

# Route to Madain Saleh



By:  
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# AL-ULA



AL ULA  
دليل العلا للسياحة  
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# **Route to Madain Saleh**

## **AL-ULA**

**Mohammed Mosa Abdul Wahed, 2012**  
**King Fahd National Library Cataloging-in-Publican Date**

Abdul Wahed, Mohammed Mosa  
Route to Madain Saleh- Al Ula - Madain Saleh - Old Town - Al Khuraibah.  
Mohammed Mosa Abdul Wahed -1 - Riyadh 2012

4v

ISBN: 978-603-00-9331-1-1 (set)  
978-603-00-9332-5 (vol.2)

1- Extinct cities - Saudi Arabia 2- Madain Saleh  
(Saudi Arabia) - Antiquities - Pictorial works  
3- Saudi Arabia - Antiquities 1- Title

939.4 dc 1433/1696



Al-Ula is one of capital of many kingdoms in ancient civilizations. Many civilizations formed and grew on the banks of Al-Ula Valley. Mediator can see evidence of its old traces on the valley which extends from Madain Saleh to the north of the valley. Traces of agricultural channels, castles and remains of old city walls can be found in the valley of Al-Hammad to the south. The trade caravans are passing from the south carrying goods from India and Yemen such as incense, amber, honey and spices to north towards Iraq and Levant. Al-Ula became a station for trading between north and south due to its strategic location and availability of water resources and security that is necessary for economic city. The mountains in Al-Ula contain many drawings, inscriptions and ancient writings dating back thousands of years ago. Travellers in ancient time who passes through the area or have lived there recorded their memories, information, names of men and places, regulations and various laws provided scientists with information about the region and its great importance. Al-Ula has been called with different old names before it is known to its present name Al-Ula. Dedan was mentioned in the Torah, several stories about Al-Hijr and Thamud in the Qur'an and the Prophet Saleh which is the most important events in Al-Ula in ancient times. It also carried the name of Al-Qura Valley and Qarah as mentioned in the biography of the Prophet. Islam came to Al-Ula in 6th century A.D. when Prophet Muhammad passed Al-Ula on his way to Tabouk. Al-Ula also considered as one of the cities with major economic importance in the Islamic state, its tax (zakat) were sent to the house of Muslim treasury. The Ottoman state gave Al-Ula particular importance and constructed two main train stations, one in Al-Ula and the other in Madain Saleh. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Ula is one of the fastest growing cities in terms of tourism and agriculture.







**AL-ULA**

# KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA LOCATION

**Route to Madain Saleh**





Map of Al-Ula

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is situated among three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe. It is part of west Asia and is parallel to the eastern coast of Africa. They are separated by the Red Sea which is the main passageway to the Mediterranean that is linked to Europe and then to the Atlantic Ocean through Gibraltar.





## **AREA & POPULATION**

The area of Saudi Arabia is 2,240,000 square kilometres. Its territories stretch between 34 -36 degrees longitude. To the east of Greenwich, it is between 32 -34 degrees latitude. The total population in the Kingdom is around 26,500,000.



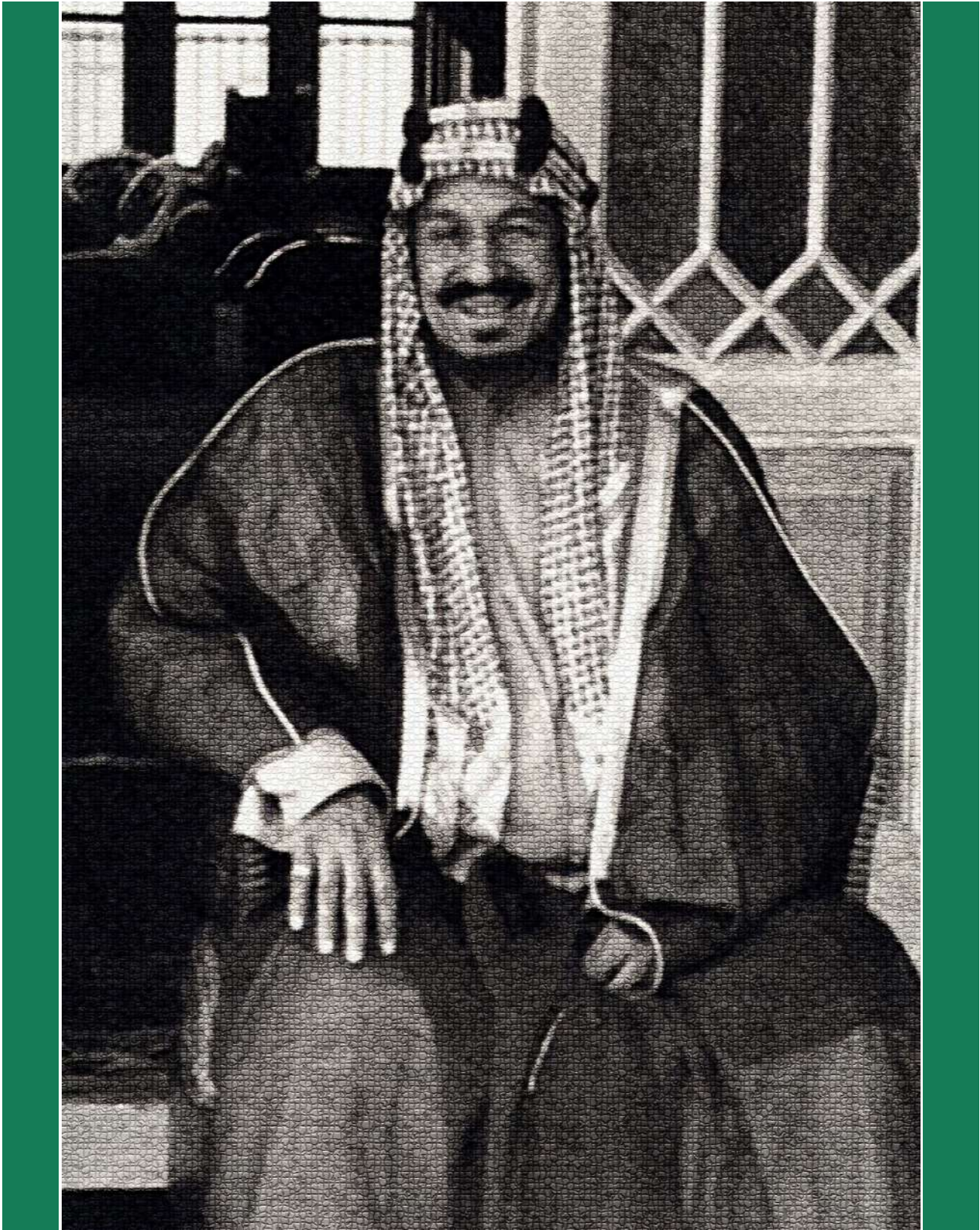




# **CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNTRY**

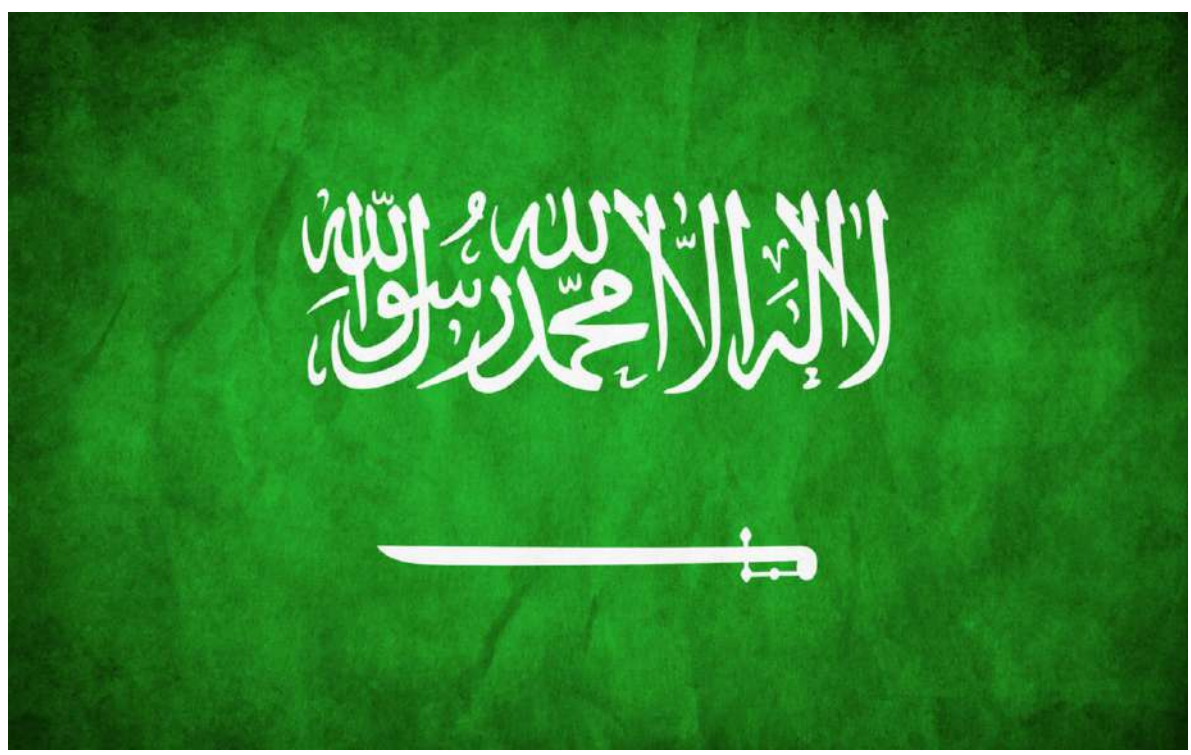
The constitution of Saudi Arabia is the Holy Qur'an, the book of Allah that Allah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad. The Kingdom follows the Islamic Law as the basis for its source of legislation and procedures. Among the most important objectives of the Kingdom at the foreign affairs level is serving Islam and Muslim all over the world to enhance pan-Arab and Islamic solidarity and to contribute to world peace and security.





## **THE FLAG AND EMBLEM**

The flag of Saudi Arabia is green spreading from the mast until its end with the words of Tawheed (the testimony of Islam) “La Ilaha Ilala Allah Muhammad Rasoul Allah”, written with the Thuluth Calligraphy in white color. Under these words, there is a drawn sword with its hilt towards the mast in white color as well. The emblem of the Kingdom consists of two Arabian swords crossed against each other, on top of them there is a date-palm tree. The two swords represent justice, power and sacrifice. The date palm represents growth, prosperity and vitality.









# OFFICIAL NAME & NATIONAL DAY

The official name of the Kingdom is "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". It is being called as Al-Saudia (Saudi Arabia) or Al-Mamlakah (The Kingdom). The national day falls on the first day of Libra, 23rd of September. It commemorates the anniversary of the unification of the Kingdom by the late King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud within a unified entity and a strong integrated state.

## CALENDAR & TIMING

Saudi Arabia follows the Higri Calendar, based on the date of the migration of Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Madinah. This calendar based on the lunar year, 12 months each 29 to 30 days. Many establishments use both the Higri and Gregorian Calendars. Time in the Kingdom is Greenwich plus three hours (GMT + 3).



# GOVERNMENT OFFICES TIME

Official working hours in the government departments is from seven to eight hours daily. It starts mostly at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. from Saturday through Wednesday. Thursday and Friday are official weekends. In private sector, work hours are eight hours a day. Friday is a regular non-working day.

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## OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS

The weekend holidays in the government departments and educational institutions are on Thursday and Friday. In private sector, weekly holiday is only on Friday. The seasonal holidays are the two holidays of Eid Al-Futr (the feast that comes by the end of the holy month of Ramadan) about one week holiday. Eid Al-Adha, the feast that comes by the end of pilgrimage about ten-day holiday. The annual academic holiday is almost three months. It usually starts towards the end of June and ends by the beginning of September.

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## OFFICIAL CURRENCY

The official currency in the Kingdom is Saudi Riyal, which is equal to one hundred halala. Currency denomination starts with one Riyal, five Riyals, ten Riyals, fifty Riyals, one hundred Riyals, and five hundred Riyals. One US Dollars is equal to Saudi Riyal 3.75.

