

Updating the seven wonders of world

Jordan's Petra, pyramids look like they'll make the cut in on-line contest

BY MARK MACKINNON, PETRA, JORDAN

The sign at the entrance to this ancient Nabatean capital is openly pleading in its tone: "Please vote to Petra," it reads in awkward English. "It needs to be one of the Seven Wonders of the World."

Not many pass by to read the handmade advertisement on this sunny weekday afternoon. A trickle of tourists gape in wonder, sweating from the hike through the 2,100-year-old city that was hewn out of the rose-coloured mountainsides. Few of them stop at the visitor's centre and sign a petition. But people elsewhere are responding to the plea. For the second time in its long history Petra, hidden from easy view at the end of a long and winding canyon that was its primary defence, seems set for a coming-out party.

The first time around, it was Indiana Jones and his father — or rather, Harrison Ford and Sean Connery — who focused imaginations on the ancient trading centre famously described by poet John William Burgon as "the rose-red city half as old as time." The columned facade of Petra's treasury stood in for the fictional temple that held the Holy Grail in 1989's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. That movie sparked a rush of visitors to the site, and finally put Jordan, the oft-forgotten neighbour of more popular destinations like Egypt and Israel, on the tourist map.

This time, it's a Swiss-Canadian adventurer named Bernard Weber who is playing the role of leading man, organizing an online contest that has drawn millions of people worldwide into choosing the "new seven wonders of the world." The voting hasn't concluded yet, but it looks likely that Petra will make the cut.

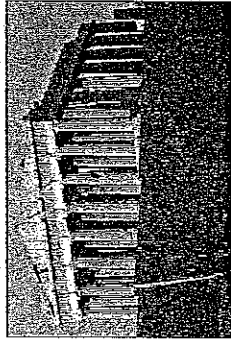
It's paradoxical that the future prominence of an archeological marvel like Petra should be dependent on something so modern and fickle as an Internet vote, but that's exactly the situation in which the ancient trading centre finds itself. The city that survived the ravages of Roman conquest, rule and renovations is suffering the fallout of a string of modern catastrophes that have scared off many would-be visitors. To the west, there was the unrest in the Israel-occupied Palestinian territories in 2000; to the east, the continuing war in Iraq; to the north, a series of suicide bombings in the Jordanian capital of Amman in 2005.

Like all of Jordan's crucial tourism industry, which provides 10 per cent of the jobs in the country and 10 per cent of gross domestic product, Petra has been hit hard by the maelstrom of events around it. Just 59,000 people visited the site in October and November of last year, a 25-per-cent drop from the previous year and an even steeper fall from before Sept. 11, 2001.

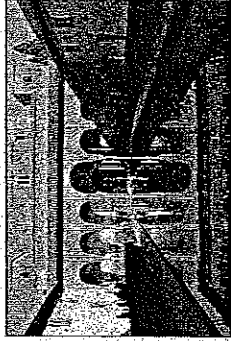
"Before we had many, many tourists coming to Petra — Americans, Canadians the whole world. But because of the problems in the world, the wars, people are afraid to come now," said Hashem Oweidat, a tour guide sporting a red-and-white checkered Bedouin headscarf. Before Sept. 11, he said, he would take at least one group a week from Amman to Petra, and

The world wonders short list

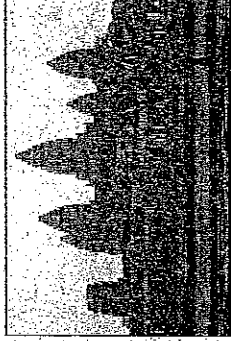
The Colosseum of Rome, the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, the moai statues of Easter Island and the Incan city of Machu Picchu were in the top seven when early results were posted online last month.



