

Alternative **Tourism** Journal



**Cultural and Heritage Tourism in
Palestine: Obstacles and Opportunities**
Case Study: The City of Jericho

Alternative Tourism Journal is an initiative of the Alternative Tourism Group-Study Center Palestine (ATG). It is a journal which offers an alternative narrative of the situation in Palestine and the way it impacts on tourism.

ATG is a Palestinian NGO specializing in tours and pilgrimages that include a critical examination of the history, culture, and politics of the Holy Land. ATG operates on the tenets of “justice tourism” and seeks empowerment of the local community through affirmation of Palestinian cultural identity, and protection of eco-rights. Above all, ATG seeks to promote justice in the Holy Land with tourism as one of its instruments.

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Introduction

Tourism in its essence is a process of social, cultural, economical, political, urban and entertainment actions. Interactions with the human heritage are becoming wider and more diverse over time, which has always put people in front of important questions, such as; how can we use that heritage as a base to enhance the national identity and people's belonging to their homeland and humanity? How to preserve that heritage? How can it be rationally invested to improve human livelihoods without causing any harm?

Nations and human groups have inherited a huge fortune over their long history, whether it's materialistic fortune, such as historical attractions, archaeological sites, and tools of construction and production, or non-materialistic, such as cultures, traditions, values and heritage. This includes singing, dancing, music, work rituals, wedding rituals, legends, myths and literal creations.

In the course of interaction with this diverse cultural heritage, cultural tourism emerged and flourished alongside other traditional forms of tourism (religious, environmental, educational, intellectual and athletic tourism). Cultural tourism is paying attention to and focusing on the cultural dimensions, which include getting to know and interact with the cultural and historical heritage of the people, nations and groups, considering that the cultural heritage is part of the unified diverse human experience.

Palestine has a distinguished and unique position in regards to tourism specifically cultural tourism. The tourism phenomenon is not new to Palestine, as it dates back to more than 3000 B.C. Palestine's unique geographical location helped attract tourists, for it used to be a link of land roads and sea routes between Egypt, the Levant, and the Arabian Peninsula. Palestine became more present in the 8th century B.C, thanks to the Philistine and the Phoenician merchants, then its position grew higher with the emergence of the three religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as it became a destination for pilgrims from all three religions (Shomali, 1999).

Palestine was the focus of attention for European colonial powers, as they were passing through it to and from South East Asia. Their interest is ascribed to its important geographical location as it's the center of the three great continents.

Palestine has witnessed many fierce battles against foreign invasions by greedy countries; many important historical monuments (Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, etc...) are scattered throughout the mountains, valleys, meadows, cities, and villages of Palestine (Al-Qasem, 2007).

Palestine's status, and what it contains from antiques, heritage, and historically embedded human experience, as well as its unique geographical and environmental features, in a small geographical space (being on the Mediterranean Sea, the Dead Sea, desert, mountain ranges, meadows, and the Jordan valley as the lowest point on earth), all of that makes Palestine -alongside religious tourism- an excellent educational and intellectual tourist attraction.

This reality requires paying attention to cultural tourism in order to introduce its importance, to what it has in potentials and opportunities, as well as to tackle the difficulties and challenges to overcome them.

It's worth noting that the role of cultural tourism in Palestine is not only limited to economic, educational benefits and civilized interactions with other people and cultures, but also to introduce the Palestinian people and their diverse cultural heritage, in a way that enhances their consciousness, confidence, and national identity. This will enhance the Palestinian resilience in front of the Israeli occupation policies which aim to uproot Palestinians from their homeland, through policies that blur, distort, and demolish anything that signifies Palestinian Arab culture, and the rights of the Palestinian people.



Thesis

Despite the rich historical and cultural heritage of Palestine, the heritage is not yet invested in a sustainable and scientific manner due to the lack of systematic governmental policies. Because of this, a lot of the Palestinian heritage has become neglected and thus exposed to theft, destruction and distortion by locals and by the Israeli occupation, which follows a systematic approach that aims to strike out the memory of the place as well as the memory of the Palestinian generations.

This reality has led to waste opportunities of effective investment in this rich heritage, which is considered a main pillar to define Palestine, its history and its culture. It has also led to wasting possibilities of benefiting from this heritage in regards to social and economical development.