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## TRANSPORTATIONS

A big road network interconnects Saudi Arabia. Transportation is available between and within the regions. Road transport is available by taxicabs and by busses. Car rental is also available in all cities of the Kingdom. Air transport is ideal for transportation among the cities in the Kingdom, as distances are quite long. Saudi Airlines, Sama Airlines and Nas Airlines operate domestic flights. The number of domestic airports in the Kingdom is twenty-seven airports in addition to three international airports: King Khalid Airport in Riyadh, King Abdul Aziz Airport in Jeddah and King Fahd Airport in Dammam. All main airports have transportation services.



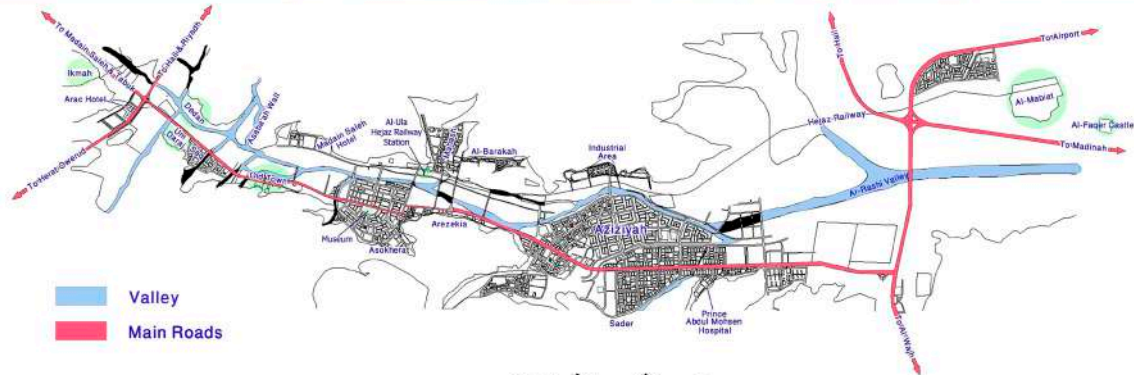
# ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS OF MADINAH REGION

Madinah Region comprises of six governorates surrounding it. These governorates are Yanbu, Al-Ula, Al-Mahd, Khaibar, Badr and Al-Hanakia. Added to those governorates are seven main administrative centers: Wadi Al-Far 'a, Al-Maleleh, Asuwaidrah, Al-Frash, Abiar Al-Mashi, Al-Yatimah and Al-Hafira. Urban areas, villages and agricultural settlements extend all over the region.

## GOVERNORATE OF AL-ULA

It comprises of 14 administrative centers: Shalal, Anajeel, Al-Hijjar Athaleth, Al-Abraq, Al-Boreka, Al-Ward, Al-Far 'a, As-Salilah, Al-Nashifa, Al-Hijr, Abu Raka, Al-Odeb, Moghira and Fadala. The governorate is famous for its diversified economic activities like agriculture, tourist resources and metallurgy. Its location on the international road gives it a potential growth in the field of services. There are areas that can support environmental tourism like, Herat Owerud and Jabal Al-ward.





خريطة مدينة العلا  
Al-Ula City Map



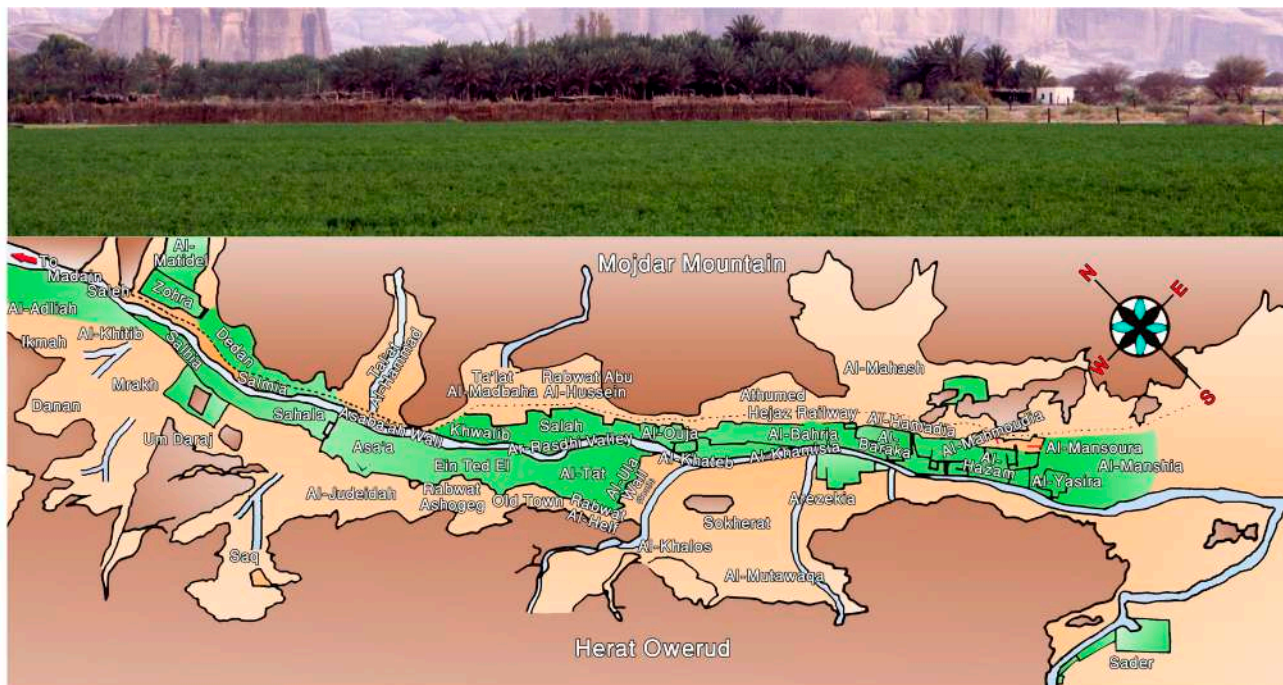


## LOCATION OF AL-ULA

Al-Ula is administratively affiliated to the Governorate of Madinah. It lies 300 km. north of Madinah and is link with the road network from several directions due to its location. The Hejaz Railway line passed through it during the reign of the Ottomans. Al-Ula is a fertile valley located between Madinah and the Jordanian border and surrounded by two ranges of high mountains. Herat Khaibar borders it to the east, Herat Owerud to the west, Hashish Valley to the north and Al-Hammad Valley and Madinah to the south. The nearest cities to Al-Ula are Madinah to the south and Al-Wajh, 180 km. to the west. There is new airport built in Al-Ula called Prince Abdulmajed Airport. In addition, there is new road between Al-Ula and Tabouk that made the distance short at around 200 km.

## CLIMATE

Al-Ula is 1,000 m. or 3,280 feet above sea level. Travellers from outside Al-Ula will feel the temperature drops by 1 degree Celsius for every 150 m. of altitude while approaching the city. The average drop in temperature from sea level is therefore between 6 and 7 degrees Celsius. Generally, the weather in Al-Ula is moderate with relatively low humidity. Summer temperatures range between 26 and 36 degrees Celsius. Rainfall occurs mainly during the winter and a number of green areas surround the city.



- Valley
- Farms
- Mountains

خريطة مدينة العلا الزراعية  
Al-Ula Agricultural Map







**AL-ULA**



## **AREA AND POPULATION**

The area of Al-Ula is about 60 square kilometer. Its population is approximately 850,000 with an annual growth rate of about 4%.







## **SUB-GOVERNORATES**

There are 52 sub-governorates affiliated to the Governorate of Al-Ula. One of the best known of these is Madain Saleh (Al- Hijr), located 25 km. away and well-known for its Nabataean historical monuments.



# ROADS

Al-Ula is link to the surrounding areas and the Kingdom's major road network by a number of modern asphalted roads including:

- Al-Ula – Khaibar – Madinah: 360 km.
- Al-Ula – Tayma Tabouk: 560 km.
- Al-Ula – Hail: 416 km.
- Al-Ula – Al-Wajh: 180 km.
- Al-Ula- Shajwa – Madinah: 300 km.
- Al-Ula – Al – Boreka – Tabouk: 250 km.
- AL-Ula – Tayma: 130 km
- New hi-way between Madinah and Tabouk through Al-Ula

## HEALTH CARE

The Ministry of Health has established two hospitals in Al-Ula, Prince Abdul Mohsen hospital with 100 beds and Abu Raka hospital with 50 beds. The two hospitals have 12 outpatient clinics covering the various medical specializations. There are also diagnostic laboratories, pharmacies, blood banks, and X-ray and physiotherapy units.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS

Al-Ula has a special historical status because of its many antiquities, which reflect the high standards of construction ability attained by its ancient inhabitants.



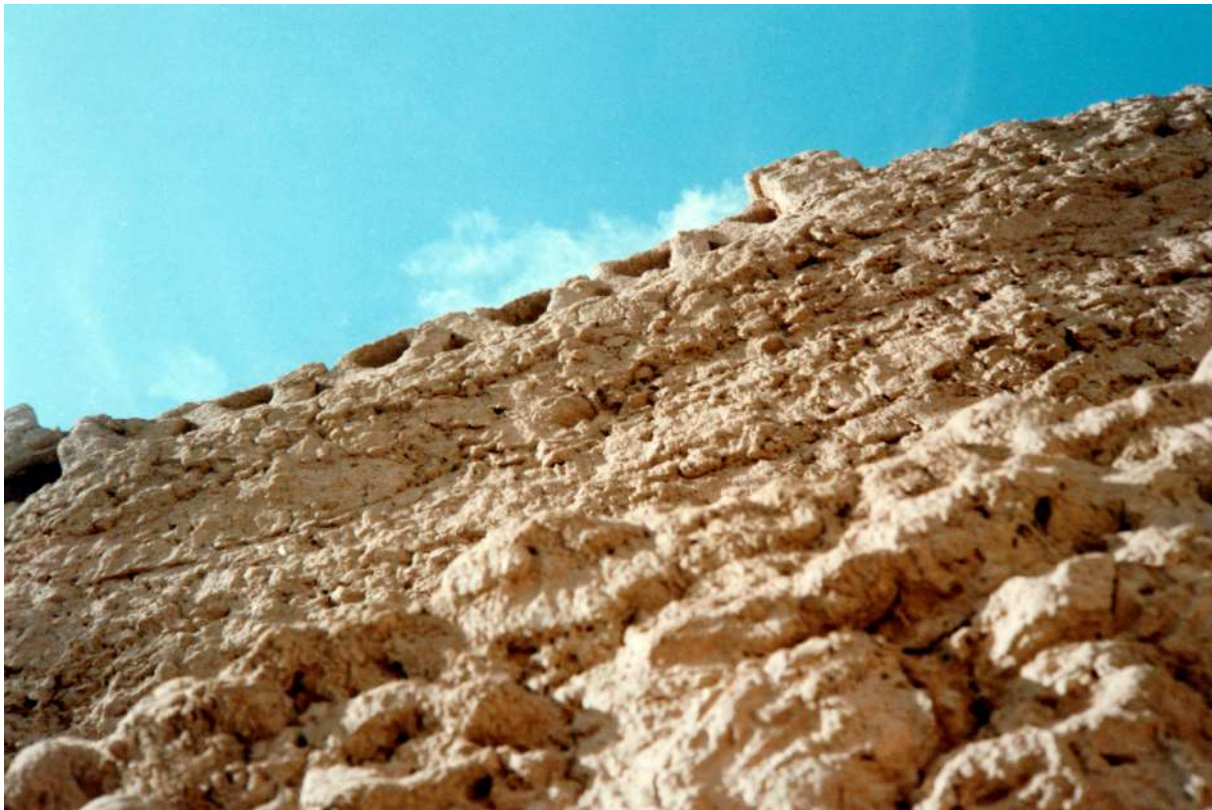
# WHICH PLACE TO VISIT IN AL-ULA?

