim his throne from rival factions. The death of Barquq led to a surge in unrest and conflict, adversely affecting both the Sultanate and the Kingdom of Karak. This state of decline persisted until the Ottoman Empire seized control in 1516 AD following the Battle of Marj Dabiq.

Karak in the Ottoman era (1516-1916):

Karak fell under Ottoman dominion where Karak and Shobak counties were established, and Karak was the administrative center linked to Damascus Governorate. The administrative affiliation of Karak fluctuated among various governorates, including Sidon and Beirut, before it was definitively linked to Damascus Governorate. The county included regions such as Salt, Balqa, Shobak, Ma'an, Tabuk, and Madain Saleh. The turmoil within the Ottoman Empire, characterized by wars and internal turbulence, had a bad impact on Karak, adversely affecting its infrastructure, agriculture, and overall quality of life. Nevertheless, some historians and pilgrims who traversed Karak noted its abundance of diverse products. The Ottoman influence over Karak remained tenuous until it was seized by Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt in 1830 AD.

Karak was under the rule of Ibrahim Pasha from 1831 until 1840. This era was characterized by significant injustice and oppression; however, following his departure, the city became a sanctuary for those rebelling against his tyrannical rule. Among these insurgents was Sheikh Qasim Al-Ahmad Al-Zar'ini. Although Ibrahim Pasha initiated a campaign to reassert control over Karak, he ultimately left the city in 1840, leading to its reintegration into the Ottoman Empire. In 1864, the Karak county was established, operating under Damascus Governorate and encompassing the regions of Salt, Tafilah, and Ma'an, along with several districts including Dhiban, Iraq, Al-Jiza, Tabuk, and Mada'in Saleh.

Karak Municipality was established in 1893. Karak Rebellion of 1910 focused on sentiments of resentment and despair permeated the Arab territories, as the newly appointed leaders from the Young Turks Association implemented a policy aimed at Turkifying the region. This approach incited various uprisings across the Ottoman states, one of which was the Karak Revolution in 1910.

The Karak revolution of 1910:

This revolt was a direct response to the prevailing injustices, oppressive measures, escalating taxation, and the enforcement of mandatory military service. The uprising, which took place in late 1910, was spearheaded by Sheikh Qadr Al-Majali alongside numerous tribal leaders who rallied against the oppressive Turkish policies. Unfortunately, the revolution was suppressed, resulting in the detain of its participants and the execution of several leaders in both Damascus and Karak Castle.

Nevertheless, this revolution remains a significant chapter in Karak's history, symbolizing resistance against tyranny and a quest for freedom.

The legacy of the revolution's leaders continues to evoke pride among the people of Karak, who celebrate their courage. Following the suppression of the revolution, the residents of Karak sought assistance from the Sharif of Makkah to alleviate the injustices imposed by the Turks, which ultimately contributed to the emergence of the Great Arab Revolt in 1916, led by Sharif Hussein bin Ali.

Karak in the Hashemite era, 1921 to the present:

Karak emerged as a significant historical city throughout the Hashemite era, which began in 1921 AD and continues to the present. This region experienced a rich historical evolution, having been a kingdom during the Moa'bite period, an emirate in the Ayyubid era, and a kingdom under the Mamluks. Often referred to as the mother of Jordanian cities, Karak's prominence is attributed to its illustrious past, the influx of free individuals and rebels, its appeal to scholars, writers, thinkers, and politicians, as well as its unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

The most notable landmark in Karak is its castle, accompanied by other historical sites such as the shrines of companions in Almazar, the location of the Battle of Mu'tah, and the shrines of significant figures including Prophet Noah, Joshua bin Nun, and Al-Khidr. Additionally, the cave of Lout in southern Jordan

Valley, the sugar mills in Ghor Al-Safi, and the shrine of Zaid bin Zain Al-Abidin in Rabbah contribute to its historical significance.

Karak also holds a strategic position with a platform in one of the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque, which explains the mobilization of armies from this city on two occasions to reclaim Jerusalem from the invading Franks.

As the administrative center of Karak Governorate, the city constitutes of eight administrative divisions: Al-Qasaba, Al-Mazar Al-Janubi, Al-Qasr, Faqou', A'i, Al-Qatrana, southern Jordan Valley, and Moa'b. During the Hashemite era, Karak has undergone important changes in education, economic development, urban growth, and a focus on women and youth.

This period has seen the establishment of cultural and youth centers, as well as advancements in communication and transportation infrastructure. Noteworthy developments include the founding of Mu'tah University with its military and civilian campuses, Karak Community College, the Arab Potash Company in Jordan Valley, the establishment of the industrial zone, and the Hashemite restoration of the companions' shrines in Almazar.

Karak is a remarkable city and a region characterized by its generosity, as its inhabitants are recognized for their profound generosity and unwavering commitment to the Jordanian state. Historically, they have been among the earliest supporters of national causes, particularly the Palestinian issue. This region is truly deserves recognition and commendation, both in historical and contemporary contexts, as well as on local, Arab, and humanitarian levels.