The Alternative Tourism Group, Study Center (ATG) believes that a part of its role and responsibility is to introduce the importance and values of cultural tourism in Palestine. This research will discuss the cultural tourism in Jericho as an example for this type of tourism in particular; and to clarify the relationship between investing, developing and preserving the cultural heritage.

The choice of Jericho as a model for cultural tourism in Palestine also holds a very important historical and political significance. Jericho is an ancient Canaanite city, considered by archaeologists to be the oldest city in Palestine, and its history dates back to the Stone Age (around eight thousand BC). This makes it the oldest inhabited city in the world to this day.

This fact reveals the lie of the Zionist narrative which claims that Palestine is a land without people. This is related to this narration of distortion and falsification of history and the rejection of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights in Palestine.



Chapter I

Palestine and the Cultural Tourism and Heritage

I- Cultural Tourism and Heritage

The heritage for the people and any human group is a key factor in confirming the cultural and historical depth of those people. It also represents their culture and interactions with their geographical, social, and environmental reality as well as the challenges they face in the context of development, such as songs, dances, food, clothes, antiques, architecture, work and traditions. Traditions all emerge and develop due to essential needs during the human groups attempts to adapt or use their surrounding natural sources to satisfy their physical, social, and spiritual needs. Throughout time, it has become an organic part of that group's conscious, memory, and social behavior.

Therefore, heritage, according to the researcher Zazia Barquqi, is all that was inherited from the ancestors, and it is all that was produced by the sensory and intellectual activities and skills. It is the result of human interaction with nature and social environment, where heritage represents all the historical accumulations that established successive civilizations drawn from various political, economic, cultural and social paths. In this sense, the heritage clearly reflects the reality of civilized societies for the various successive time periods, which include all the individual or collective creativity of the civilizations through their long history.

Barquqi has classified the elements of heritage into tangibles and intangibles; Tangible heritage includes monuments, archaeological sites, all manuscripts, and all acquisitions including achievements, tools, cultural, historical, and artistic skills. Intangible heritage includes intellectual, spiritual creativity and oral heritage, system of values, customs and traditions, also on what successive generations negotiate orally, such as sayings, proverbs, stories, tales, myths and different lyrical styles (Barquqi, 2012).

Since the impact that heritage represents on consciousness and collective memory, it constitutes a catalytic force when facing challenges, whether to enhance internal cohesion or to face external challenges and risks.

Cultural tourism is described as heritage tourism in the scope of environmental tourism. The concept has evolved into tourism that targets cultural activities, where it has taken the forms of school trips, artistic, cultural trips to the sites, museums, monuments, attending festivals, exhibitions, and any materialistic or non-materialistic manifestations of the culture of societies. Regardless of what it's called, it meant that a section of society is directed to discovery of cultural relics of appeal and value in societies that showed sympathy and respect for the heritage of the host community.

This is why Kathleen Perret, chair of the maintenance committee at the International Council of Museums, believes that "it is inconceivable to implement and support sustainable tourism without expanding the range of compatible, modern and developed conservation programs for heritage, as it is an important element in the regional, economic and cultural development of the whole world" (Imbabi, 2005).

Nevertheless, with the growth and expansion of cultural tourism, it has been accompanied by a set of risks governed by the logic of profit by accelerating investment without adhering to the standards of preserving, maintaining and protecting it from historical erosion and tampering with the historical and cultural sites. This has led to the necessity of developing a set of international principles for cultural tourism linked to a tripartite integrated system:

1. Cultural Heritage: In its broad sense, includes all tangible and intangible cultural products, life, knowledge experiences and other development processes throughout the ages.
2. Tourism Industry: strengthen the economic value of heritage and provides material support for maintenance and restoration projects, this is a part of the national economy.
3. Local Community: The one, who belongs to that heritage (inheritance), is related to it, which understands its value, and provides it with appropriate respect and protection.