## OLD TOWN (ADEERAH)

The old town is in the center of new Al-Ula city wherein new zones become north and south of the old town. Al-Judaydah, Saq and Al-Odeb are part of north and south as extension of the city. Old town is in the narrowest point of the valley beside Musa bin Nusair Castle (Um Nasser or Al-Jubail) which is higher point in the valley passes through the old town. Now Musa bin Nusair Street (also known by Salman) is situated next to the road going through Madain Saleh. Going to the city can attract visitors due to the town's distinctive natural features built of mud and stones. The urban mass and monolithic that distinguishes old town are the Main Mosque, Al-Sakhrayh Mosque and Musa bin Nusair Castle also called Al-Ula Castle. Date back to 11th century A.D. all buildings in Old town was built by mud and stone brought from Dedan site. These houses were lined side by side that creates enclosure wall to protect the town against enemy attacks.









# AL-ULA



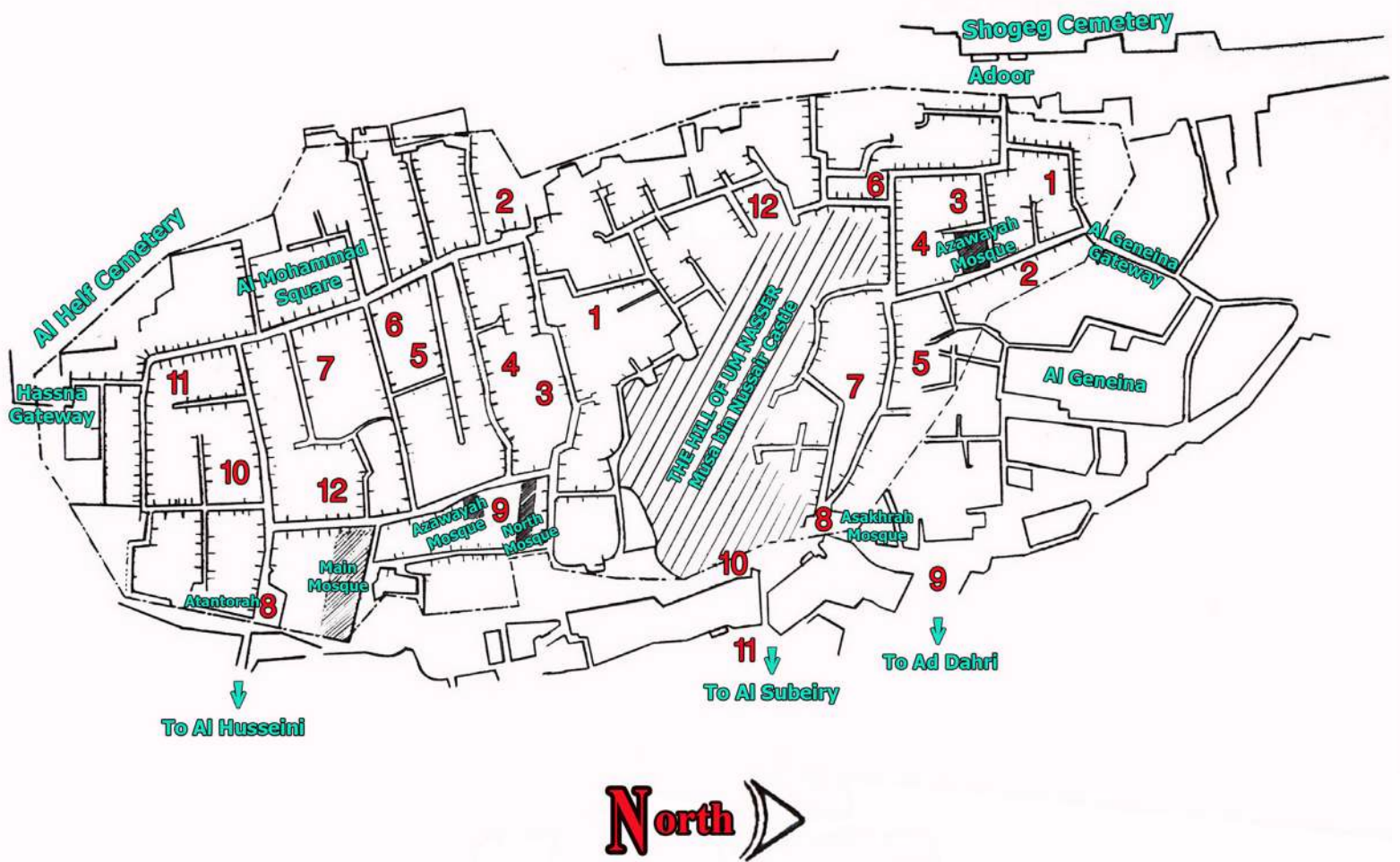
## Route to Madain Saleh

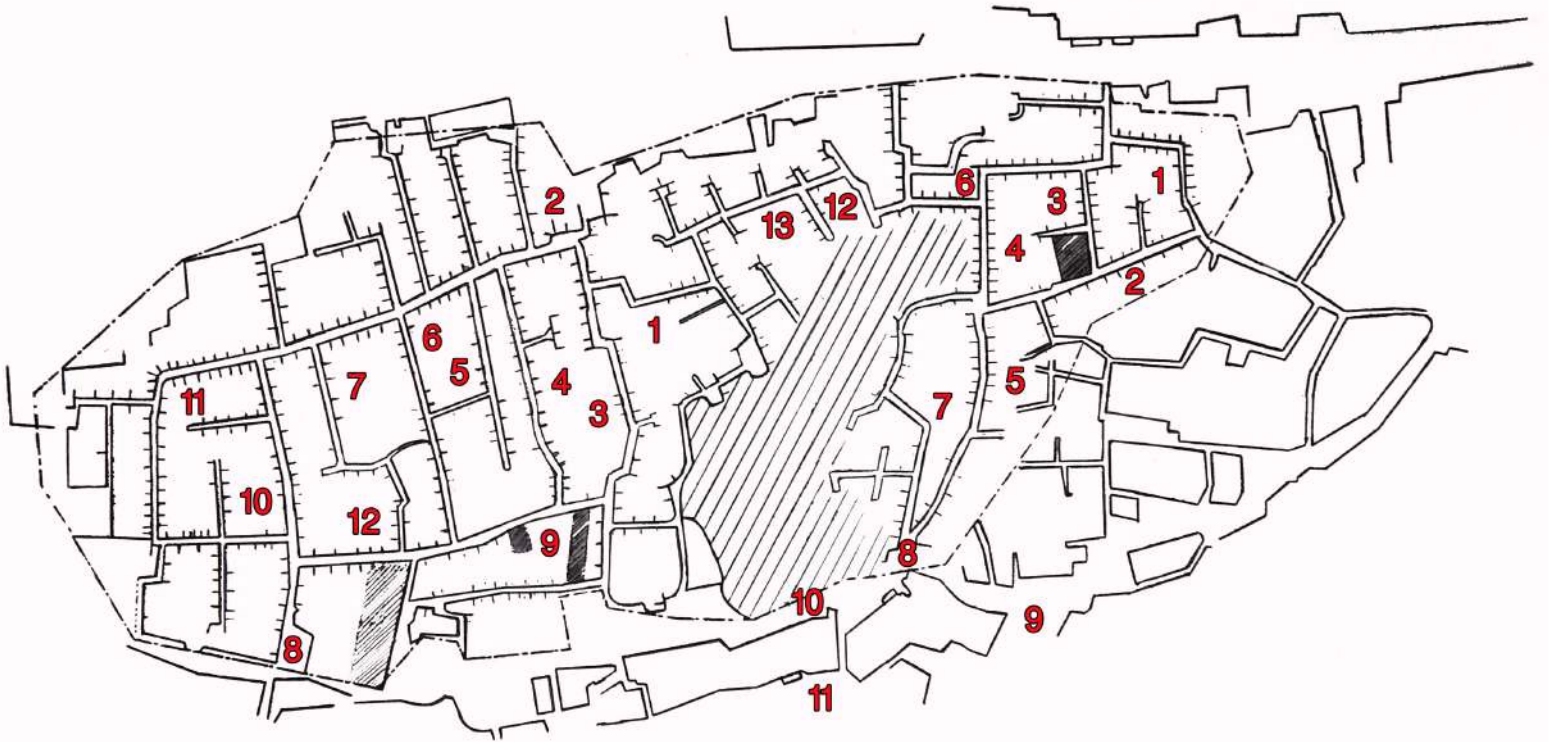






# Map of Al-Ula Old Town





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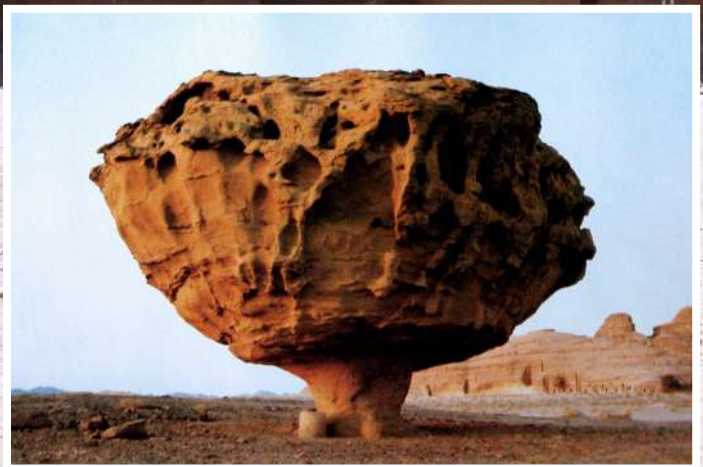
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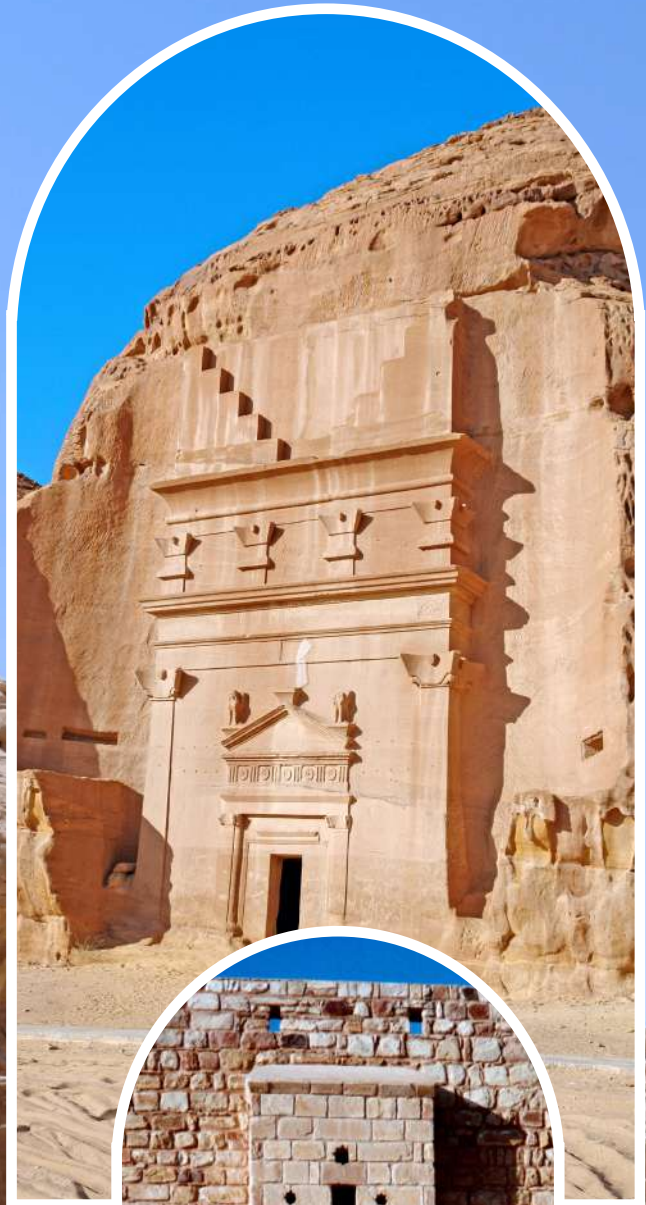
## MADAIN SALEH

Fortunately, no modern settlement has encroached upon the remains of Madain Saleh. They stand alone in an undulating sea of sand, with islands of weathered sandstone rocks, eroded and rippled into fantastic sculptural shapes. It is into some of these that the Nabataeans carved their monumental tombs, a Herculean task when one considers the tons of rock removed to straighten the high facades as they worked from top to bottom.