1. The Acropolis, Athens, Greece



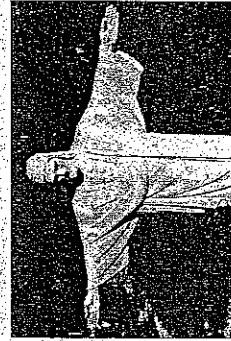
2. Alhambra, Granada, Spain



3. Angkor, Cambodia



4. Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico



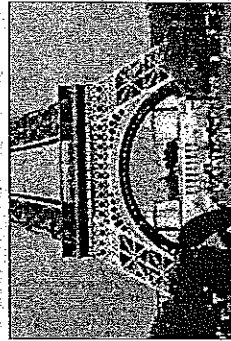
5. Christ Redeemer, Rio Janeiro, Brazil



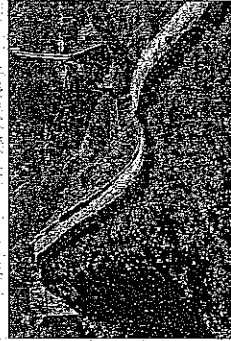
6. The Colosseum, Rome, Italy



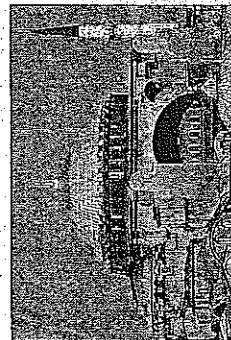
7. Easter Island statues, Chile



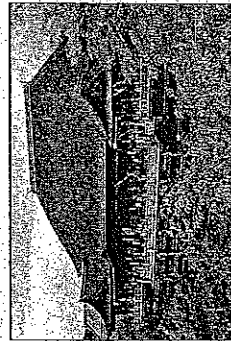
8. Eiffel Tower, Paris, France



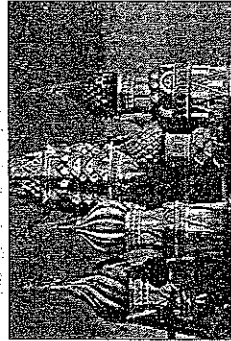
9. Great Wall, China



10. Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey



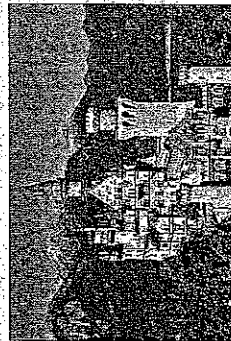
11. Kiyomizu Temple, Kyoto, Japan



12. Kremlin, Moscow, Russia



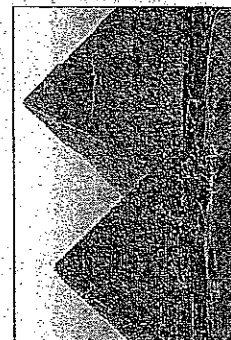
13. Machu Picchu, Peru



14. Neuschwanstein Castle, Germany



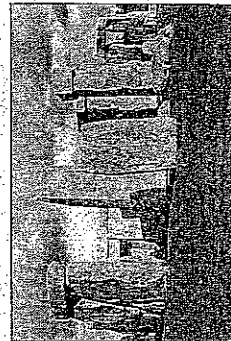
15. Petra, Jordan



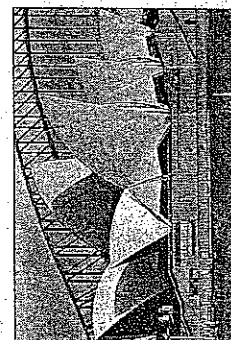
16. Pyramids of Giza, Egypt



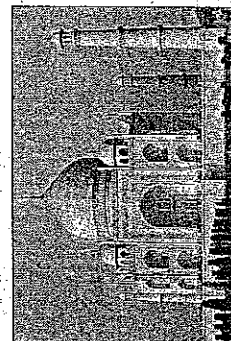
17. Statue of Liberty, New York City



18. Stonehenge, Amesbury, England



19. Sydney Opera House, Australia



20. Taj Mahal, Agra, India



21. Timbuktu, Mali

The original seven

The Seven Wonders of the World were all man-made monuments, selected by Philon of Byzantium in 200 BC as a travel guide for fellow Athenians to stunning sites around the Mediterranean world. All were built between 2,500 BC and 200 BC, but only the pyramids at Giza remain

MIKE BIRD/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Great Wall of China, India's Taj Mahal, the moai statues of Easter Island and the Incan city of Machu Picchu in Peru.

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planes over Africa and acting as the curator of a modern-art museum in Zurich. Now he's trying his hand at being the next Philon of Byzantium, the man who compiled the first list of the seven wonders in 200 B.C.

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ident on something modern and exactly the situation in which the ancient trading centre finds itself.