In this context; the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) issued the International Charter for Cultural Tourism in October, 1999 in cooperation with the South African Archeology Council, which outlined the basic principles of achieving the complementary reciprocal relationship

between the requirements of preserving the heritage's environment and the politics of tourist attractions and the benefit of the local community. Those principles are:

1. Considering international and domestic tourism as one of the most important reasons to promote cultural changes, as it is responsible for supporting conservation operations and conscious management of the characteristics of the heritage resource, and also aims primarily to protecting the world heritage and the culture of societies.
2. The reciprocal relationship between heritage and tourist sites is a dynamic relationship that includes contradictory values, which must be managed within a framework of sustainable development for present and future generations.
3. Tourism orientation programs which should preserve the characteristics of cultural heritage of international, regional and local value.
4. Ensuring that the plan for managing the heritage site of cultural tourism achieves richness, gratifying and value in the tourist's experience, which requires the offers to be attractive, exciting and reliable. It should also provide trained tour guides and the use of modern technologies, all this in addition to planning and providing all the requirements of safety and entertainment.
5. The participation of local communities and citizens in planning, tourism development and preservation of the cultural heritage
6. The benefit of the local communities (fair attention to the heritage and cultural sites in all places, providing employment opportunities for the local citizens as a priority, while training and raising their competencies in various fields of cultural tourism: researchers, restoration, planning, and many more).

Cultural heritage tourism has become an organic component of the tourism sector in its comprehensive sense. Cultural tourism goes beyond observing and witnessing antiquities, but more into deep interaction between the tourist and the host community. It also links the past and the cultural heritage with the current social reality. Cultural tourism has become an intellectual and educational process that builds bridges of knowledge between societies, civilizations and various nations.

2-Palestine and Cultural Tourism

Palestine's Position and Cultural Importance:

Palestine is very rich in cultural and natural heritage sites and areas. In addition to its many historical religious features, such as the Nativity Church, Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Ibrahimi Mosque, the Church of Annunciation, there are also many historic sites such as Roman Amphitheatres, Byzantine Churches which spread throughout all of Palestine, the Umayyad palaces (Hisham's Palace, the House of the Emirate in Jerusalem), the Ayyubid and Mamluk corners, in addition to the huge heritage dating back to the Ottoman period.

Palestine also contains a large number of historical city centers, such as the Old City of Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem, Gaza and Jericho, in addition to the Palestinian villages, with the beautiful rural architecture. This constitutes a qualitative addition to this rich heritage. Also, the desert monasteries located on the eastern slopes show another type of architecture in Palestine, additionally the sacred shrines spread in the countryside, and diversity also appears in the architecture of "Throne Villages", which refers to feudal palaces in the Palestinian countryside in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moreover, the scattered inns along the historical trade routes, and the beautiful farmhouses (manatir- watch towers-) built of stone on the hills of Palestine, reflect an amazing cultural diversity. All of this is associated with geographical diversity: coastal plain, mountains, meadows, the Jordan Valley, and desert.



3- Elements of Cultural Tourism in Palestine

Dr. Qustandi Shomali has listed the elements of cultural tourism in Palestine and they include:

A. Space elements: which include the place, geographical area and means of communication with the surrounding countries and the world. Palestine contains religious, archaeological and historical sites that constitute a strong tourist attraction that is diverse and dense. We can find religious places in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nazareth and other cities as well. We can also find the archaeological and historical places accumulated by successive civilizations that spread in almost all of cities and villages of Palestine.

Add to that the climatic and geographical diversity; the Dead Sea, the Jordan Valley, the desert, the mountains, beaches, and the plains.

B. Functional elements: which include transportation, infrastructure, hotels, antiques, souvenir shops, rest stops, information offices, tourist villages, All of these facilitate the tourists to interact, communicate, and move easily in a way that modernly enhances the tourism industry.

C. Cultural elements: Cultural tourism has become an organic part of tourism, with its heritage and creative dimensions; it's an amazing tool for interaction between nations and peoples with the aim of introducing the Palestinian people, their identity, history and rights.

In order for cultural tourism to take its role in Palestine, it is necessary to develop materials that should be provided to tourists, especially that Palestinian people have a tremendous cultural asset in various fields of culture, heritage and human creativity. The Palestinian cultural and historical heritage is considered one of the richest legacies of the world, subsequently investing in the cultural dimensions of tourism in Palestine will present the Palestinian people in a more profound and impactful way.