In Madain Saleh, there is a railway station for pilgrims; the second such station on the old Hejaz Railway line after Damascus. There is also the Hajj Castle and a water wheel that used to lift water from a deep well into a large water pond located behind it. The site has more inscriptions and writings in walls and forts dating back to the great Islamic in particular the Abbasid Dynasty.









**AL-ULA**

## **DEDAN (KHURAIBAH)**



**Route to Madain Saleh**





Khuraibah is 2 kilometers to the northeast of Al-Ula, which extends from Tal'at Al-Mu'tadil in the north to Tal'at Al-Hammad in the south. Here as well have many inscriptions and writings, as many of its historical monuments buried and only now being unearthed. Mahlab Al-Naqa (large stone basin) or the milking bowl of the she-camel of the Prophet Saleh can also be found in this area. This consists of a cylindrical tank 3 m. in diameter and 3 m. deep.

Lehyan, who ruled Dedan, previously occupied the area. The Nabataeans extended their kingdom to the south from Petra and probably settled here around the beginning of the first century BC.





**UM DARAJ**







It is in Saq District to the western part of Al-Ula in Harat Owerud Mountain. The stairs engraved at the foot of the mountain can be seen even the visitor stays in the car. These stairs lead to a Lehyan temple in the mountain, but it ruined at the time being. Visitor is not advisable to ascend the temple; access to it is dangerous and not easy.



# IKMAH

It is a Mountain located north-west of Al-Ula on the road leading to Madain Saleh. Mount Ikmah lies outside the fenced area in Dedan almost 3 km. away from it. It also lies to the left side on the way to Al-Odeb farms and Qaraqir Village. The visitor can see the location immediately after leaving Arac Hotel northwards where they can see the wall and the fence of the site. The site is generally not available for public visit to protect the archaeological site of the area and difficulty of access to the site of the temple and the Lehyan writings therein. The stairs to the temple have significantly affected by erosion. The most prominent researchers interested in this site are Dr. Hussein Abu Al-Hassan who has works and specialized studies about the site.







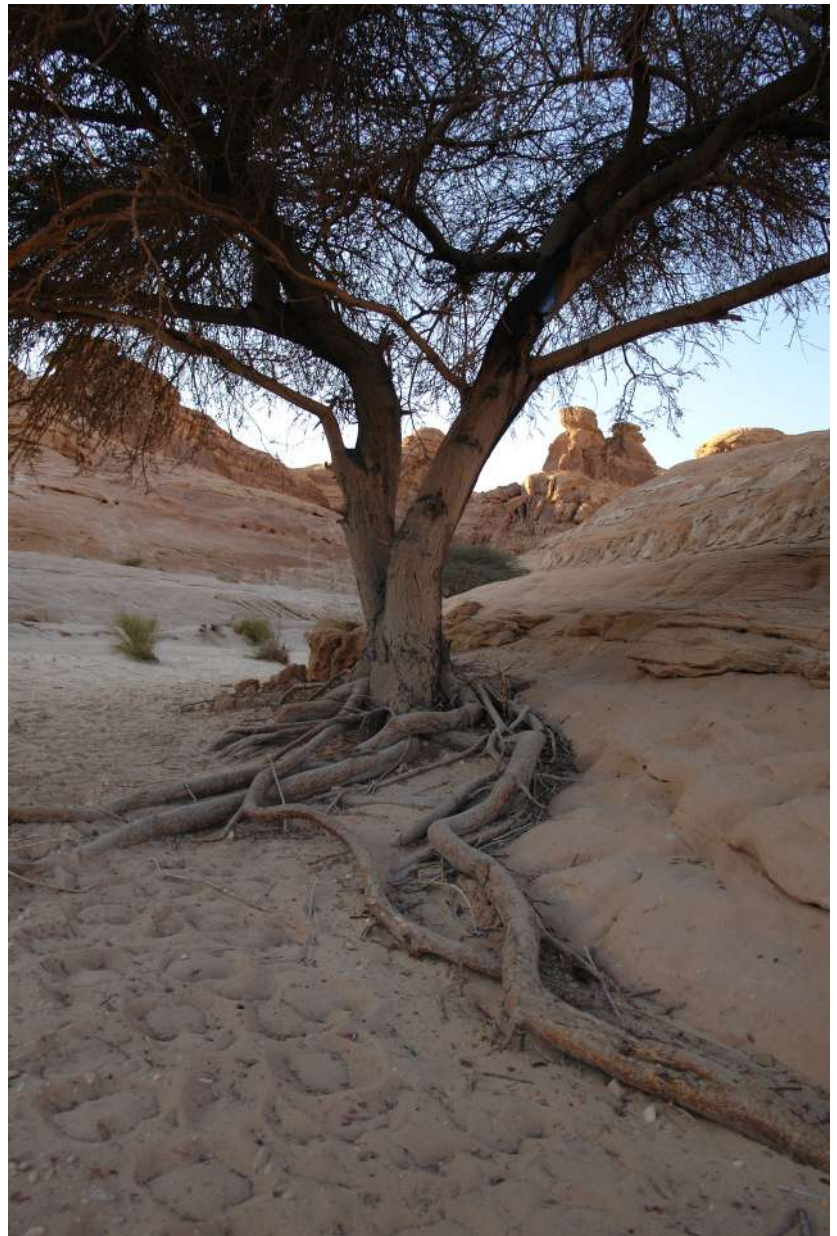
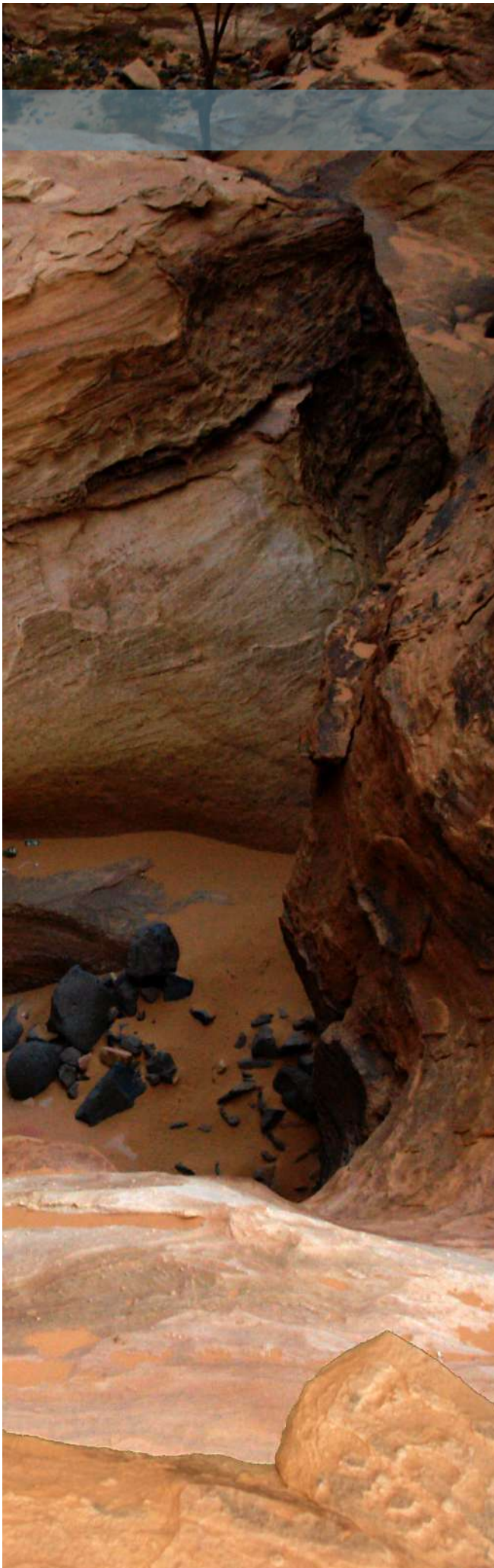


## **ABU UD (DENAN)**

It is located to the north-west of Al-Ula. It is a beautiful valley surrounded by mountains on the east and west and contains many Arab and non-Arab writings, graffiti and strange rock formations. It is parallel to Mount Ikmaah from the west and can be reached by two ways; first from behind of Arac Hotel and the other are through Denan Valley, southwest of Qaraqir Village.







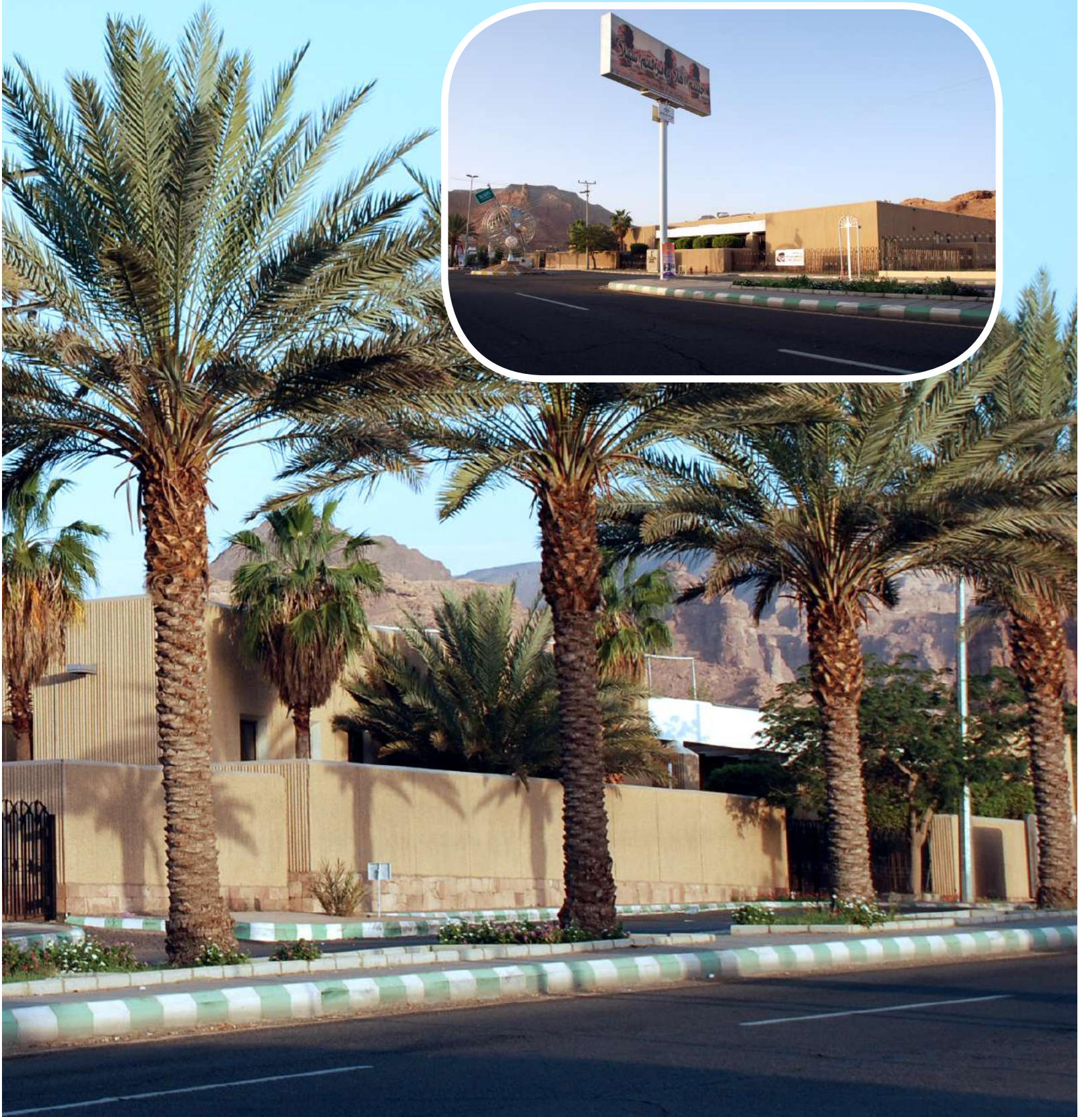




## MUSEUM

The Museum in Al-Ula is supervised by the Higher Tourism Authority. It is in the center of Al-Ula near the Municipality building. It contains many of the cultural and heritage collections and rare picture collections. It opens from morning until evening for visitors without entrance fee.