The Narrative and Silver Jubilee of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein's Ascension to the Throne

The Karak Culture Directorate has diligently pursued the implementation of its initiatives and programs, aligned with the strategic framework set forth by the Ministry of Culture. Since His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein took on his constitutional responsibilities, the cultural sector experienced significant qualitative and quantitative advancements, fostering development and prosperity across all regions of the Kingdom.

There was a notable increase in the number of cultural directorates and well-equipped cultural centers, including Al-Hassan Cultural Center in Karak, which opened its doors in the year of 2000. Numerous organizations, clubs, and diverse cultural institutions were established, bolstering the infrastructure and expanding opportunities for participation among all community members, particularly youth and creative individuals, in various cultural activities and events. Achievements that align with the Jordanian national narrative have surged, reflecting the royal vision that prioritizes the enhancement of creativity and Jordanian involvement in a wide array of local and international cultural activities, programs, and festivals, with Moa'b Poetry Festival standing out as one of the most significant.

The Directorate of Culture placed a greater emphasis on the collection and preservation of heritage and national documents, while also continuing to support libraries by equipping them with resources that enrich their capabilities. Additionally, it focused on promoting museums and their collections of heritage and biography.

Efforts were made to monitor publications and support the works of creative individuals across various fields. There was a heightened interest in both tangible and intangible heritage, leading to the registration of several notable elements on the World Heritage Lists. Among these, the Karak Secondary School for Boys was recognized as a significant heritage site within the Islamic world.

There was a growing interest in technology, emphasizing the importance of training youth to effectively utilize it across various facets of contemporary life and to keep pace with its rapid advancements. The initiative to promote the concept of a Capital of Culture across the country's governorates, districts, and counties has significantly contributed to their involvement in numerous events and activities, showcasing the talents, creativity, and achievements of their residents.

In 2009, Karak city was designated as the cultural capital of Jordan, followed by the Southern Ghor District being named the District of Culture in 2018. In

2024, the Southern Mazar District has been honored as the District of Jordanian Culture, aligning with this notable milestone in the nation's history.

These developments, along with many others that cannot be elaborated upon here, illustrate that the cultural narrative of human, time, and place continues to thrive, thanks to the dedication of the country's loyal citizens and the enduring policies of the Hashemite leadership, which echo the timeless words of the late King Hussein bin Talal, may God have mercy on him: "Man is the most precious thing we possess.

The Citadel

Upon entering the city, I was immediately enveloped by its warmth, and the whispers of the valleys began to echo the calls of its brides. The ascending path led me to the northern facade. The massive, rugged stones conveyed a profound language, while the crevices within them resembled watchful eyes, and the balconies appeared as hands in motion.

I found myself standing on the wooden bridge that would guide me to the western gate of the citadel, allowing me to cross into its interior. Between the western and eastern gates lies a broad, elongated trench, filled with water for defensive purposes, much like the elevated bridges that served the same function in the past.

As I entered the citadel, I explored the northern facade that overlooks the city, followed by the Burj Al-Hima facade that gazes upon the suburb of Al-Thalaja. From the western facade, I beheld a deep valley that separates the citadel from the town of Al-Shahabiya and other nearby settlements. I then proceeded to the eastern facade, which overlooks Wadi Itwi, the bridge, and the suburb of Al-Marj.

I wandered through several levels of the citadel, examining its facilities and the Nasserite Hall. The castle was constructed during the Moabite period, between 860 and 840 BC. Its dimensions are as follows: the eastern side measures 220 meters, the western facade spans 240 meters, the southern facade is 85 meters long, and the northern facade extends 135 meters. The castle predates the

Crusader occupation, during which they added fortifications in 1142 AD. It was reclaimed by Saladin in 1188 AD. This citadel stands as one of the largest in the Middle East, and its history is far too vast to be encapsulated in a brief account.

Karak School (Mother of Schools)

As I stepped away from the castle, the vibrant heart of the city beckoned me. The city stands like a protective fortress, cradling the citadel with a nurturing embrace, much like a compassionate mother. The castle boasts its impressive towers, while the fortress is fortified with four strategically placed towers, all dedicated to safeguarding the city.

My path led me past the Hamidi Mosque, the city's oldest mosque, established in 1906. I continued to the Shrine of Al-Khidr, then to the Omari Mosque, which was constructed in 1920 and completed in 1942. Next, I explored the Christian quarter, home to several historic churches, including the Latin Church from 1898, the Greek Orthodox Church built in 1839.

I also visited the old Christian schools, such as the Greek Orthodox School (1847), the Latin Patriarchate School (1875), the Greek Orthodox Girls School (1898), and the Latin Girls School (1906).

My journey ended at the Karak Secondary School for Boys, located next to the northeastern tower of the castle. It faces the Marj suburb to the east and overlooks the valley to the north, extending towards the mountain range from the Abu Hamour area to the western outskirts near the Dead Sea. Established in 1893 during Sultan Abdul Hamid's reign,

This two-story school features a central staircase and an internal sky courtyard, with twenty-seven windows illuminating its halls. This institution was a nurturing ground for remarkable leaders, politicians, military figures, thinkers, writers, and educators. A stone plaque on the second-floor balcony displays the Ottoman Tughra, accompanied by verses of poetry honoring the Sultan.

