

# Mada'in saleh essay

Government



Also called Al-Hijr, is a pre-Islamic archaeological site located in the Al-Ula sector, within the Al Madinah Region of Saudi Arabia. A majority of the vestiges date from the Nabatean kingdom (1st century CE). The site constitutes the kingdom's southernmost and largest settlement after Petra, its capital. Traces of Lihyanite and Roman occupation before and after the Nabatean rule, respectively, can also be found in situ, while accounts from the Qur'an tell of an earlier settlement of the area by the tribe of Thamud in the 3rd millennium BC. According to the Islamic text, God punished the Thamudis for their persistent practice of idol worship and for conspiring to kill the prophet whom He sent, the non-believers being struck by an earthquake and lightning blasts.

Thus, the site has earned a superstitious reputation down to contemporary times as a cursed place, an image which the national government is attempting to overcome as it seeks to develop Mada'in Saleh, officially protected as an archaeological site since 1972, for its tourism potential. In 2008, for its well-preserved remains from late antiquity, especially the 131 rock-cut monumental tombs, with their elaborately ornamented facades, of the Nabatean kingdom, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed Mada'in Saleh as a site of patrimony, becoming Saudi Arabia's first World Heritage Site. The long history of the place and the multitude of cultures to have occupied the site have led to the several names that are still in use to refer to the area.

The place is currently known as Mada'in Saleh, Arabic for " Cities of Saleh," which was coined by an Andalusian traveler in 1336 AD. The name " Al-Hijr," Arabic for " rocky place," has also been used to allude to its topography.

Both names have been mentioned in the Qur'an when referring to the settlements found in the locality.

The ancient inhabitants of the area, the Thamudis and Nabateans, referred to the place as "Hegra". The archaeological site of Mada'in Saleh is situated 20 km (12. mi) north of the Al-Ula town, 400 km (248.5 mi) north-west of Medina, and 500 km (310.7 mi) south-east of Petra, in modern-day Jordan.

The site is on a plain, at the foot of a basalt plateau, which forms the south-east portion of the Hedjaz Mountains. The western and north-western portions of the site contain a water table that can be reached at a depth of 20 m (65.6 ft). The setting is notable for its desert landscape, marked by sandstone outcrops of various sizes and heights.