

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN YEMEN

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Yemen has great touristic fundamentals. It contains archaeological sites and historical cities that tell the stories of

civilization. Here, we will take a look at these prominent sites, in Yemen.

Barran Temple

Temple of Barran is a Sabaeen temple near Ma'rib, also known as Throne of Bilqis. The temple is located to the west of Awwam temple, dedicated also to the god Almaqah. The main features of the structure are the six columns and the sacred well in the middle of the courtyard.

Awwam

Awwam now thought by most scholars to be Ma'rib or to the famous temple of Awwam otherwise known as Mahram Bilqis. One of the most frequent titles of the god Almaqah was the Lord of Awwam. Temple of Awwam is a Sabaeen temple near Ma'rib. It was built between the 7th and 5th century BCE. The largest part of the temple is occupied by an unguarded yard that is enclosed by a massive stone wall with an irregular oval ground plan.

Al Hajjarah

is a village located in the Manakhah District of the Sana'a Governorate, in the Haraz Mountains. Al Hajjarah is built upon a precipice and is famous for its towering houses which are built onto the cliff faces. Its citadel was founded in the 12th century by the Sulaihids, and became an important fortification during the Ottoman occupation of Yemen, given the strategic importance of the location.

Baraqish

or Aythel is a town in north-western Yemen. It is located in Wādī Farda. It was known to the Greeks and Romans as Athlula. Barāqish was inhabited from time immemorial; one generation building their houses on the ruins of the earlier ones. In the main area of the site, there still remain, the ruins of a dome, a mosque, a well and tower, as well as many pottery shards and pieces of glass. The ancient city of Yathill was surrounded by a wall 14 meters high. Inscriptions mention that the wall was rebuilt by the Sabaeans in 450 BCE. There is another temple in the center of the city but only four of its columns are still erect.

Ma'rib

was the capital of the Sabaean kingdom, which some scholars believe to be the ancient Sheba of biblical fame. The Sabaean kings made their capital at Ma'rib, and built great irrigation works such as the Ma'rib dams, whose ruins are still visible. The Marib Dam supported a flourishing culture for more than a thousand years. They also built castles and temples (Awwam and Barran) in the area.

Marib Dam

The Ma'arib Dam blocks the Wadi Adhanah in the valley of Dhana in the Balaq Hills. The current dam is close to the ruins of the Great Dam of Ma'rib, dating from around the 8th century BC. It was one of the engineering wonders of the ancient world and a central part of the South Arabian civilization around Marib. There are also other important ancient dams in Yemen such as the Dam of Jufaynah, the Dam of Khārid, the Dam of Aḍra'ah, the Dam of Miqrān and the Dam of Yath'ān. Historically, Yemen has been recognized for the magnificence of its ancient water engineering.

Cisterns of Tawila

or the Tawila Tanks, are the best-known historic site in Aden. The site consists of a series of tanks of varying shape and capacity. They are connected to one another and located in Wadi Tawila to the southwest of Aden's oldest district, Crater. The tanks were designed to collect and store the rain that flows down from the Shamsan massif through Wadi Tawila, and to protect the city from periodic flooding. One favored hypothesis is that Himyar, a pre-Islamic Arabian kingdom that ruled parts of Yemen from 115 B.C. to 525 A.D., started to build water tanks in the area that eventually became the Cisterns of Tawila. The Himyarites are known to have employed water-catchment tanks in other areas under their rule.

Maṣna'at Māriya

Dhamar Governorate. This pre-Islamic Himyarite archaeological site is one of the largest in the Yemen. It is important as a large escarpment site partly of late pre-Islamic date. Inside one of the four city gates a text written Sabaic describes the roads in the area.

Sana'a

is the largest city in Yemen and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It is also one of the highest capital cities in the world. The old city of Sana'a has a distinctive visual character due to its unique architectural characteristics, most notably expressed in its multi-storey buildings decorated with geometric patterns. Located here is the Great Mosque of Sana'a, the largest in the city. According to popular legend, it was founded by Shem, the son of Noah.

Shabwa

The ancient city of Shabwa was the capital of Hadhramaut at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula. The ruins of the city are located in the north of modern Shabwah Governorate. Shabwa was first settled in 13th century BC, and was destroyed by the Himyarites at the end of the 3rd century AD.

Shaharah

is a large mountain village. The village "lies at 2600 metres and overlooks mountainous bulging swells to the south and shimmering hot plains to the north." The village, which lies on top a sharp mountain of the same name, Jabal Shaharah, consists of several old stone houses and a cistern. The area is noted for its limestone arch bridge, constructed in the 17th century by a local lord to connect two villages across a deep gorge.

Shibam

It is famous for its mudbrick-made high-rise buildings. The first known inscription about the city dates from the 3rd century. It was the capital of the Hadramawt Kingdom. Shibam is known for its distinct architecture. The houses of Shibam are all made out of mud brick and about 500 of them are tower blocks, which rise 5 to 11 stories high, with each floor having one or two rooms. This architectural style was used in order to protect residents from Bedouin attacks.

Sirwah

was, after Ma'rib, the most important economical and political center of the Kingdom of Saba at the beginning of the 1st century BC, on the Arabian Peninsula. Şirwāḥ was surrounded by a fortified wall. The city layout inside the oasis included a number of large buildings. It was also the site chosen by King Yada'il Dharih I. to build an important temple to Almaqah about the year 700 BC.

Socotra

The island of Socotra constitutes around 95% of the landmass of the Socotra archipelago. The island is very isolated, home to a high number of endemic species; up to a third of its plant life is endemic. It has been described as "the most alien-looking place on Earth."

Zabid

is one of the oldest towns in Yemen. The Great Mosque of Zabid, also known as Al-Asha'ir Mosque, was built in 628 AD by Abu Musa Ashaari, one of the followers of Muhammad. The town was the capital of Yemen from the 13th to the 15th century. The town, named after Wadi Zabid, from which Abu Musa came, and had the Great Mosque of the town built in 628 AD. According to tradition, this is the 5th mosque built in the history of Islam.

Zafar

is an ancient Himyarite site situated in Yemen. Zafar was the capital of the Himyarites (110 BCE - 525 CE), which at its peak ruled most of the Arabia. The Himyar are not a tribe, but rather a tribal confederacy. For 250 years the confederacy and its allies combined territory extended past Riyadh to the north and the Euphrates to the north-east.