Culture of Karak

Karak boasts a rich cultural heritage rooted in its ancient history and distinctive characteristics that set it apart from other cities. The landscape is adorned with natural springs, fertile wheat fields, and historic pathways, all under the glow of a soft sunset that gracefully bids farewell to its majestic castle.

The narratives of its people, steeped in pride and honor through the ages, echo the legacy of figures such as Mesha', the Moabite king, whose stone inscriptions remain a testament to the past.

The influence of the Nabataeans is evident in the inscriptions and artifacts that can be found throughout the region, from the southern to the northern reaches.

The Islamic era, marked by the battle of Mu'tah, is remembered for its martyrdom and sacrifice, alongside the eloquent leaders of conquest who enriched the cultural tapestry with their poetry and rhetoric.

The establishment of the first library by Al-Nasir Dawud, housing invaluable texts on medicine and philosophy, laid the groundwork for intellectual pursuits.

The Ottomans further contributed to the educational landscape with the Rashidiya School, notable for its unique architectural design, which continues to grace the city as Al-Karak Secondary School. The founding of the Latin School followed, coinciding with the emirate's establishment under the guidance of the poet-prince Abdullah I Ibn Al-Hussein.

This period ignited a cultural renaissance in Karak, fueled by a strong sense of nationalism and engagement with broader movements beyond its borders, inspiring the local populace to embrace and enhance their cultural identity.

From this vibrant environment numerous writers and creatives emerged, leading to the establishment of additional schools and universities that fostered a flourishing cultural scene. Various clubs, forums, and platforms have been created, each playing a vital role in education and enlightenment, aligned with their defined objectives.

The Ministry of Culture, as the official sponsor, has made significant preparations for individuals from various backgrounds, aiming to interpret the

state's highest aspirations, which emphasize the value of humanity as our most treasured asset, both in words and actions.

This cultural movement has persisted with all its elements, where Karak Culture Directorate, with its keen awareness, has recognized the needs of the community by documenting and sharing the stories of people and places. This is achieved through a rich cultural heritage that connects the past with the present, while also seeking out, nurturing, and showcasing talents, thereby enhancing the status of their bearers.

The Directorate of Culture has also prioritized the significance of places, developing programs that revive them and give voice to their silence, allowing them to recount their histories. Efforts have been made to retrieve the memories and glory of the ancient city through comprehensive activities that encompass every individual and location, from the north to the south and through the central regions.

Al-Hassan Cultural Center serves as a vast arena for disciplined and responsible expression, where everyone can find what they seek. Within its walls, one can encounter individuals sharing literature, others publishing books, and some reciting poetry. Children are seen joyfully painting, while women engage in dyeing fabrics and embroidering with their creativity.

Crafts that were nearly forgotten have been revitalized, and tools once covered in dust now dominate the space, narrating stories of the past. Publications affirm that history remains unaltered, with sincere and honorable pens documenting it. The walls are adorned with images of influential figures who shaped life and history, while the air resonates with the sounds of an oud and a melancholic flute, accompanied by a rababa and skilled fingers producing melodies filled with both joy and sorrow.

The atmosphere is filled with music, quietude, and justifications; there are gatherings for symposia and lectures, book launches accompanied by discussions on significant topics, as well as cinema, theater, and visual arts. Educational curricula and methodologies are also present, reflecting the essence of the locale.

The Directorate preserves the legacy of Karak, encompassing its heritage, the stories of its notable figures, and the names etched in history, along with their

portraits, monuments, and belongings, all of which bear witness to their existence.

This is a space that intellectuals from both within and beyond the borders aspire to engage with, serving as a platform that nurtures and disseminates creativity.

It is alive with the vibrant details of the city, proclaiming that Karak remains the queen of cities, a hub of thought, culture, and conscience. Its castle stands majestically on the opposite mountain, symbolizing its embrace of the people, witnessing their achievements, and extending heartfelt greetings.

Driven by a commitment to the memory of the place and its influence on individuals through teachings and reflections, the Directorate acts as the sole custodian of historical events, narrating the tales and memories of ancestors while guiding future generations to hold onto their identity and roots.

The Directorate has revitalized the essence of Karak through the initiative "The Glow of the Place," which highlights the most significant religious, historical, and tourist sites by documenting and restoring their vibrancy. The Directorate commenced its efforts with the castle and subsequently addressed its neighboring landmarks, including Jabal Shihan, the shrines and tombs of esteemed companions, Almash-had, the village of Hmoud, Bab Al-Dhra'a, Iraq, the mother of martyrs, and the springs of water that emerge periodically.

The residents of Karak are set to engage in a series of cultural events that embrace inclusivity, showcasing a rich tapestry of their customs, traditions, joys, and sorrows. These gatherings take place in various locations, such as Matal Al-Mujib, which connects them to the loved ones in Madaba, and the fertile plains at the base of Shihan, where history and legacy flourish. The scenic Wadi Ibn Hammad offers a backdrop of natural beauty and abundance, while Al-Qatrana, on the desert's edge, reflects the honorable narratives of its tribes.