D. Entertainment elements: This includes new cultural and historical monuments, such as museums, theaters, social institutions, markets, scientific institutions, universities, cultural and youth centers. (Shomali, 1999)

Precisely, Palestine contains a number of specific historical, cultural, religious, and natural monuments that has a distinguished international position, which include:

1. The Nativity Church: added by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to the World Heritage List on June 28, 2012.
2. The ancient city of Jericho: Tel al-Sultan, which has international importance as the oldest city in the world.
3. The old city of Hebron and its surroundings: This is considered one of the oldest cities in the world that was always inhabited.
4. Mount Gerizim and the Samaritans: Where the Samaritans, who live on Mount Gerizim, represent the smallest and oldest living ethnic group in the world.
5. Qumran Caves and the Dead Sea Scrolls: These scrolls constitute one of the greatest archaeological discoveries in the twentieth century; they include the oldest known manuscripts of the Torah, in addition to important historical documents describing the life of the Essenes community.
6. Wilderness and desert monasteries: The global importance of the wilderness is due to its association with Christ and the early Christian personalities. It also witnessed the use of fire in one of its prehistoric caves, which is the first use of fire, known in Palestine.
7. Dead Sea: as the lowest point on the surface of the earth.
8. Wade Al-Nattouf and the Cave of Shuqba: The Shuqaba Cave is the ideal site for the Natufian civilization known worldwide, when people were practicing the economy of hunting and gathering.
9. Umayyad palaces the oldest example of non-religious civil architecture in Islam.
10. The Old City of Nablus and its Surroundings: Its importance stems from the fact that it is a historic city consisting of buildings that were built in the traditional architectural style.
11. Al-Sabeel Canal - Jerusalem Water Systems: It is considered the longest water canal in Palestine.
12. Tel Umm Amer - Gaza: This site is linked in concrete terms to the phenomenon of the flourishing of monastic centers of worship in the desert, in Palestine, during the Byzantine period.
13. Throne villages: In the central highlands of Palestine, which is unique in its view of the historical conditions in which it originated, the remaining

architectural monuments, and the impact it had on the Palestinian social and cultural life.

14. Sebastia: According to Christian and Muslim religious traditions in the area, the tomb of John the Baptist was said to be found there.
15. The Anthidon- the old Gaza port: The Anthidon is a clear example among the seaports on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, which reflects the socio-economic exchange between Europe and the East.
16. Gaza Valley and the rainy coastal lands: which is one of the most important coastal lands with high rainfall percentage in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean Sea, rich in the diversity of its vital geographical system ("Justifications for the global value of the distinct archaeological and natural sites in Palestine", 2019).

The tourist attractions mentioned above, in addition to the cultural, historical, religious and patrimonial attractions in the city of Jerusalem and those in Palestine 1948 are just examples of historical, cultural, religious and natural fortunes. These attractions have a global distinctive position which confirms that the cultural tourism in Palestine is based on peculiarities and astonishing diversity. It makes it a great tourist attraction for pilgrims, scholars and scientists, in addition to those who wish to enjoy nature and geographical diversity. It is also important for providing serious opportunities for investment, economic and social development.



4-Forms of Cultural Tourism

Tourism in Palestine has focused on pilgrimage and religious tourism. Hence, to overcome this reality, tourism in Palestine has to take -in addition to these traditional religious trends- the role of its cultural and developmental dimensions that corresponds with the importance and status that Palestine represents in its inherited culture, history and environment.