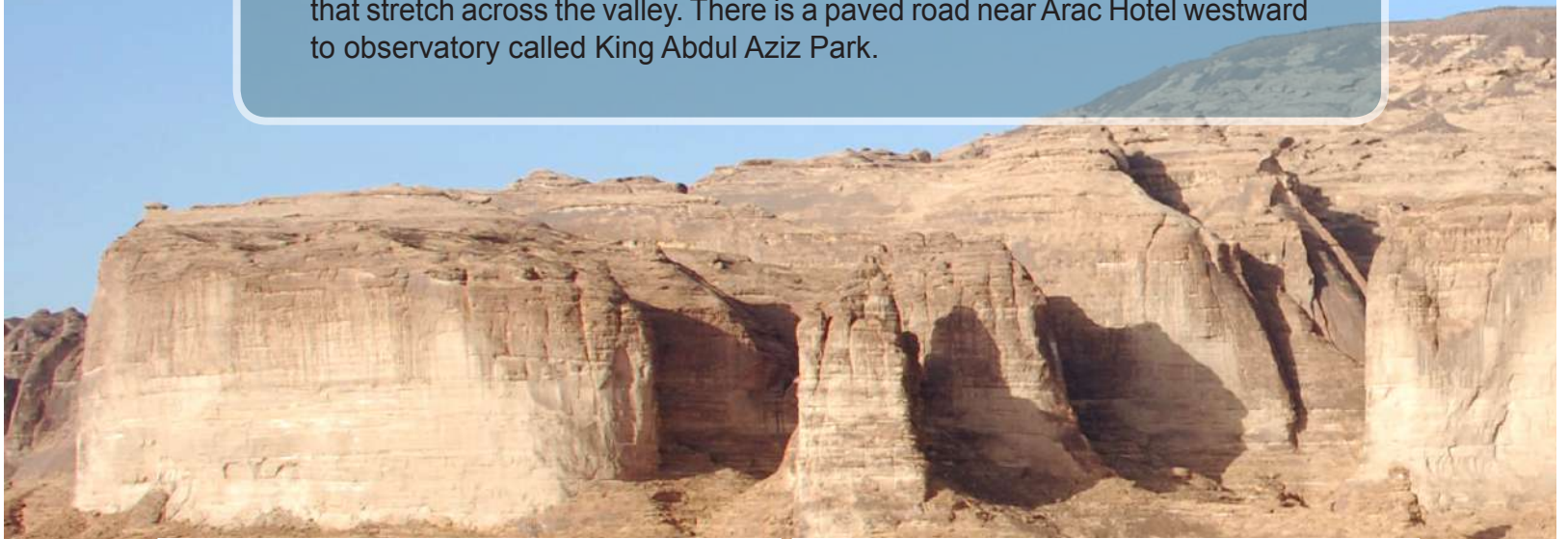






## **HARAT OWERUD (KING ABDUL AZIZ PARK)**

It is located to the west of Al-Ula. It is a 40 to 50 km. wide and more than 200 km. long series of mountains extending from the south of Al-Ula northwards. The visitor can watch from its observatory overlooking Al-Ula and Madain Saleh, all landmarks such as the Old town, monuments of Dedan Kingdom (Khuraibah), the modern city, the monuments of Madain Saleh and the farms that stretch across the valley. There is a paved road near Arac Hotel westward to observatory called King Abdul Aziz Park.









## AL-ULA

It is recommended for the tourists to visit this place because of its uniqueness and charm. It has vast areas of black rock surfaces and enjoys fresh air as well as significant bio-diversity including birds, rabbits and reindeer that attracts hunters in specific periods. There are several ways to go there including Shalal Village Road leading to Dhaa Spring with its natural springs and high palms trees, also through Therbah or Albrekah Villages wherein visitors must have guide specializing in the region.









## AL-ULA

# AL-MOJDAR MOUNTAIN

It is in eastern mountain of Al-Ula. It can clearly be seen from Al-Ula. It is more than 300 m. high. It includes several ancient writings and drawings in addition to some wonderful caves, the most important of which is Kathroubah Cave as known locally. It is situated to the right side of the road leading to Madain Saleh Hotel and can access easily. There is another cave in front of the hotel that can be reached by ascending to Abu Al-Hussein Hill. The local people call it Christians Souq. It is a narrow passage between two rocks in the middle of the mountain, leading to a valley cave at its end. The surface of the mountain is even and extends to long distances.









## AL-ULA

# AL-MOJDAR MOUNTAIN

Above the mountain, there are monuments of stone settlements, circular buildings and specific routes linking the parts of the stone village for long distances to reach the mountain overlooking Al-Mahash neighborhood. Watching Al-Ula from the altitude of the mountain is a wonderful scene. It can be access by mountaineering amateurs in many ways; first is from inside Madain Saleh Hotel through Abu Al-Hussein Hill, the shortest road. The other one is through Tal'at Al-Hammad in front of agricultural nursery. It is long and arduous way. It can also be access from behind the mountain from Al-Mahash or Athamid in front of the Khamissiyah neighborhood.









## **AL-MABIAT**

It is located at the south of Al-Ula towards Prince Abdulmajed Airport road. In the beginning of Islamic Era Al-Mabiat also known as Qarah was a famous Arab markets. Research and excavations carried out at Al-Mabiat indicated that the site contains Islamic City with narrow streets, shops and houses with wooden doors. Gypsum are used to decorate houses and the remains of city walls, a mosque, pieces of ceramics and floors covered by mud or plaster have been found.









# **AL-FAQIR CASTLE AND ISLAMIC CASTLES**





Al-Faqir Castle is located to the south of Al-Ula and to the north of Moghira Village. It is 20 kilometers from Al-Ula and can be access via Al- Ula – Shajwa - Madinah Road; visitors can see it on the left hand side heading to the south along this road. Al-Faqir is an old castle dating back to the earlier Islamic Era and was built for the service of pilgrims and delivery of mail. It is part of a series of castles in old pilgrimages road.

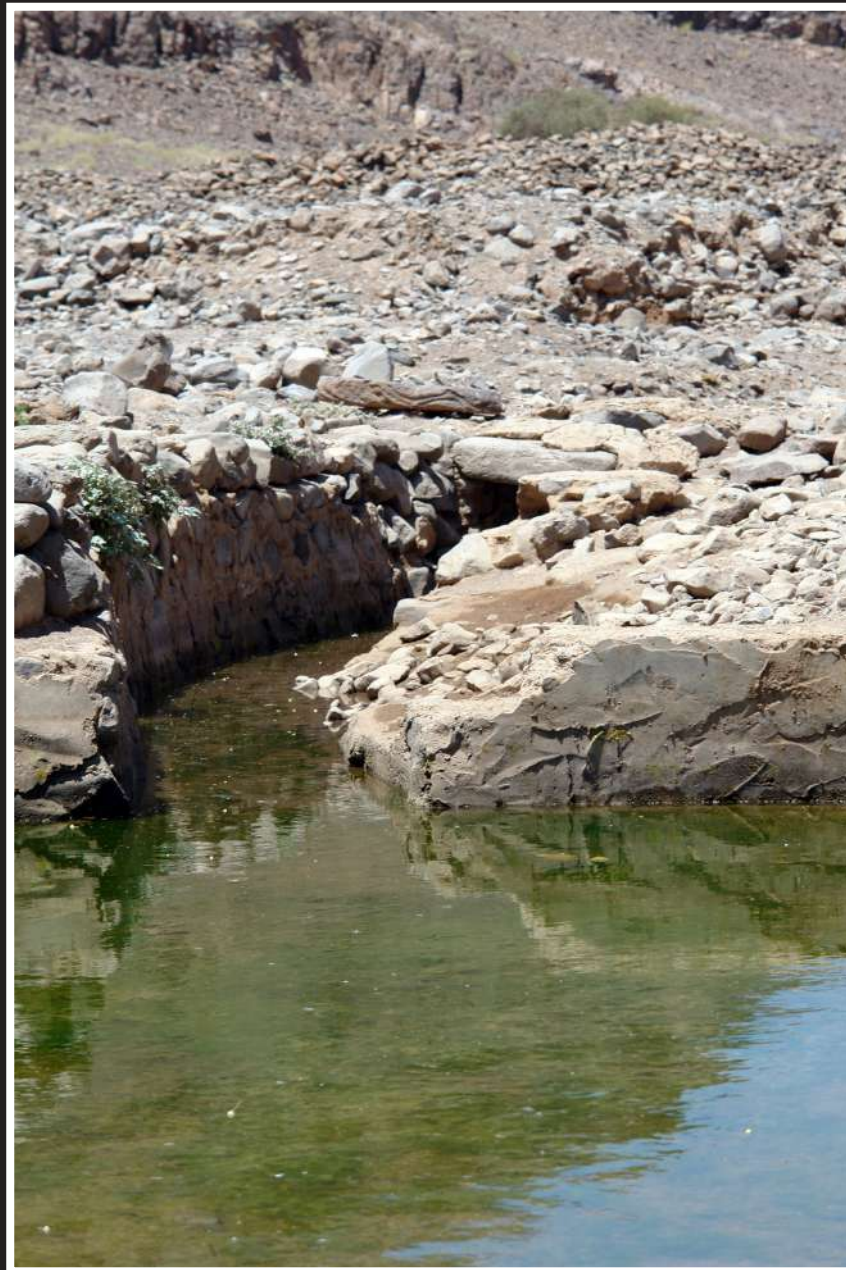


These series of castles are the Tabouk (Al-Akhdar) Castle, Al- Mo'azam Castle, Al-Boreka (Ad-Dar Al-Hamra) Castle, Al-Hijr (Madain Saleh) Castle, Al-Faqir (Moghira) Castle, Zomorood Castle, As-Sora Castle, Hadeya Castle, Antar Mountain Castle and Al-Hafira Castle which are the most important fortresses on Shami's Pilgrimage Route within the boundaries of the kingdom from north to the south and to Madinah. In the past, travellers went from Al-Ula to Madinah by trekking and castles serves as stop-over for travellers to rest and sleep even at the present day where cars are being use.



# SHALAL VILLAGE

It is located 25 km. away to the north of Al-Ula that link to Al-Ula Road via modern paved way. Shalal is one of the populated villages bordered by Herat Owerud Mountain to the west. It is place where Jameel Buthaina lived. It has a fascinating mountainous, sandy and plantation diversity. In addition, there is «Da>ab Alqoful» a cave at the ground level. When rain falls, it is filled with water forming beautiful natural lake preserving water for months that attracts hunters. In Shalal, there are also Thamud drawings and writings on the basis that it is a natural extension of Madain Saleh. There are fresh spring water as well, flowing throughout the year and irrigating the date trees of the village. This spring emanated from Al-Hara Mountain, it bears the name of the village Shalal.