The city that survived the ravages of Roman conquest, rule and renovations is suffering the fallout of a string of modern catastrophes that have scared off many would-be visitors. To the west, there was the unrest in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories in 2000; to the east, the continuing war in Iraq; to the north, a series of suicide bombings in the Jordanian capital of Amman in 2005.

Like all of Jordan's crucial tourism industry, which provides 10 per cent of the jobs in the country and 10 per cent of gross domestic product, Petra has been hit hard by the maestro of events around it. Just 39,000 people visited the site in October and November of last year, a 25-per-cent drop from the previous year and an even steeper fall from before Sept. 11, 2001.

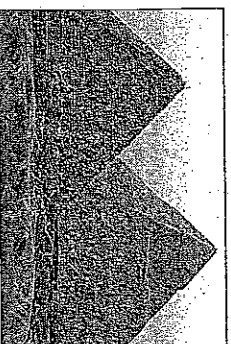
"Before, we had many, many tourists coming to Petra — Americans, Canadians the whole world. But because of the problems in the world, the wars, people are afraid to come now," said Hashem Oweidat, a tour guide sporting a red-and-white checkered Bedouin headscarf. Before Sept. 11, he said, he would take at least one group a week from Amman to Petra, and spend three or four days exploring the expansive site. Now, he says, he has only one tour booked for the rest of the month of February.

"If there's a problem in China, it affects Jordan," grumbled Raed Naceb, another tour guide. "If a Muslim guy does something in London or anywhere, people stop coming to Jordan."

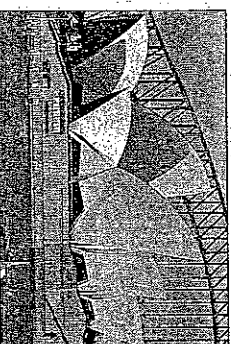
As visitor numbers have dropped off, so has maintenance of the site. Tourists and guides alike complain of a lack of modern facilities and rest stops inside the sprawling city. Many of the 70-plus hotels that operated in Petra when times were good have closed.

Enter Mr. Weber, a Montrealer who splits his time between making documentaries, flying antique

13. Machu Picchu, Peru



16. Pyramids of Giza, Egypt



19. Sydney Opera House, Australia

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The Seven Wonders of the World were all man-made monuments, selected by Ptolemy of Byzantium in 200 BC as a travel guide for fellow Athenians to stunning sites around the Mediterranean world. All were built between 2,500 BC and 200 BC, but only the pyramids at Giza remain standing today.

1. The Lighthouse of Alexandria
2. The Temple of Artemis
3. The Statue of Zeus at Ephesus
4. The Colossus of Rhodes
5. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon
6. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus
7. The Pyramids of Egypt

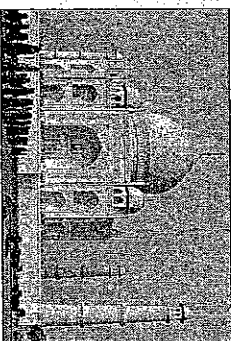
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SWISS-CAKADIAN CONTEST ORGANIZER
BERNARD WEBER

14. Neuschwanstein Castle, Germany

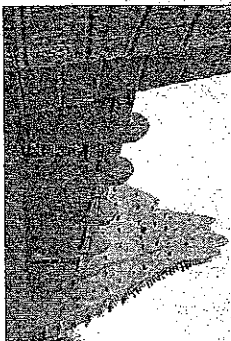


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MIKE BIRD/THE GLOBE AND MAIL



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planes over Africa and acting as the curator of a modern-art museum in Zurich. Now he's trying his hand at being the next Ptolemy of Byzantium, the man who compiled the first list of the seven wonders in 200 B.C.

Realizing that six of the original seven wonders are gone — only Egypt's Great Pyramids remain — Mr. Weber decided in 2000 to launch a contest at www.new7wonders.com to choose seven "new" sites that would celebrate the world's heritage.

Initially scorned in some quarters, especially in Egypt, where the government was insulted at the suggestion that the pyramids would have to be voted back in to wonder status by an Internet poll, the contest has since caught the imagination of millions of people worldwide.