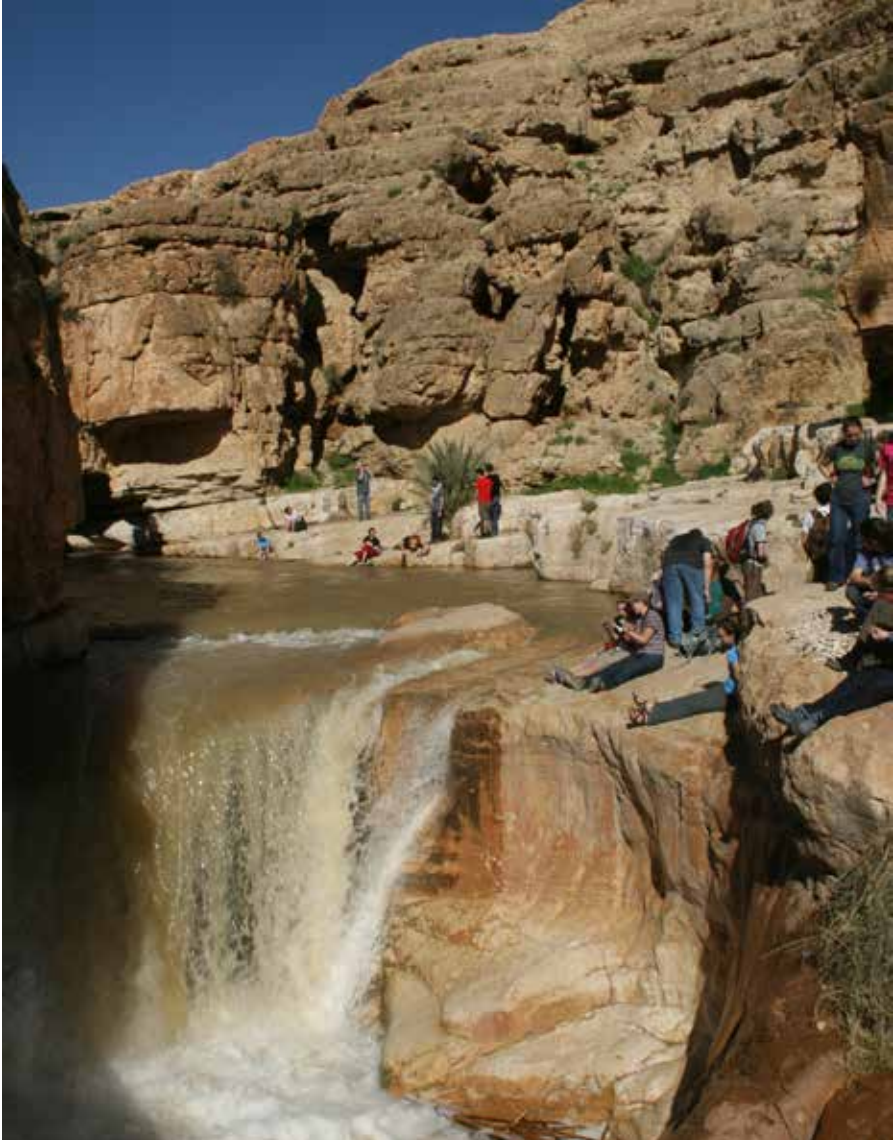
The development of Palestinian cultural tourism shapes an essential input in order to perform its role and function in defending the rights, history and civilization of the Palestinian people on one hand and in stimulating social development, improving the standard of living by increasing job opportunities, tourism industry, events and cultural activities covering various regions on the other hand.

Accomplishing these goals requires a strategic and organized action that includes the Palestinian National Authority, tourism institutions, civil society institutions, and Palestinian cultural institutions, in addition to the media, educational institutions, and the Palestinian local community.

It also requires the availability of frameworks, where the cultural events and activities can be identified and organized to create an introduction to encourage cultural tourism, such as:

- Creating and organizing events: festivals, celebrations, conferences, seminars, social and sports activities, theater, cinema, cultural literary and musical activities;
- Reviving and developing pathways and routes: such as those used by pilgrims and merchants with everything related to these tracks, from heritage sites, cultural and natural attractions;
- Cultural media: include theater groups, marching bands and musical groups, clubs and cultural centers, exhibitions of fine art and photography, educational and cultural conferences and seminars on architectural art in Palestine, heritage events and Palestinian folklore;
- Alternative tourism: where the local community has an active and essential role in this tourism pattern, with all the interaction and coexistence between tourists and families and the Palestinian community. Examples include organizing residency in Palestinian villages, rural areas and in camps,

as well as in Bedouin gatherings to learn about Palestinian social diversity, as well as identifying all the suffering that the Palestinian people are exposed to due to the Israeli occupation. (Shomali, 1999).



5- Threats to Cultural Tourism

Due to the reality and the difficult circumstances imposed by the prolonged existence of the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian historical and cultural wealth was and still is subjected to a horrific, systematic process of control, theft and destruction. On the other hand, there are the weaknesses and limited Palestinian capabilities and restrictions imposed on them by minimal opportunities for investment and development of the tourism sector in general.