## AL-ULA

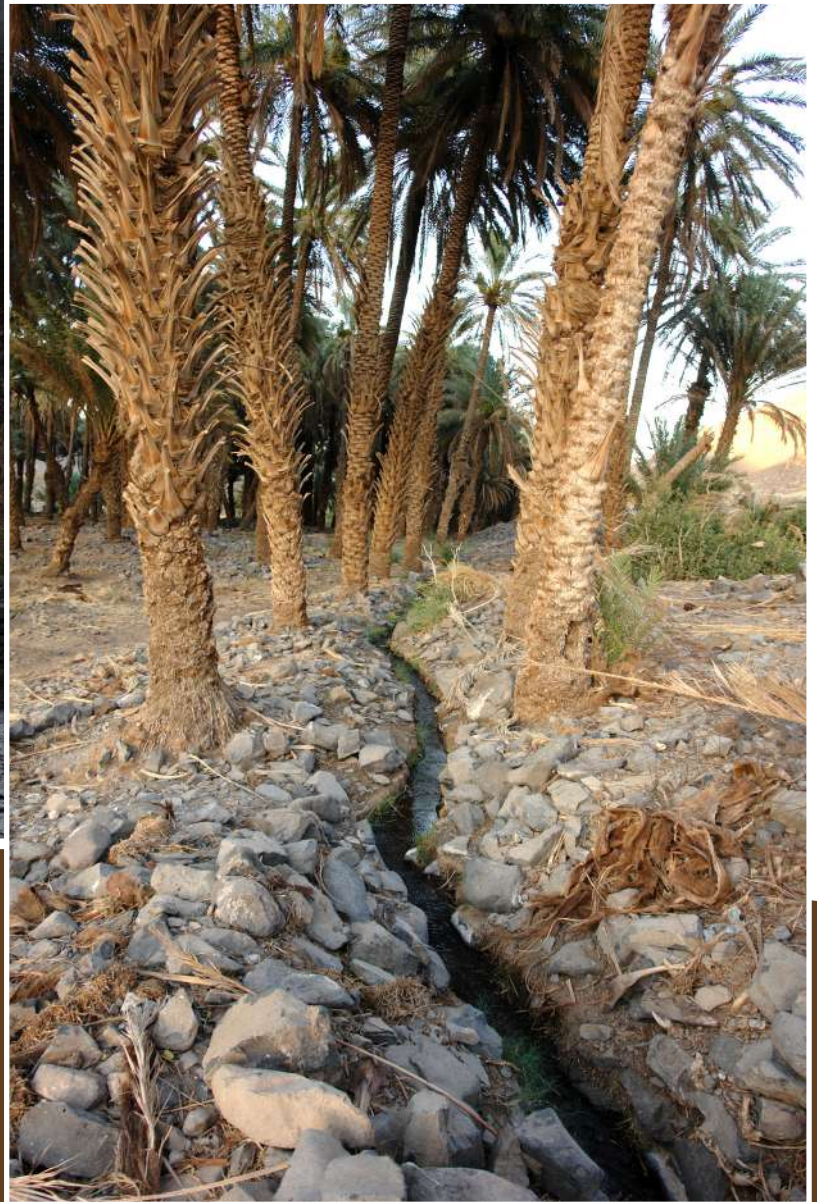
# THERBAH

Therbah is located 35 km. away from north-west of Al-Ula. It links to Al-Ula through a modern paved road. It is one of the populated villages in Al-Ula region. It is a transit point for those heading for Owerud. It is parallel to the village of Owrash in the west and located at the western part of Owerud. It includes evidence of ancient settlements like those found in Owrash in addition to the fresh spring water throughout the year that irrigate dates farms. These springs comes forth from Herat Owerud Mountain, which called Therbah springs.



**Route to Madain Saleh**









## MADAKHEEL

It is an area well known to the people and residents of Al-Ula in general. It is famous for its beautiful mountainous formations and its moderate climate. It has many green trees and some wild animals visited by hunters. It is located to the north-west of Madain Saleh and it considered as one of Al-Ula Valley tributaries. It is mentioned in the famous Arab poet "Emro> Al-Qais" in addition to Homel, which is located also to the north west of Al-Ula and Madain Saleh known today as Madakhil. Zabin Moazi Al-Enazi, the author of Dictionary and History of Villages in Al-Qura Valley asked older people from those areas about Madakhil. He said that Homel still carries the same name. It is a mountain famous for shooting. These places are attractive to those who love the desert, hunting and camping. Madakhil consists of various narrow and overlapping valleys surrounded by high red mountains in the south and north. It terminates at Herat Owerud in the west that can be access only from the east. It has many catchments during rainfall where it retains water for a long time, hunters and animals drink from it. The area is densely wood with permanent green trees. It is real fun to visit in summer, spring and autumn. Tourists are invited to visit some wonderful places that love by the famous ancient Arab poets.





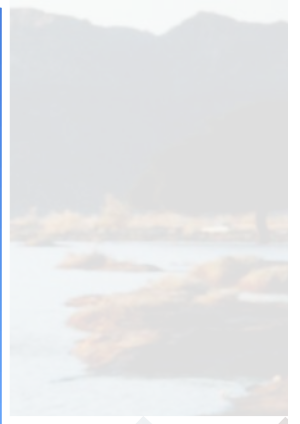


## RAM VALLEY



It is located on the eastern side of Al-Ula. It can be accessed via Riyadh Street in Azizia District going eastward through Prince Abdulmajed Road. This valley is a natural extension of the modern southern districts of Al-Ula, but their urban expansion does not reach the valley. At the beginning of the valley there is «Qa Ram» which is a natural park for the local people and is being use for driving lessons. There are diversity of green trees, archaeological writings and drawings.







## AL-ULA

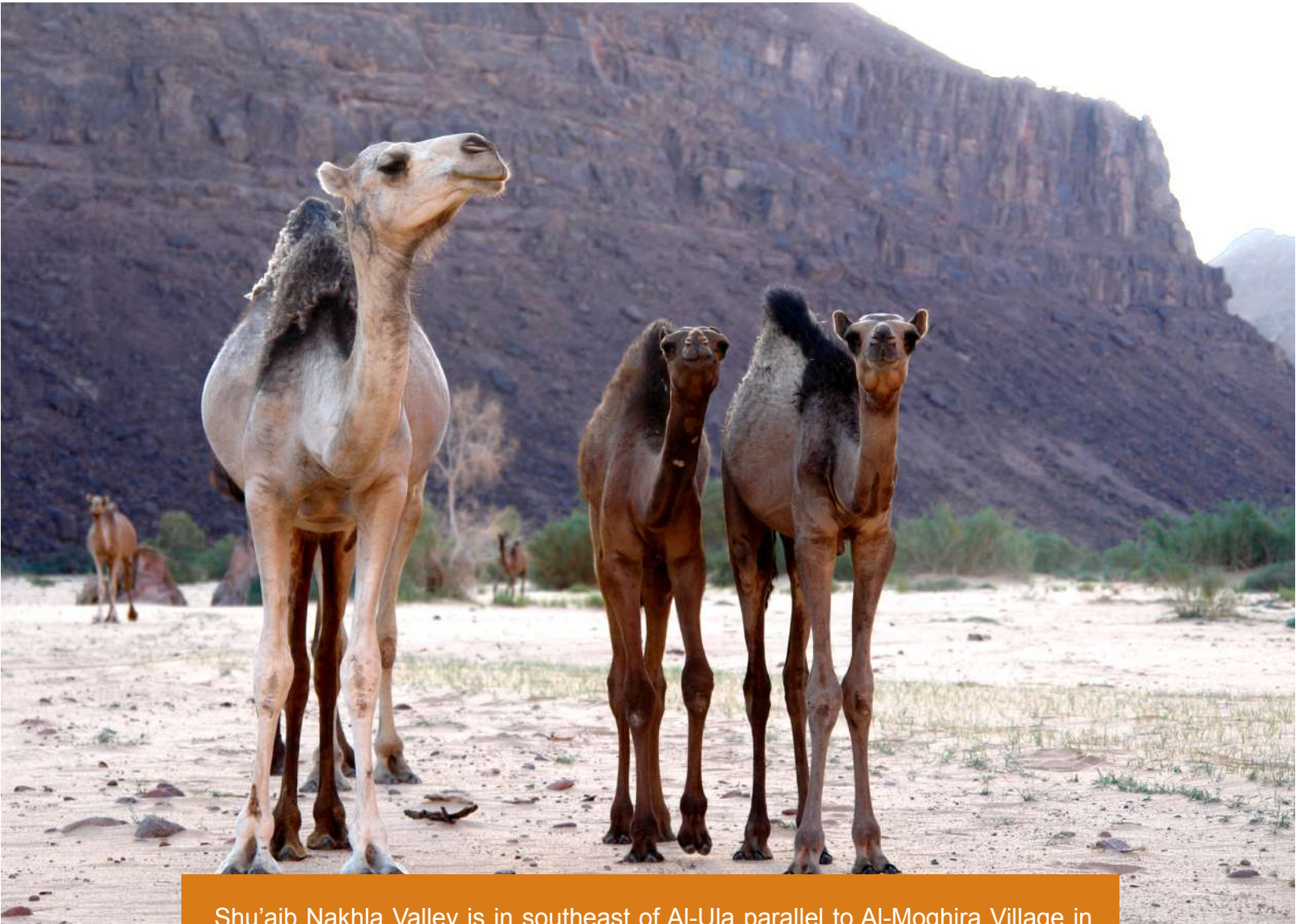








## **NAKHLA VALLEY**



Shu'aib Nakhla Valley is in southeast of Al-Ula parallel to Al-Moghira Village in the east. It is 60 kilometers away from Al-Ula and can be access through the road of Madinah passing through Moghira Village, turning left to Madain Saleh Airport and continue in the east road northwards until reaching the site called Al-Qatar. There is water falling from the rock caves and continues falling throughout the year except the seasons of drought and interruption of rain. This water flows down from the highlands in the east of Nakhla Valley. It is a valley's natural extension where there is high density of wild standing green trees in the sandy valley.







# ABU BILI







Abu Bili or Al-Balawiya lies almost 17 km. to the west of Al-Ula. It is located at the right side heading to the west on the way to Al-Wajh. It can be access via Al-Ula – Al-Wajh paved road. It is famous at spring seasons where its valleys and mountains turn into beautiful green areas attracting people who love desert and pristine nature.







# NAKHLA VALLEY

This valley is located to the West of Al-Ula with about 250 km. long. Herat Owerud separates it from Al-Ula. It extends from Abu Raka and Al - Fare 'a Villages northwards. It has many tributaries and small valleys that flow in the east and west and increase its size and force wherever it heads south until it meets with Al-Salilah Village, Khaibar and Al-Hammad Valleys in the south. Then it turns to the west where it reaches Yanbu until it flows into the Red Sea. This valley considered as one of the most beautiful natural virgin areas in the Kingdom where multiple types of rare plants and trees grow in its waterway. It is also home to different animals such as wild rabbits, deer and mountain caribou in addition to the Arab tiger, which was seen during the floods that swept into the valley in 1986. The Valley can be accessed via several ways such as Al-Ula – Al-Wajh Road or though Abu Raka, Al – Nashifa, Balata and Al-Khoshaiyah or Al-Jadida Village. It is not advisable to walk or spend night in the valley during the rainy seasons.







## **JABAL AL-WARD (ROSE MOUNTAIN)**



It is located west of Al-Ula at 120 km. It can be access via Al-Ula – Al-Wajh road passing by Qarm and Al-Farsh valleys. All of them contain sites that deserve visiting. Al-Ward is one of the most beautiful summer resorts, it is located about 1,500 m. above sea level while the Mount peak is over 2,000 m. Average summer temperature is 25 degrees Centigrade and sometimes snow covers the mountain during the winter. It contains natural spring water flowing in the valley.







# AL-ULA



## Route to Madain Saleh









## **SHU'AIB SIRAR (SIRAR VALLEY)**

It is a valley located to the west of Al-Ula with nearly 120 km. away. It can be access through Al-Ula – Al-Wajh Road before Anajeel Village driving through a 20 km. unpaved desert road towards the south until the village of Jabal Al-Ward. From there, you can return to Al-Ula through Al-Ward – Al-Ula Road. Sirar Valley is one of the most beautiful natural virgin places where many diverse desert trees, mountain rabbits, birds, sashes and other birds can be found in the valley.