Despite the complaints from Egypt, the contest looks sure to return the pyramids, which have been among the leading vote-getters all along, to the new list when it is announced on July 7. Petra, too, looks set for some good news, as are the Colosseum of Rome, the

Great Wall of China, India's Taj Mahal, the moai statues of Easter Island and the Incan city of Machu Picchu in Peru.

All were in the top seven when voting results were briefly posted online last month. However, strong contenders such as the Acropolis of Athens, Stonehenge, the Eiffel Tower and the Kremlin were still in the running. (Toronto's CN Tower was among 77 sites initially nominated, but didn't make the cut last year to the final 21.)

Mr. Weber said the Egyptians gave the contest an inadvertent boost by taking public offence to it. "The Egyptians took the whole thing so seriously, but it was a little negative news that injected a seriousness into it that could not otherwise have been created," he said in a telephone interview from Rio de Janeiro, where he was reviewing the candidacy of the Christ the Redeemer statue that towers over the city.

While the Egyptian government chastised Mr. Weber, the Jordanian government celebrated him. Queen Rania joined him when he travelled to Petra last month.

The ancient empire that beer built

Women's status raised by role in brewing chicha, research into pre-Incan city finds

BY ANNE McILROY
SCIENCE REPORTER

Women had more status in Incan and pre-Incan society than they have been given credit for, archaeologists say, and not because they were soldiers or political leaders. They brewed the beer.

This is one of several findings in an intriguing new research paper about the mysterious last days of the Wari, who lived in the central Andes from 600 to 1000 AD, and predated the Inca. They built an elaborate city on a remote summit in southern Peru that included an industrial-sized brewery, a palace and a temple.

The Wari made and drank copious amounts of a beer-like drink called *chicha*, which was concocted by fermenting corn and Peruvian pepper-tree berries in ceramic vessels.

Back then, beer was as important to the Wari as it is to Homer Simpson — but for different reasons.

"There was much more to it than drinking and getting drunk," said University of Florida anthropologist Susan deFrance, part of the team that has spent more than a decade excavating the site.

Beer was an economic tool and the Wari would have used it to keep workers who built the mountaintop city happy, she said. "Kind of like the weekend party for people who help you move or paint your house."

Evidence suggests beer was also used to get upper-class men to commit their workers to communal jobs, like building canals or temples. It would have been an honour to be invited up the hill for a drink of high-class beer out of ceremonial ceramic vessels, Dr. deFrance said.

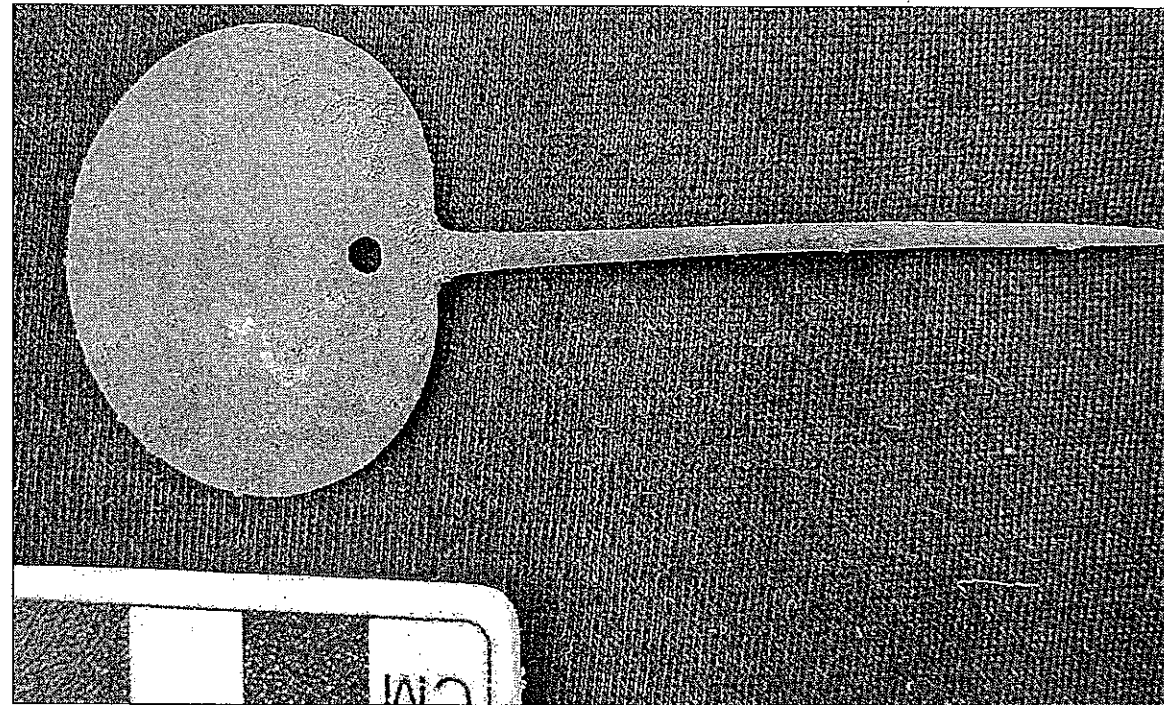
Making the beer was so important to the Wari that researchers aren't sure the ancient empire could have functioned without it. When they built their summit city, the Wari erected a sophisticated brewery that could make 1,800 litres of beer at a time. It had separate compartments for milling, boiling and fermentation.