A. Occupation: The most dangerous threat that cultural heritage tourism is facing in Palestine is the procedures and policies imposed by the Israeli occupation. This is represented by the destruction, distortion and theft of wealth to prove the Zionist narration. All of these procedures have led to distortion and change of facts, the destruction and obliteration of all what refers to the Palestinian people and its history on this old land.

Among the most prominent threats that the occupation represents to the tourism sector in Palestine is the control over the largest parts of the touristic areas, causing restrictions on the movements of Palestinian tour guides and tourist buses, despite the agreements signed between the two sides. The occupation also refuses to recognize the Palestinian tour guides who have obtained a license from the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism, although the signed agreements stipulate that each party licenses the tour guides according to their own rules and regulations. Moreover, procedures imposed by Israel prevent the freedom of the tourists' movement through the border crossings with Jordan and Egypt ("WAFA News Agency, Cultural Tourism in Palestine", 2018).

The problem becomes more serious in light of the big difference in the economic and service capabilities and infrastructures that the occupying power possesses, compared to what is available for the Palestinians. In this context, the control of the occupying power over all the historical, religious and cultural sites behind the "Green Line", significantly limits the ability of the Palestinian side to invest and compete.

B. The internal factor: risks to the cultural and architectural heritage in Palestine, mainly in the occupied territories of 1967, are not only limited to what the occupation does, but there is also the damage resulting from the lack of Palestinian attention to the cultural wealth. For example; the random urban

expansion that the Palestinian lands witnessed during the time period between 1995-2000. This unplanned and random development in Palestinian cities and villages has led to the destruction of many cultural and natural properties, and most of this destruction cannot be repaired.

As a result of the scarcity of lands under the control of the Palestinian Authority (areas A and B), and the increase of the Palestinian population, and a lack of public awareness to the importance of cultural heritage, many historical buildings, sites and monuments have been demolished (RIWAQ).

This harsh reality made Palestinian tourism almost confined to religious tourism that led to the absence and marginalization of the cultural and heritage dimension in tourism in Palestine. This is why it is important to develop the cultural tourism as part of the cultural and political confrontation with the Zionist project and narration, in addition to promote the Palestinian national identity and introduce the cultural richness and heritage of Palestine to the world.



Chapter Two

Jericho a Model for Cultural Heritage Tourism

After explaining the importance of cultural tourism and its social, urban, political, cultural and developmental role, this paper will continue to discuss Jericho city as a case and model for the importance of cultural tourism in Palestine. Jericho has an environmental, historical, urban and cultural characteristic that goes beyond the religious dimension into the historical, urban, and cultural dimensions.

I- Jericho's Location

Jericho city is about 38 kilometers away from Jerusalem. The main road that leads from Jerusalem or Ramallah to Jericho is considered one of the most beautiful and important roads in Palestine. As it is the same historical trade route that was and still connects Jerusalem to Jericho and Trans-Jordan across the river. This road is considered a semi-desert area known locally as the "wilderness or desert of Jerusalem"



The city of Jericho is located around 250 meters below sea level, which is unlike any other city in the world. That is why it is considered to be the perfect place to stay during winter; a first class touristic city due to its mild climate in winter and its many historical and ancient sites that are spread and scattered all around the city and its surrounding areas. Most of the important historical locations are concentrated on an area of about 20 sq. km; Such as “Tel al-Sultan”, “Khirbet Qumran”, “Mount of Temptation”, and several other churches and mosques. Additionally, the city is full of restaurants, cafés, hotels, parks most of which have been recently opened. Besides, its roads are wide, and the people are hospitable and accustomed to tourists in their city (“Cultural Tourism in Palestine”, 2018).

Jericho's unique location made it an important transit point since ancient times; commercial convoys and military invasions that were heading west towards Jerusalem and east towards Amman. Jericho was the western crossing/passageway of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, as it was the crossing point for Christian pilgrims coming from Jerusalem to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. Jericho was an eastern gateway to Palestine that was used by many migrating human groups over ages (Palestinian Encyclopedia).