The castle stands as a testament to the heroism and sacrifices of the Karak people throughout history. In the plains of Mu'tah and Al-Mazar, the spirits of Jaafar, Zaid, and Abdullah, who were the vanguards in spreading Islam. The area of Ayy embodies challenge, fertility, knowledge, and determination, while Moab tells the story of its people and their history. In Iraq, the souls of martyrs continue to bear witness to the past, and Khan Zeera (Tayyiba) boasts a rich

historical narrative. The sights of Aynun, Al-Shihabiya, and Sail Al-Karak provide a view of the castle, while the fertile valleys of Al-Aghwar complete this cultural landscape.

The Directorate of Culture has developed its programs based on the lived experiences and memories of the people, striving to preserve their cultural heritage despite the challenges posed by social change that threatens to erode this legacy. Through observation and storytelling, the Directorate aims to maintain the authenticity of the cultural identity.

Among the most captivating events is Al-Ta'alil, an evening gathering that illuminates the historical connections between places and people, rooted deeply in the landscape. The Directorate collaborates with academic and folk experts who document and narrate these events, alongside poets who convey their devotion to the homeland through their verses. The melodies of the oud evoke a sense of nostalgia, resonating with the audience, who respond with applause.

The program "Dialogue with an Intellectual" profoundly influences individuals, as intellectuals engage in discussions about heritage, history, and contemporary issues, among other significant topics. This program was produced with a high level of professionalism and expertise within the directorate's studio, which was established through dedicated efforts and the support of various stakeholders.

In contrast, the program "Village Talk" focuses on the daily lives and traditions of its community, capturing noteworthy moments that merit documentation. This was achieved through exceptional filming and live documentary techniques, showcasing a commitment to quality and professionalism.

The program "Craft and Value" supports individuals with creative potential by offering comprehensive assistance and resources. It ensures that no innovative individual or inspiring figure is overlooked, hosting seminars and events dedicated to recognizing their contributions and achievements. The program honors these creative individuals with awards and actively engages in community initiatives, presenting these accolades under its banner to emphasize the importance of local support for talented individuals across various fields.

Additionally, the Directorate has organized exhibitions for books, photographs, and documents, while also facilitating bazaars to promote local products for the benefit of producers. It has prioritized the production of documentaries about places, events, and individuals, providing training for those interested in developing their skills.

Recognizing its role as the official support system for cultural and environmental forums and clubs, the Directorate has equipped them with the necessary resources to enhance their operations and fulfill their missions effectively.

Cultural and tourism initiatives have persistently pursued their objectives of exploring regional attractions, enhancing tourism, and endorsing cultural events, such as the Golden Triangle Festival, with ongoing support from the Directorate of Culture.

The Directorate of Culture is dedicated to its efforts across various events—cultural, developmental, and educational—leveraging all available resources to ensure the success of Jordanian cultural cities. This revitalization breathes life into these cities, illuminating them throughout the year, with the impact of their achievements lasting well beyond the events.

Additionally, a range of activities is organized, including Interactive Weeks that address diverse topics—national, patriotic, and societal. Other initiatives encompass mobile libraries, engagement with creativity clubs, reading marathons, and inclusive programs for individuals with special needs, ensuring that cultural experiences are accessible to everyone.

Folklore plays a significant role in the Directorate's celebrations, collaborating with schools and institutions to highlight the elements of heritage and cultural identity. This is achieved through well-crafted performances by popular groups and enthusiastic youth, who receive comprehensive support.

Al Hassan Center has emerged as a central hub for visitors to Karak, hosting conferences, symposiums, book launches, and meetings with embassies or ministries. It also serves as a venue for artists to showcase their work and musicians to offer training and lessons.

Women in the Narrative of Place and Time

Karak through the ages tells a profound story. Women have played a vital role throughout history and geography. Emerging from the heart of Islamic civilization, rooted in a land shined with the essence of sacrifice, Karak had witnessed the unfolding of history since the first expansion of Islam beyond the Arabian Peninsula.

From the era of Crusaders' incursions to the Turkish conquests, people of Karak—both men and women—had contributed to the remarkable chapters in the book of time and place. Their journey was guided by faith and devotion to Allah, even amidst the inevitable human flaws and challenges. "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise." This marks the beginning of the intertwined stories of time, place, and human, with family as its cornerstone. woman, prepared by Allah Almighty both physically and emotionally, stands as a pillar of strength and resilience, embodying patience and endurance.

She is the sanctuary described by Allah, who said, "He created for you from yourselves wives that you may find tranquility in them." Khadija, was the first woman to comfort our noble Prophet in his moment of fear after the revelation, is an evidence to this strength. He sought her support .Aisha, too, was cherished, as he expressed, "I was blessed with her love." .

