

Gebel Abu Dukhan



History has it that an exquisite purple rock called the Imperial Porphyry was extracted for over three centuries from 29 AD to 335 AD. It was the only source of imperial porphyry known to the ancient world. This fine-grained purple stone speckled with white crystals was discovered by a Roman legionnaire named Caius Cominius Leugas in 18 AD. It became a symbol of royalty due to its unmatched beauty and much of this gem-like rock was used in pillars, basins, statues and sarcophagi in Rome and Istanbul. It is thought that the quarries worked there from the Tiberian period till the early fifth century AD.

Gebel Abu Dukhan, Hurghada massif consists of a number of peaks which generally rise to a height of 1200 meters ranging up to 1626 meters above sea level. It is only 40 km away from the sea, separated by a plain of low rolling hills. The rocks within the range are mainly the Pre-Cambrian 'Dokhan volcanics'. The legendary Imperial Porphyry is actually a quartz andeite ignimbrite lithified to create a dense, hard rock with a well-developed system of joints. It is only found over a small area of approximately 6 square km.

Narrow footpaths with difficult areas meander up the hills at Gebel Abu Dukhan in Hurghada. The slipways have a smooth slope and are wider. The path of the slipways is often marked by cairns, circular structures formed with dry stone walling. The slipways are especially notable for both their extent and completeness. Today Gebel Abu Dukhan, is considered as one of the major Hurghada Tourist Attractions as excursions to Mons Porphyries are arranged from Hurghada, Safaga and Quseir. You can explore the remains of ruined fortresses, dwellings, temples, shrines, wells, broken pillars and cracked stone baths.