2- Historical Overview

Jericho is an ancient Canaanite city, and considered by archaeologists to be the oldest city in Palestine, and traced its history back to the Stone Age -more than ten thousand years- which makes it the oldest inhabited city in the world. Experts have identified Old Jericho to be the site of Tel al-Sultan Mound, which is located about two kilometers north of the current city, next to the spring of Ein Sultan. The meaning of “Jericho” in Canaanite is moon, which indicates that moon worship was widespread there. The Hyksos coming from Egypt made it a base for them between 1750 and 1600 BC. It was also mentioned in the Torah as “Ariha”. It is the first Canaanite city to be attacked by the Children of Israel, as their leader Joshua the son of Nun and his soldiers managed to capture it and burn it down in 1186 BC (Book of Joshua). Around 1170 - 1030 BC and according to the Old Testament, in the Book of Judges, Ajloun the king of the Moabites drove out the Jews from Jericho and made it his capital. Herod the Great renewed Jericho, expanded it, and decorated it with various installations. The city extended over what is known today as the Tlol Abu Al-Alayeq south of Ein Al-Sultan. Among the constructions of Jericho during Herod's reign are

palaces, gardens, squares, canals and ponds. In the south of the city, Herod the Great built fortresses to protect Jericho and defend it.

The Romans rebuilt Jericho in the valley of Qelt where it is today. During the reign of Constantine the Great (306 - 327 AD), Christianity spread in Jericho where monasteries and churches were established in its suburbs. In the year 325 AD, Jericho was the epicenter of the episcopate. During the Byzantines era, the city flourished and advanced until it was ruled by the Arabs who conquered Palestine in the seventh century AD.

During the Islamic era, Jericho became the utmost important agricultural city in the Jordan Valley, surrounded by palm and banana plantations, and sugar canes. Significant monuments were discovered in Jericho, including the ancient walls of Jericho, which were ruined in 1400 or 1350 BC. In addition to that, Herod the Great's Palace was discovered in Tloul Abu Al-Alayeq, which can clearly be seen from the Mount of Temptation.

Jericho's population gradually increased during the first half of the twentieth century; population increased from 300 people in 1912 to 1,039 people in 1922 and to 1,693 people in 1931. Jericho's population reached 3,010 people in 1945.

After 1948, the city witnessed a major transformation, as thousands of refugees poured in to live in or near the city within the camps of Ein al-Sultan and Aqabat Jabr. The population of Jericho alone in 1961 reached 10,166 people. In the late 1970s, it reached 15,000 people. Then the city expanded its area as a result of the increase in the construction movement that accompanied the increase of the population, which doubled the population since that time.

After the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the beginning of the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, the importance of Jericho enlarged. Today, it is one of the governorates of the West Bank that fall within the Palestinian National Authority areas. Jericho Governorate has fourteen residential communities. According to the census conducted by the Palestinian National Authority in 1997, the population of the city of Jericho reached 14,674 people, and the total population of the governorate was 31,412 people (Palestinian Encyclopedia)

3- Climate

Jericho's climate is commonly a tropical climate, very high temperatures, complete droughts in summer and warm winter with little rain, the average temperatures is 48 degrees Celsius during summer which drops in winter to less than four degrees. Rainfall rate in winter is 150 mm per year; humidity at a rate of 50%, the agricultural crops in Jericho ripen at least two months before their counterparts in other regions. For these reasons Jericho has been known since ancient times as a first-class agricultural city. Until today, Jericho is considered the vegetables and fruits' basket of Palestine, and some of its most important agricultural products are: bananas, citrus, dates, tomatoes and green peppers ("Justifications for the global value of the distinct archaeological and natural sites in Palestine", 2019).

4- Occupational Structure in Jericho

Jericho; contained multiple professions, from ancient times until today. The relative importance of each trade varies according to the conditions in which the city was going through its stages of development and growth. The top professions in Jericho are:

I- Agriculture: Jericho was known from ancient times for its abundant water and fertile soil, as the city grew in the heart of a beautiful oasis where trees abound. Jericho has almost maintained its agricultural popularity from old times. Its agricultural products verify its importance to the domestic and foreign markets.

Jericho has a total land area of 37,481 acres, of which 1,060 acres are roads and valleys. An important part of Jericho is used for dense irrigated agriculture that relies mainly on spring water and wells. The most important crops for the Jericho region are vegetables of all kinds. Jericho produces various types of grains, such as wheat, barley, corn, and sesame. Fruit trees are planted in it such as citrus, bananas, olives, grapes and palm trees, in addition to some industrial crops such as tobacco.