The proverb says, "Behind every great man is a woman," that highlights the essential role women play in shaping history. Islam safeguarded women, honoring their dignity and improving their status, imposing severe consequences on those who harm or belittle them. Surat An-Nisa was revealed as a testament to this commitment to women's rights.

In contrast, during the pre-Islamic era, women were often seen as possessions, denied inheritance, and subjected to the horrific practice of being buried alive as a shame.

Ancient civilizations subjected women to humiliation and oppression until the advent of Islam, which restored their rights, honored them, and elevated their societal standing. While it is impossible to track the continuous movements of

humanity throughout history and across different cultures, we can offer glimpses that aim to capture this evolution as accurately as possible.

It is important to note that despite the respect and reverence afforded to women, Arab societies, including Jordanians and particularly those in Karak, have historically not celebrated the birth of a girl, often expressing joy only at the arrival of a boy, due to the nature of many tribal and pastoral societies of the past. However, as time changed and societies evolved, the perception of women transformed.

Women emerged as vital contributors to society, their presence celebrated just as much as that of males, if not more. In conversations, women were often belittled through insulting remarks, a stark contrast to today, where they are seen as sources of pride and honor for their families and communities, recognized for their knowledge, morals, and societal influence.

Historically, women received little to no inheritance, often compelled to compromise their shares to their brothers. Today, however, the situation has changed significantly; inheritance is now distributed according to Islamic law, granting women their rightful financial independence and income from various sources, although some societal restrictions still persist.

In Karak society, women's fashion consisted solely of long, body-covering dresses, whether in urban or rural settings, for both Muslim and non-Muslim women alike. In the past, the palette of dress was strictly confined to deep black, encompassing dresses, head covers, and shoes, with no other hues permitted. However, as society evolved and embraced diverse cultures, clothing began to flourish in variety and color.

Yet, the madrakah, a traditional garment cherished by the women of Karak, has remained a symbol of elegance and is still widely worn. Crafted from various types of black fabric, this garment is adorned with intricate embroidery, often done by hand or using a sewing machine, showcasing vibrant designs inspired by nature.

The Karak madrakah boasts a distinctive style that sets it apart from dresses found in other regions of Jordan. It has preserved its uniqueness, even as it has undergone some modern updates, such as the addition of bead work, while still honoring its original silk thread embroidery.

This garment continues to reflect beauty and respect, standing as one of the most exquisite forms of fashion. The madrasah is constructed from two rectangular pieces complemented by two triangular sections that extend from the armpits to the hem. The sleeves are attached at the sides and secured at the back with ties one positioned at the nape of the neck and the other further down to ensure the sleeves remain in place and enhance the overall silhouette.

Overall, the madrasah is a harmonious blend of form and function, designed to gracefully cover the body while allowing ease of movement, whether standing or sitting, all while showcasing stunning embroidery that redefines traditional elegance.

Recently, many women in Karak have chosen to wear Almadraqah primarily for social gatherings. As society evolves, the styles of this outfit have adapted to suit various environments, reflecting modern fashion while respecting modesty, religious beliefs, and cultural values. Women pair Madraqah with a complementary shirt that matches the embroidery colors, and always cover their heads with a stylish and appropriate scarf. For daily wear, women often opt for the mishlah, a simple unembroidered gown suitable for both home and work settings, as well as for attending funerals.

Historically, Karak women wore the al-Ibb, a long black embroidered dress that could be elegantly folded and cinched at the waist with a black belt, traditionally worn on their wedding day. When stepping out, some Karak women wear a cloak to cover their heads and bodies. The wool double-sided jubbah, typically worn by older women, comes in dark blue and green hues. For head coverings, young girls typically wear a scarf, while married women prefer the handkerchief known as shatfa, made from perforated cloth. Elderly women often choose a headband after reaching the age of forty, especially for significant occasions like the death of a spouse, their children's weddings, or during Hajj.

This headband consists of three strips of black fabric wrapped around a sturdy piece of paper, securing the underneath head covering, which is layered to provide full neck coverage, with part of it sweeping down the back beneath the cloak.

The headband held immense significance for women, symbolizing pride and identity. They would often swear, "By my headband, I am the sister of so-and-so," showcasing their connection to family in a proud sense. If someone dared to criticize a woman they say, , "May Allah curse her headband," highlighting the deep emotional ties to this emblem. Women took pride in their relatives, exclaiming, "Oh my headband, oh children of so-and-so, who protect our tents on difficult days."

For the women of Karak, wearing the headband with its unique characteristics is a favored tradition, distinct from how women in other regions of the Kingdom adorn themselves.

In the tribal structure of Karak society, similar to the broader Jordanian culture, certain limitations were placed on women, intended to safeguard their well-being. Gathering with men at weddings and funerals was restricted, allowing gatherings only among female relatives and elders. However, this did not prevent the emergence of events where women played a vital role, showcasing their strength and the protective instincts of men.

During traditional wedding dances, such as Alsamer and Aldihhiyah, a woman known as Alhashi would be called upon to demonstrate her skill in marching and sword-waving, all while remaining veiled to maintain her anonymity. The men would sing praises in her honor. Despite the restrictions, women, particularly in rural areas, actively participated in their husbands' work, contributing to the family's needs. They believed in their ability to fill food shortages and provide alternatives, which not only ensured food security but also fostered stability within the family and community.