The researchers found at least 10 elegant shawl pins on the floor of the brewery, brooches used to keep warm wraps around the shoulders. The metal pins, which were worn by noble women as a sign of status, were not found in other areas of the ruins.

"The brewers were not only women, but elite women," said Donna Nash, an anthropologist with the Field Museum in Chicago who was part of the team working on the Wari site.

The discovery of the shawl pins adds to a growing body of evidence that suggests women in Incan and pre-Incan Andean societies had more authority than has previously been acknowledged, the researchers say.

Beer also played an important role in the final days of the outpost,



P. R. WILLIAMS/COURTESY OF THE FIELD MUSEUM

The large number of shawl pins found in the brewery but conspicuously absent elsewhere at the excavation site in Peru indicates that the elite women, who would have worn such pins, brewed the *chicha*.

which was the most southern of several Wari settlements. The flat-topped hill, or *mesa*, wasn't a practical place to live. Food, water and construction materials had to be lugged up 2,400 metres, a climb that takes a good hour today. Researchers believe they built it to impress their neighbours, the Tiwanaku, who reigned to the south in what is now Bolivia. It was first settled around 600 AD, and then abruptly abandoned around 400 years later. No one is sure why.

Today, it is still a sacred site for the

local indigenous people, and is known to researchers as the ancient imperial colony at Cerro Baul.

Remnants found at the site indicate that before the Wari left town, they held a farewell ceremony that began with the brewing of a final batch of *chicha*. A week later, they drank it, and then as a sacrifice to the gods, torched the brewery and smashed ceramic drinking vessels.

They also burned the palace, after a banquet of deer, llama and seven types of ocean fish. It also appears they sacrificed a condor and a

pygmy owl before moving out.

The Wari seemed to disappear after they left their mountain city. Their society fragmented, and eventually the Inca colonized the area. Research suggests beer was also important to the Incan culture and economy, and the upper-class Incan women were the brew masters.

Today, in the Andes, men and women drink *chicha* and other alcoholic drinks together, Dr. deFrance said.

"There's a lot of equality in terms

Wari's best brew

It is probably a good thing that the Wari drank their *chicha*, or beer, in pottery vessels because the cloudy brew probably wasn't that appealing to look at, Dr. Susan deFrance says. The Wari had several social classes, and each made its own beer. The top-of-the-line brew was made in the city built on the mountain in southern Peru. Sprouted corn kernels were ground up, and then boiled over fire pits. The women chewed some of the corn, and spit it into the pots to get some microbes in to the mix. Spicy pepper tree berries were boil or soaked, then their pits were discarded to leave a syrupy mash. It is not clear whether the corn and berries were combined, or kept separate as distinct kinds of drinks. But the liquid was transported to the fermentation area, placed in 12 vats and aged three to five days. Then it was ready to quaff.

of how men and women drink in the highlands of the Andes," said the anthropologist, a co-author of a paper published this week in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "Women will get as rip-roaring drunk, if not more so, than the men, and it is not frowned upon."

It was probably the same when the Wari ruled that part of the world, Dr. deFrance said. Not only did women make the beer, they probably got as stinking drunk as the men.