## AL-ULA



## OWRASH



Owrash is a historical old village located west of Al-Ula, which it is almost 90 km. away on Al-Ula - Al-Wajh paved road, it can be access via this route and entered from the direction of Balata Village. It can also be access through unpaved desert road with 10 km. to the east, the road leading to it cross Al-Jazel Valley. Owrash is parallel to Therbah Village in the east and separated by Herat Owerud. There is an old route for camels and pedestrians through Herat Owerud linking Owrash to Al-Ula. Owrash was famous in the past for its quality production of dates, mint and tobacco that exported to the markets of Al-Ula. There are some ancient evidence of settlements like those in Therbah Village such as several drawings of extinct animals, ancient inscriptions and writings. There are also five-spring water providing freshwater throughout the year and irrigating dates farms in the village. Owrash is rich of mountainous delicious partridge bird.

## Route to Madain Saleh









## AL-ULA



## Route to Madain Saleh





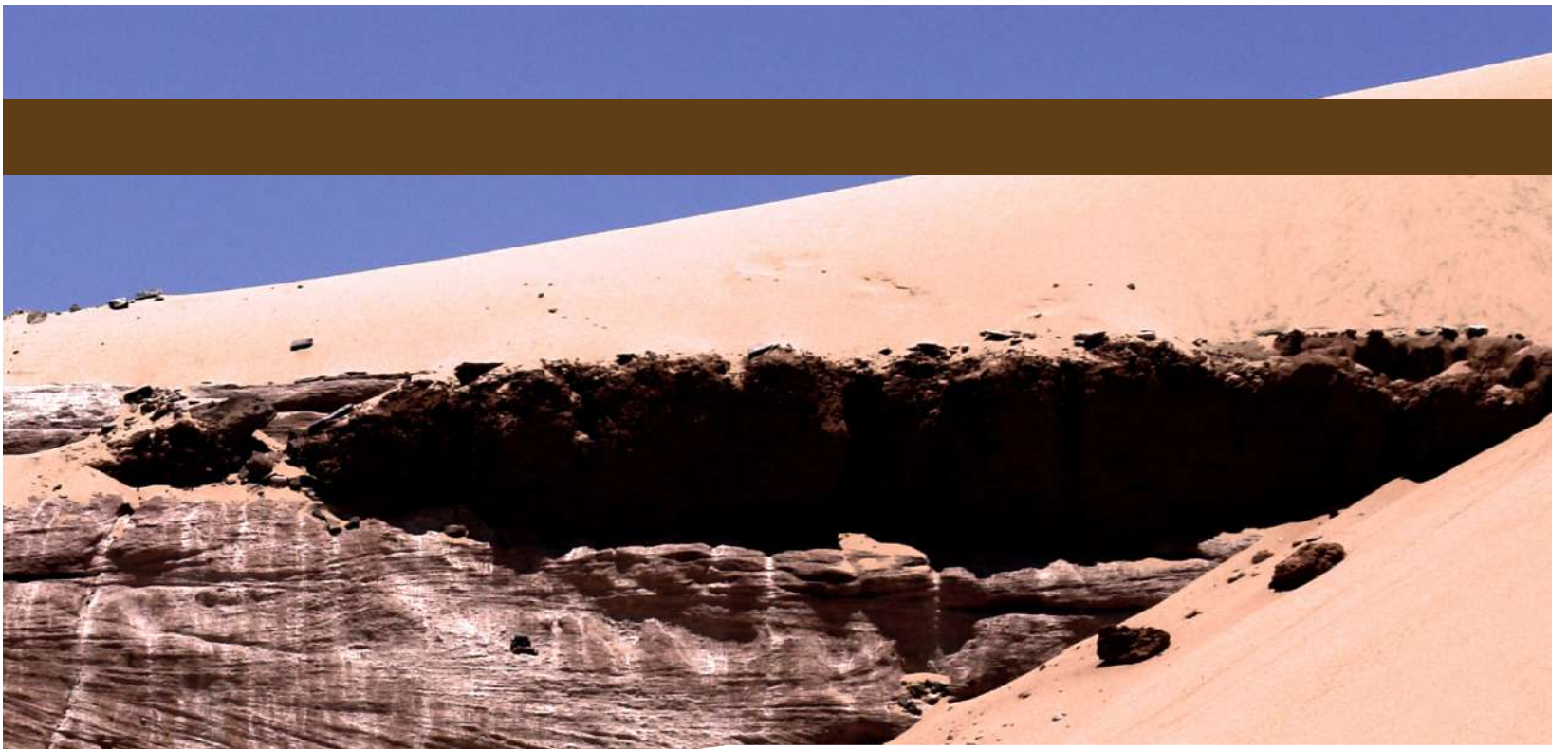




## **DESERT CAMPING**

Al-Ula is characterized by its attractive natural scenery marked by the reddish sandstone into beautiful and attractive shapes. Sand dunes and huge rocks formation combined together that shows a wonderful display of thrilling nature. During winter and spring, after the rain, the area turns into green fields attracting inhabitants and visitors from outside the region.







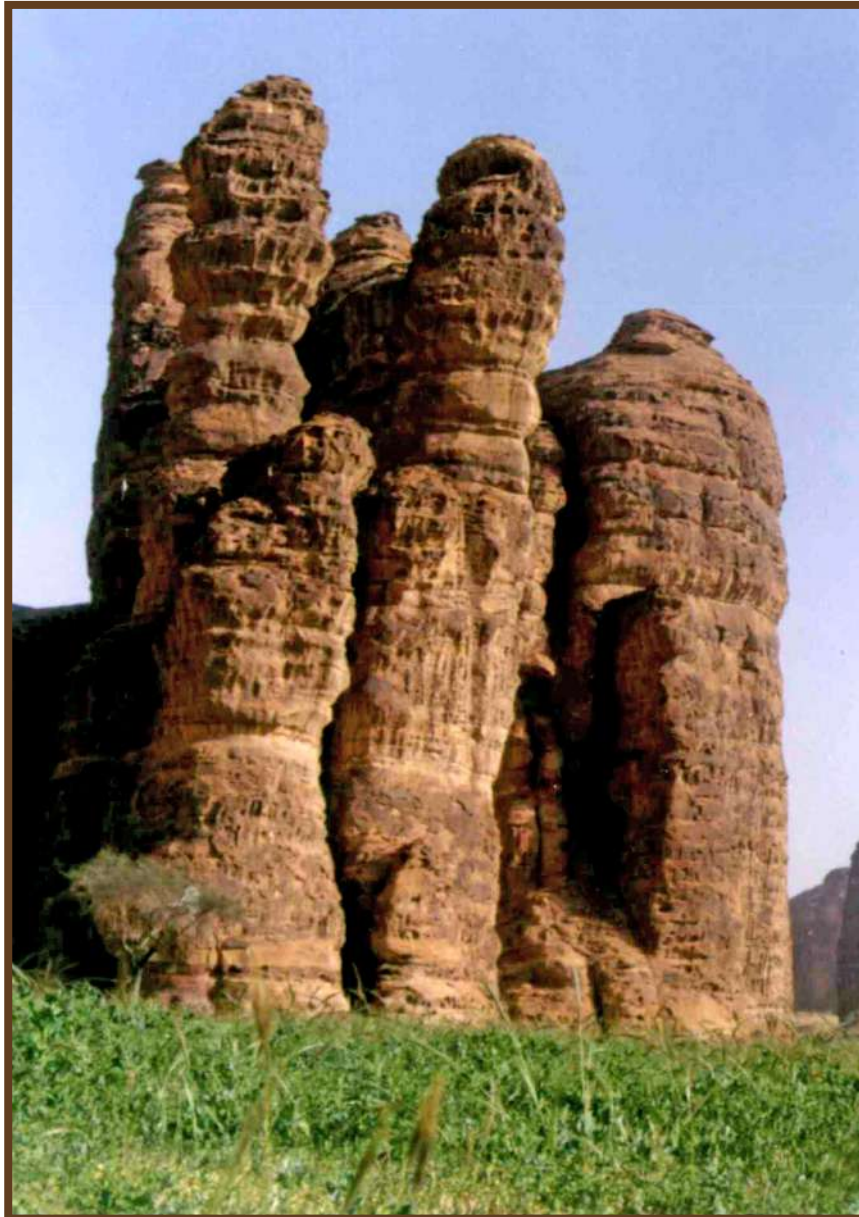
## AL-ULA



**The following are a list of places in Al-Ula that are recommended for desert camping:**

1. Rawdat Al-Naqa
2. Elephant Rock
3. Dalabeh
4. Al-Hawia
5. Hejaz Railway





## RAWDAT AL-NAQA

It is located north of Madain Saleh and modern Al-Hijr. It is about 8 km. away from Al-Hijr farms and is difficult to access using tourist vehicles. It needs four wheel drive cars specially made for such places and a guide who have knowledge about the roads in the area. Tourist is not advisable to go there alone, tour guide is a must.

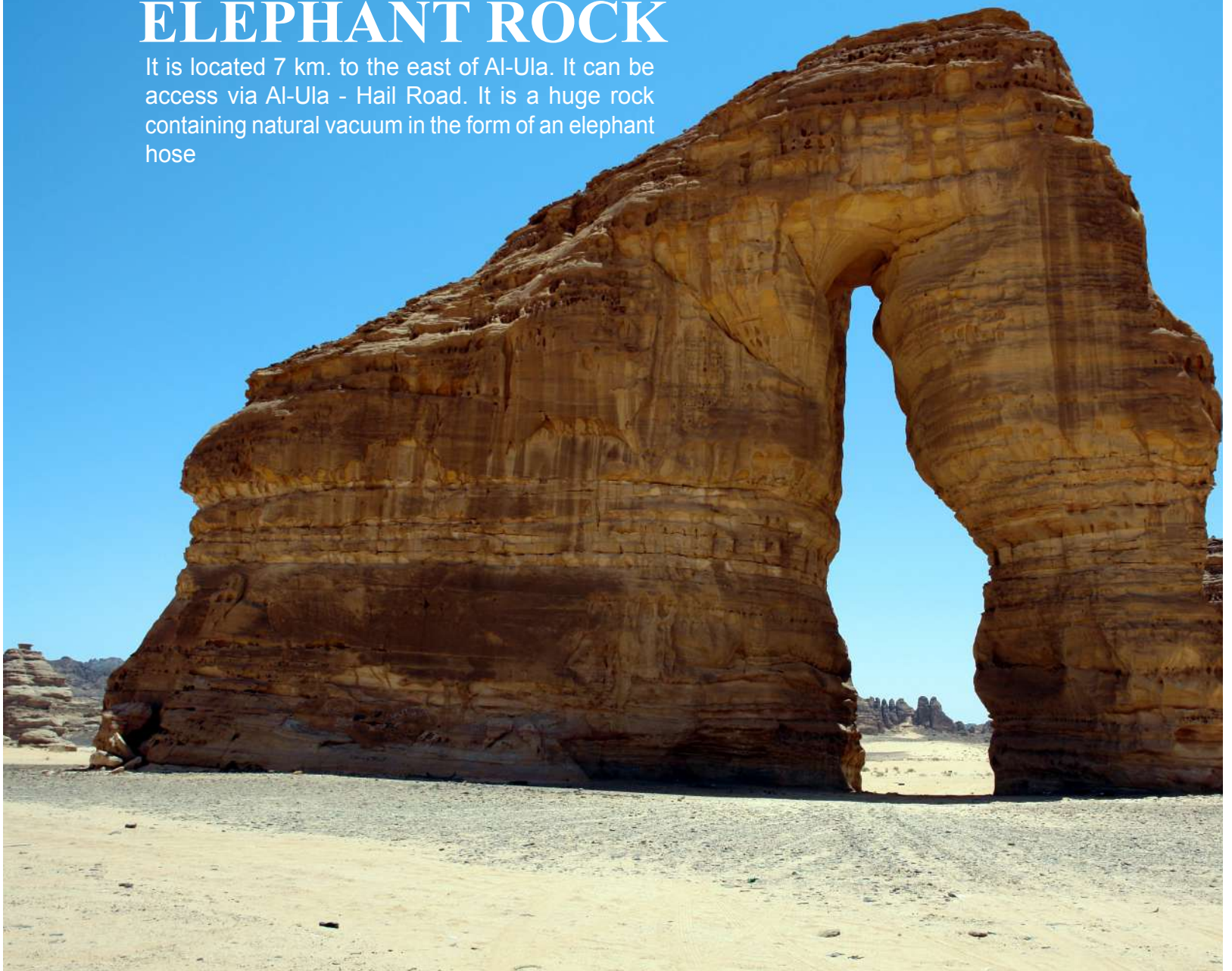


## AL-ULA



## ELEPHANT ROCK

It is located 7 km. to the east of Al-Ula. It can be access via Al-Ula - Hail Road. It is a huge rock containing natural vacuum in the form of an elephant hose









### DALABEH

Um Azer is located to east of Al-Ula. It is a group of deserts and mountains extending eastward to Hail until the borders of Jahra. It consists of rock and mountainous formations overlapping with yellow sand dunes composing wonderful scenery as if it was painted. This area flourishes during rainy and spring seasons where many types of herbs and shrubs grow.