Their efforts in what is now recognized as the productive kitchen have made them pioneers in home economics, supporting their families, nurturing their children, and giving generously, just like women everywhere. It is noteworthy that many women engaged in various professions, including sewing, embroidery, and even practicing medicine as folk healers and midwives.

In the past, for marriage, women often found themselves without support, as decisions were typically made by their fathers or brothers, with little consultation. The first glimpse of their husbands often occurred only on the

wedding night, and in accordance with local customs, cousins frequently held the primary claim to a woman's hand, accompanied by a substantial dowry.

Certain clans proudly uphold mottos that celebrate the bravery and sacrifices of women. Despite societal restrictions, women were not barred from hosting guests in the absence of men, reflecting the generous traditions passed down through generations. These limitations did not hinder their participation in discussions surrounding social, economic, or political issues, affirming that Karak traditions honor women, both in Muslim or Christian communities. From the earliest days of Karak's history, women have played a vital role in resistance movements, drawing strength from their faith, principles, and deep-rooted love for their homeland.

A remarkable reminder of their courage is the first martyr of the Battle of Hittin, Janan al-Kanani al-Karak. This significant battle saw Muslim forces, led by Saladin, confront the Crusaders, culminating in a resounding victory.

Karak women have long stood alongside men in their valiant struggle against Ottoman domination, demonstrating remarkable stand and sacrifice. They sold their precious jewelry to buy weapons for the resistance, embodying a profound commitment to their faith, honor, and homeland. Actively engaging with national movements, they led demonstrations and participated in various political parties, even those deemed illegal at the time.

In an era marked by widespread illiteracy, they ventured into the realms of education and knowledge, tirelessly advocating for their rights and asserting their presence, despite facing significant challenges within Arab societies, including Jordan.

Their unwavering belief in their role as a continuation of the legacy of Arab Muslim women throughout history empowered them to navigate and gain victory over adversity. The women of Karak have consistently received the support of the Hashemite leadership, from the establishment of the Jordanian state to the present day. They have made their mark across diverse fields, including politics, legislation, education, journalism, fine arts and other fields, showcasing their multifaceted contribution to their society.

Situated on the mountain facing the castle, this impressive structure offers stunning views from its windows, showcasing the castle's beauty. It bears the name of the esteemed prince, Al Hassan bin Talal, a prominent Arab and global intellectual.

The center narrates the story of a city, captures the daily lives of its inhabitants and preserves all that is worthy of documentation. Within its walls, the people of Karak, along with visitors from various regions, share their narratives.

The center provides a welcoming atmosphere where they can freely express their thoughts and emotions, fostering a sense of comfort and reassurance. This establishment is accessible to all, free from barriers, bureaucracy, or formalities, serving as a home for everyone without discrimination .

It embodies the cultural narrative of the city and the vibrancy of its community, represented through meticulous documentation and active engagement rather than mere words.

Upon entering through the main gate, visitors ascend the steps leading to the Karak facade, which greets them in the city's own language. This facade shows the history and journey of its people, serving as a significant wall of remembrance. Culture in Karak From its ancient history distinguished among cities, to its abundant water springs, fertile wheat fields, winding paths, and the soft glow of the sunset bidding farewell to the castle, the stories of its people—men, women, and their enduring pride—resonate throughout the ages.

The legacy of Mesha', the Moabite king of Karak, along with the inscriptions of his stone, and the enduring presence of the Nabataeans, with their artifacts visible in every direction, from south to north, reflect the rich tapestry of history.

The Islamic presence, marked by the events at Mu'tah, martyrdom, and sacrifice, along with the leaders of conquest and their eloquent poetry, further enriches this narrative.

Additionally, the establishment of the first library by Al-Nasir Dawud, housing invaluable texts on medicine, highlights the city's commitment to knowledge and culture.

The establishment of Al-Rashidiya School by the Ottomans marked a significant architectural achievement that continues to enhance the city's landscape today, known as Al-Karak Secondary School. Additionally, the creation of the Latin School during the emirate era, under the guidance of the intellectual poet prince Abdullah I Ibn Al-Hussein, sparked a cultural renaissance in Al-Karak.

This movement was inspired by a deep national sentiment, influenced by external national movements, which the proud people of Karak embraced. This openness fostered a rich environment for writers and creators, leading to the establishment of more educational institutions, including schools and universities.

These developments significantly contributed to the flourishing of cultural gatherings through various clubs, forums, and platforms dedicated to enlightenment and education, all aligned with the objectives set forth by the Ministry of Culture, the official patron of these initiatives. Their efforts aim to embody the state's core belief that "citizen is the most precious thing we have," both in principle and practice.

This cultural momentum has persisted, with the Karak Culture Directorate keenly attuned to the community's needs and interests. It actively engages in documenting and sharing the stories of its people and places, drawing from a rich cultural heritage that connects the past with the present.

