

THE ARAMAEANS

Around 1100BC, a group of nomads known as the Aramaeans settled in the Middle East. They took over great cities such as Damascus and Aleppo, and one group - the Chaldeans - settled in what had been Sumer. The Aramaeans settled over such a wide area that their Semitic language became the everyday speech all over the Middle East for the next few centuries. Jesus of Nazareth spoke Aramaic.

THE INCENSE TRADE

Sweet-smelling incense was as valuable as gold in the ancient world. Both the old Mesopotamian states and the new nations burned it at all their religious ceremonies, and states on the south coast of Arabia became very rich by selling it. One group of incense-trading Arabs, known as the Nabataeans, built a beautiful city called Petra in present-day Jordan.

The Khazneh - the treasury - in the Nabataean city of Petra is carved out of solid sandstone.



INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can explore Petra and its peoples with an interactive map, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com