### AL-HAWIA CANYON

It is a very low mountainous depression with depth of more than 300 m. It is a place where floods coming from the east towards the west collected and distributed to Moghira and Abu Zaraeb. It is located about 80 km. east town of Al-Ula and 1,000 meters above sea level. It is accessible through Al-Ula - Hail Road where 60 km. signboard is being place. The visitor can turn southwards to the road leading to the site through unpaved road extending about 25 km. It is one of the bizarre landscapes especially in the rainy seasons and spring. It acquired this name because of the rocky deep gap it made up of and the absence of rims or heights that can prevent falling in its bottom. Water is permanently located throughout the year and there are approximately some of the wild flora and fauna on the site such as wild rabbits and kinds of birds and pigeons.

### HEJAZ RAILWAY

Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the last Ottoman caliph established the railway to transport pilgrims, mail and to consolidate the power through the sprawling Ottoman Empire. Hejaz Railway was an Islamic project at first to connect all of the Ottoman Empire. Second reason was to facilitate the arrival of pilgrims to Makkah and Madinah. The railway has contributed in economic, commercial, as well as cultural and social communication in the regions and cities. Despite of the difficulties faced during the establishment of the railway such as lack of funding and resources, Sultan Abdul Hamid II ordered to continue the work. Sultan Abdul Hamid did not ask loans from foreign countries but came to the involvement of people from the Islamic world to donate in order to continue building of Hejaz Railway. The contributions handled by the treasury of the Ottoman Empire and continued during railway operation for the completion of the project extending to Makkah. The cost of the Hejaz Railway Project was nearly three and a half million Ottoman Pounds (Ottoman Liras).

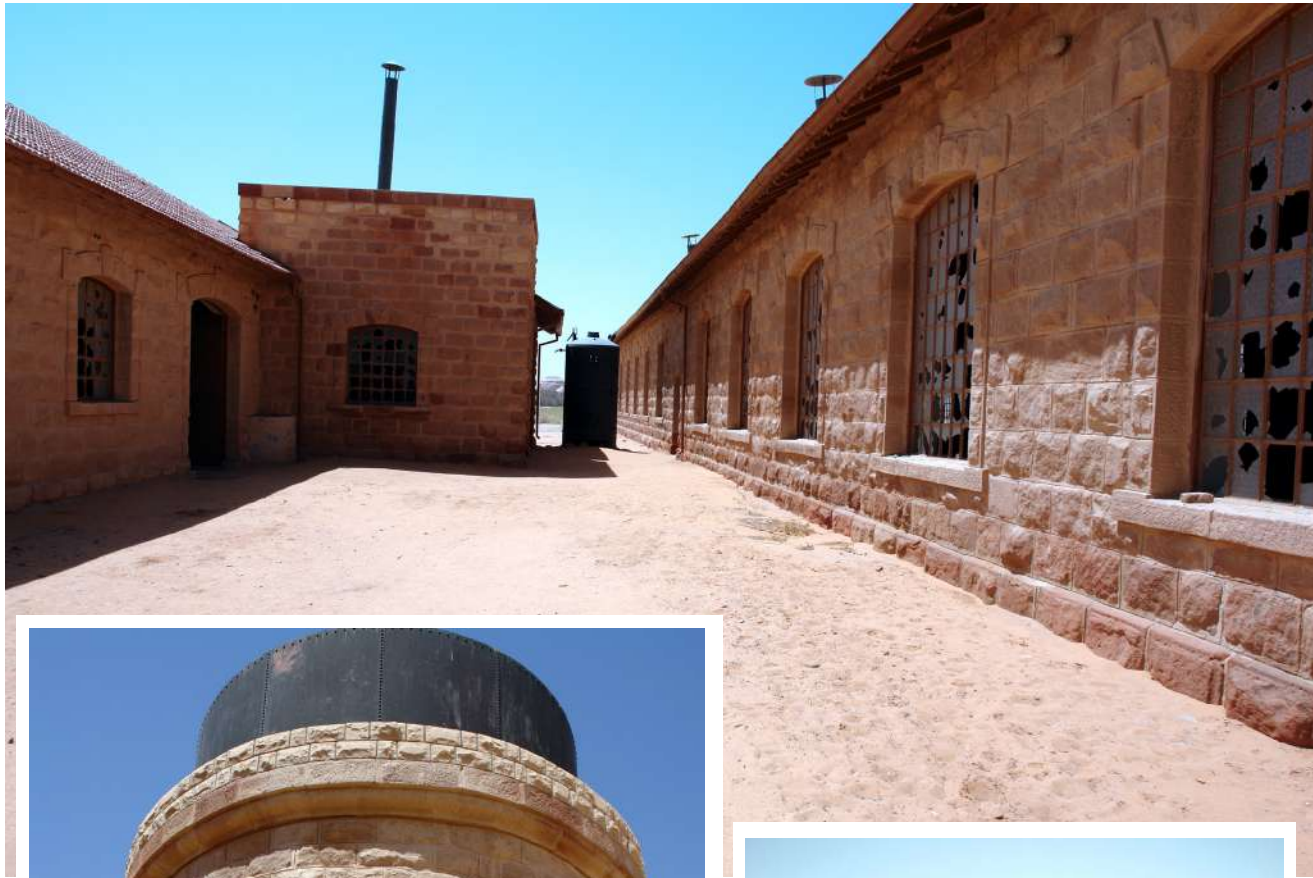


After the construction of the railway, travelling the distance between Madinah and Istanbul are not exceeded to five days instead of forty five (45) days trekking. The Hejaz Railway extends at 1,320 km. between Madinah and Istanbul in Turkey and the work completed in eight years.





# AL-ULA







**SULTAN ABDULHAMID II**  
**1876 - 1909**





# AL-ULA



## Route to Madain Saleh



## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE IN AL-ULA AT THE ERA OF HEJAZ RAILWAY

During the period of 1908 and 1914, Al-Ula witnessed a significant movement of trade and cultural exchange between cities that pass through the train especially Madinah, Levant, Palestine and Istanbul. Many of the local people in Al-Ula and the sons of the tribes adjacent to the train's railway path contributed the work in the construction of the railway as workers and assistants begin to open trade and cultural exchange with Levant.

After the railway's completion, it began its regular operations between Madinah and Istanbul in Turkey, which was at that time advanced in comparison with Hejaz in general. More people from Al-Ula travelled to Levant for business and to earn a living or trading in urban Jordan and Damascus, Jerusalem, Beirut and Istanbul, some individuals have settled there and formed new families. The trade that created in the same city of Al-Ula and Madain Saleh led the creation of markets near the train stations and the availability of some activities in support of passenger services such as selling foods, livestock, local produce and some tourism activities. Al-Ula agricultural crops, especially dates, began to introduce in the markets of Madinah, Damascus and Istanbul through trading between travellers and merchants crossing the railway to Madinah. Pilgrims on their way home to south and north of Levant purchase products where Al-Ula exported dates, pomegranates, sweet lemons and grains. The surrounding villages began to offer products from sheep like butter in the markets then different products such as sugar, tea and clothing began to enter the markets of Al-Ula from Istanbul and Damascus. Al-Ula train station was the last stop for non-Muslim businessmen at that time, Christian traders sell and exchange their goods in the town's market making the city of Al-Ula play an important role in trading and economic progress. The establishment of Hejaz Railway Train Station in Al-Ula offered telephone and mailing services. Al-Ula and Madain Saleh station have telephone connecting Madinah and Istanbul and to all stations along the railway line to exchange information and receive guidance of the train schedules. The formal education reached in Al-Ula through that period, which is considered as the golden age of Al-Ula.





# AL-ULA



## Route to Madain Saleh





## HEJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN STATION IN AL-ULA

The Hejaz railway train station is in Al-Ula at the eastern part of the train district. The Hejaz railway train station in Al-Ula is smaller than that of Madain Saleh. Within it includes Ottoman post offices, wire telecommunication office, accommodation for the garrison, other staff and service buildings. Some other buildings added such as Al-Qasr and a mosque at the beginning of the Saudi Era and it became the headquarters for the official of Al-Ula at that time. Al-Qasr is now called by local population to its new name Emirah Palace but it is not being use nowadays





### THE OPENING CEREMONY OF AL-ULA RAILWAY STATION

Hejaz Railway was inaugurated in 1908 and announced the beginning of the operation officially. The Al-Ula station grand opening ceremony witnessed and attended by the representatives of Sultan Abdulhamid II, Ottoman governor of Al-Ula at that time. All the elders of the tribes, clans living in Al-Ula and the surrounding areas and those who participated in the construction of the railway also witnessed the inauguration.

To protect the railway from bandits and any attack, Sultan Abdul Hamid II cooperates with all the elders of the tribes and clans where the railway line passes. In return for the favor of protecting the railway, money was sent regularly to them as gifts provided by the Sultan. The money that was given to these tribes and clans contributed in improving their life and status.



## OTTOMAN CASTLES IN HEJAZ RAILWAY

There are different types of Ottoman Castle in Hejaz Railway, there is short-spaced and some castles are similar in terms of design and use. They are used as refuelling stations for locomotives of this railway line. It also contained all the necessities of day-to-day living at that time such as wells, water tanks, food and weapons depots, post offices and trunk (wireless telephone services) connecting Madinah to Istanbul in Turkey. Each castle had a commander assisted by a group of aides, guards and locomotives maintenance engineers.



You can see two important train stations during a trip to Al-Ula;

1. Badaya Station located near Moghira Village and Al-Mabiat, the station has a small fort for 25 men, water tower & windmill.
2. Madain Saleh Station has main workshop and small fort for 25 men and an underground store for explosives, housing, Rheinlander Locomotive, tender, 4 Belgian made carriages and water tower.

In fact it is a difficult task to list all the archaeological sites around Al-Ula as there are so many of them dating back to different historical eras.



# **Route to Madain Saleh**

## **AL-ULA**

By:  
Mohammed Abdulwahed



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Camels riding tours (Camel Caravan)



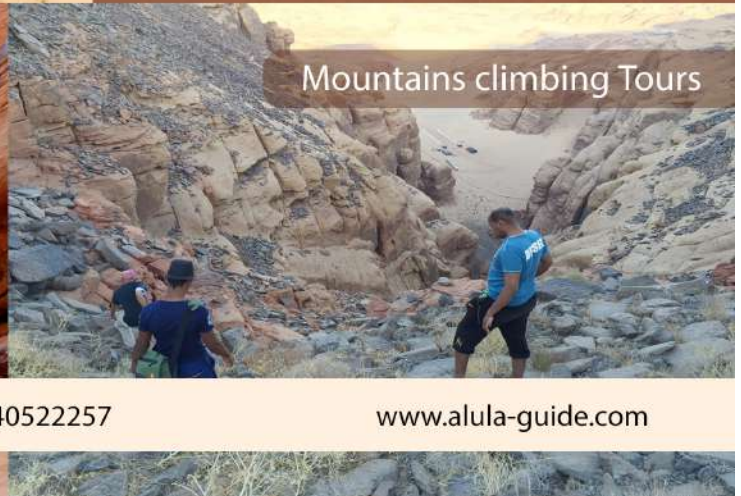
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# ALL-JULIA



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ISBN: 978-603-00-9331-1 (set)

978-603-00-9333-5 (vol.2)