The Directorate is committed to discovering and nurturing local talents, showcasing their work, and elevating their status. Furthermore, it has developed programs to revitalize historical sites, giving voice to their silent narratives and revealing their intricate details.

The Directorate has actively engaged in numerous events and programs aimed at reviving the rich history and splendor of the ancient city. These comprehensive activities encompass all individuals and locations, extending from the north to south areas .

Al-Hassan Cultural Center serves as a spacious parlor for disciplined and responsible expression, meets diverse interests. Here, one individual shares literature, another publishes a book, while others immerse themselves in poetry. A child joyfully paints, a woman dyes fabric, and another embroiders with her personal touch. Crafts that were once forgotten to nearly extinction

have been revitalized, with tools that had gathered dust now prominently displayed, narrating stories of the past.

Publications affirm that history remains unchanged, with sincere and honorable writers documenting it. The walls are adorned with images of influential figures who shaped life and history, while the air resonates with the sounds of an oud and a melancholic flute, accompanied by a rababa tones with skilled hands creating melodies of both joy and sorrow.

The center hosts a variety of activities, including symposia, lectures, book shows, discussions on significant topics, as well as cinema, theater, visual arts, and educational methods, that reflect the essence of the place, time, and its people. It preserves the memory of Karak, showcasing its heritage, the stories of its notable individuals, and the names dug in history, along with their images, monuments, possessions, and traces that signify their presence.

A space that attracts intellectuals from both within and outside the country, as well as from all cities, villages, and even the deserts of the governorate, is highly sought after for the opportunity to engage with it. This platform is dedicated to uncovering creativity, nurturing it, and disseminating it widely.

The vibrancy of the city is evident, affirming that Karak remains the queen of cities, a center of thought, culture, and conscience. It will continue to serve as a significant and civilized landmark, with its castle standing majestically on the opposite mountain, symbolizing its embrace of the community, witnessing their achievements, and extending its greetings.

Recognizing the importance of place memory and its clear impact on individuals, as well as the lessons it imparts, the directorate has revitalized the essence of Karak through the initiative known as "The Glow of the Place." This program has journeyed to the most notable religious, historical, and tourist sites within the governorate, documenting and reviving their significance.

It began with the castle and subsequently explored its neighboring landmarks, engaging with their histories and listening to their narratives. This includes, but is not limited to, sites such as Jabal Shiha, the shrines and tombs of esteemed companions, Almarshad site, the village of Hmoud, a school and market, Bab Al-Dhraa, Iraq, the mother of martyrs, and the springs of water. Regularly, the

people of Karak participate in cultural events across various regions, celebrating and recounting many of their customs.

Traditions, joys, and sorrows resonate from Matal Al-Mujib, amidst clans steeped in glory and ancient history. Greetings are sent to loved ones in Madaba or at the base of Shiha, where fertile plains bear witness to a rich legacy filled with tales of values and authenticity.

In the expansive Wadi Ibin Hammad, one can appreciate the enchanting nature, generous hands, and abundant goodness. Alternatively, in Al-Qatrana, on the desert's edge, the biographies of its people and their honorable actions come to life.

The presence of Al-Qalaa evokes the stories of the Karak people, their heroism, and sacrifices throughout history, from beginning to end. In the plains of Mu'tah and Al-Mazar, the spirits of Ja'far, Zaid, and Abdullah linger, echoing the sound of their horses' hooves as they carried the first mission beyond the Arabian Peninsula, spreading the message of the final religion.

In Ayy, one finds challenge, fertility, knowledge, and determination, while Moab reflects the history of its men and the renaissance of its people through the ages. In Iraq, the spirits of two hundred martyrs from its sons bear witness to past injustices. Khan Zbiba and Al-Tayyiba reveal a rich history, while Aynun, Al-Shihabiya, and Sail Al-Karak gaze upon the castle, listening to its messages and the voice of time.

In the valleys, the human spirit is inspired, and the earth's bounty blesses those who seek tranquility. Culture is shaped by the realities of people, their memories, and the legacies they leave behind, often reluctantly, due to societal changes and the overwhelming details that may obscure that heritage. The act of monitoring and narrating serves to preserve the authentic cultural identity, free from falsehood or exaggeration.

One of the most striking illuminations was Al-Ta'alil, "Evening Gatherings", which traced the journeys of places and individuals through a history adorned with pride.. Even the ruins of houses and vacant squares were given their due recognition, narrating the tales of their inhabitants from clans deeply rooted in the earth, recounting the tales of sacrifice and the defense of land and honor. It

celebrated the heroes among its people who forged its glory and filled the voids left behind.

There is a historian chronicles and recounts events, a poet expresses loyalty to the homeland and heartfelt emotions through verse and rhythm, and an oud player whose melodies evoke nostalgia for the past. In the narratives, Samer sings for Karak, honor its courageous figures as they boldly declare, "Ya Sami Pasha, we will not obey." In the backdrop, a woman proudly showcases her madraqah, seated alongside her male relatives, her inner voice proclaiming, "This is a cousin, this is a maternal uncle," while Nijr (a wooden bowl for crushing roasted coffee seeds) stands in the center, awaiting someone to crush the roasted coffee seeds with the stick, releasing its tunes into the air. The aroma of coffee spreads away through, welcoming guests, accompanied by dishes prepared by the hands of grandmothers and sweets crafted with care. A bread baked in fire, shaken free of ashes, returns to life joyfully, while an intricately embroidered miniature rug, still being woven by mothers' hands, complete the scene. Nearby, blacksmiths gather, surrounded by tools that bear witness to the simplicity and richness of their past lives.

If the stones had the ability to communicate, they would resonate with joy upon the return of those who breathe new life into them, weaving together the threads of conversation, explaining their absence, and reciting verses to the melodies of an oud or a rababa during the annual Moab Poetry Festival.

This event, with its consistent and established sessions, has become a cherished gathering for poets from both Jordan and abroad, asserting its status as a central cultural festival. This grand festival is meticulously organized, showcasing significant themes in literature, culture, thought, and history, with content that reflects its importance and uniqueness. It emphasizes the value of the location and the human narrative, shining brightly under titles such as "The Citadel" and "Al-Karak Secondary School.

It also honors through themes like "The Silver Jubilee of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein's Accession to the Throne.". The people of Karak eagerly anticipate this festival each year, welcoming it as a adorable guest. They prepare to showcase their heritage, proclaiming, "Here is Karak, the land of battles and coexistence,".

The program "Dialogue with an Intellectual" has left a profound impact on the community, featuring discussions among intellectuals on topics of heritage, history, and contemporary issues. This program was recorded, directed, and produced with a high level of professionalism in the directorate's studio, established through dedicated efforts and support from interested individuals.

Meanwhile, the "Village Talk" program captures the essence of daily life in the community, highlighting moments worthy of documentation. These clips are skillfully filmed and presented as live documentaries, showcasing the richness of local traditions with exceptional professionalism.

The Craft and Value program provides sponsorship to individuals capable of creating and offering support and assistance. No creative individual or inspiring figure has been overlooked; they have been highlighted through seminars and dedicated evenings that delve into their contributions, celebrating their talents and efforts.

The program honors creators by presenting awards and embracing community initiatives, believing in the importance of local support for distinguished individuals across various fields. It has organized and sponsored exhibitions for books, photographs, and documents, while also facilitating bazaars to showcase and market local community products, benefiting producers of all types.

The initiative has focused on producing documentaries about places, events, and individuals, while also training interested parties to develop their skills in this area. Recognizing its role as the official support for cultural and environmental forums and clubs, it has provided essential resources to help them thrive and fulfill their missions. Cultural and tourism pathways have continued their efforts to achieve their objectives, exploring regions, promoting tourism, and supporting cultural events like the Golden Triangle Festival, all under the ongoing sponsorship of the Directorate of Culture.

The Directorate of Culture plays a vital role in every significant cultural, developmental, and educational event, offering its resources to ensure the success of Jordanian cultural cities, revitalizing them and illuminating their communities throughout the year, with lasting impacts and visible achievements. Interactive weeks have been organized to address a variety of topics, including national, patriotic, and societal issues, among others.

Mobile libraries, engagement with creative clubs, reading marathons, and support for individuals with special needs are all part of a cultural initiative that brings activities and artistic experiences directly to people no matter where they are. Folklore plays a significant role in the celebrations organized by the Directorate, in collaboration with schools and institutions, serving as a vital element of cultural heritage and identity. This is showcased through intricate displays from local groups and the involvement of youth participants.

The Directorate of Culture has commitment to support and empower individuals and the broader community without seeking control, focusing instead on fostering energy and continuity. Its guiding principle is positive interaction, ensuring all necessary conditions for success are met.

The Directorate has also established connections with local community organizations and government entities to enhance mutual support and benefit. It has initiated student creativity forums, hosted various activities, and collaborated with schools and universities to achieve these objectives.

The Directorate of Culture in Karak has extended its reach beyond the governorate, working collaboratively and selflessly with cultural directorates in other regions. Al-Hassan Center has emerged as a central hub for all visitors to Karak, accommodating conferences, symposiums, book launches, embassy or ministry meetings, and serving as a resource for students visiting its library or artists showcasing their work. It has become a vibrant space, bustling with activity, akin to a refreshing spring.

Qatrana

Nestled deep within the Jordanian desert, where the earth inhales tranquility and the winds weave their tunes through the sand, Qatrana Castle rises like a forgotten word from an incomplete poem. Majestic and timeless, its stones guard the murmurs of travelers and the mysteries of wandering caravans.

In this place, the castle is more than merely a quiet structure; it stands as a testament to the lively past that once framed the area. Within its inner courtyard, narratives intertwined: pilgrims expressing gratitude after a long

day's trek, merchants tallying their earnings beneath the moon's glow, and shepherds sharing stories of the stars with children. Each stone here carries a memory, every nook holds a tale, and every shadow that caresses the walls conceals an absence that is rich with presence.