The areas dedicated to citrus cultivation have expanded in recent years, relying on well waters. Jericho's oranges have gained popularity locally and internationally, similar to the popularity obtained by its banana.

2- Tourism: A large number of tourists visit Jericho annually, mainly in winter, visiting the archaeological and religious places around the city, and to enjoy the warmth of winter surrounded by beautiful landscapes. The most important places that tourists visit in Jericho are the Dead Sea, Hisham's Palace, St. Gerasimos Monastery (Deir Hijleh), Mount of Temptation, the Baptismal Site at the Jordan River, Herod's Winter Palace, and Ein al-Sultan. Tourist facilities were constructed to receive visitors and tourists.

3- Commerce: Jericho is a commercial center which receives, in addition to tourists, many locals from neighboring villages and camps, as well as Bedouins and locals from the region. The market is located in the city center, where shops, companies and markets are available. In the city, there is a central market for vegetables and fruits, in which these crops are collected in preparation to export them.

4- Industries: Jericho has known industry since ancient times, such as making sugar from reeds, making dates from palms, oil from zaqqum Tree, clay bricks from mud, and mats from reeds. There are currently two textile factories on the outskirts of the city, one in Ain Al Sultan camp and the other in Aqabat Jabr camp. Jericho has soda and drink industries, banana fermentation, citrus waxing, chairs, upholstery and sulfur (Palestinian Encyclopedia).

5- Jericho and Cultural Tourism: The concentration on Jericho in this paper as a city and as a governorate does not mean underestimating the importance of cultural tourism in other Palestinian cities and governorates. The development of cultural tourism in Palestine stems from being a single cultural space, without losing sight of the characteristics of different cities and locations. It is also worth stating that the focus on cultural tourism does not mean isolating it from religious tourism since tourism is a process in which various dimensions interact and overlap.

Dr. Sami Musallam, the former governor of Jericho and the Jordan Valley, as well as the director of the Institute for Regional Studies at Al-Quds University articulates that Jericho is the oldest inhabited city, which makes it part of the foundation of civilizations in the region. There are tourist and religious areas that exist only in Jericho, for instance the Mount of Temptation which is visited daily by Christian pilgrims from all around the world. Musallam pointed at the

importance of the geographical location of Jericho and its warm winter. He adds: as a result of its location being below sea level, it contains 7% oxygen above the general rate, which makes it suitable for growing vegetables and fruits, such as citrus and bananas.

Jericho has been mentioned in many historical resources as the first city where people started to construct their houses and where they settled near the water sources of the Jordan River.

As for Muhammad Jalaita, the current mayor of Jericho, he points out that the city is considered the oldest historical city; also it is considered an attractive destination for tourists. He mentioned that tourism is a primary source of national income, as there are 132 archaeological sites with historical and religious importance in Jericho, like monasteries and churches. (Shahinaz Hmaid, Jericho city of the moon and palms, Assafir Newspaper, 2013).

6- Jericho and the Occupation: Similar to other Palestinian cities and villages, Jericho has been subjected to various destructive occupation policies that have affected the population, space and natural resources in the city, including water, land, and archeological sites. Additionally, Israel controls the Dead Sea, which is considered one of the most important natural attractions in the world. Moreover, Israel controls the Jordan River which has a symbolic importance and is considered a tourist destination to Christian pilgrims. The Israeli control over the River deprives the city from water resources and agricultural lands.

According to the Governor of Jericho and the Jordan Valley, Majid Al-Fityani, the occupation authorities are trying hard to control the city, as they control about 85% of its area, which varies between closed military areas and other areas designated for training and shooting ranges for the Israeli army. The Israeli occupation seeks to intensify its capture of Jericho through various mechanisms and means, under false pretexts and security allegations. The deep goal behind the policies of the Israeli occupation is to protect its presence and projects in Jericho, and also to exploit the city's resources. The Israeli occupation reaps huge profits from its investments in Jericho, which has exceeded one billion dollars annually. The Israeli revenues from agriculture does exceed \$700 million used in the agricultural system of Israeli settlers. The Israeli financial profits from investing in cosmetics, and pharmaceutical industries from the Dead Sea

products exceed \$500 million.

The Israeli occupation was a major cause of the mass displacement for the Palestinian residents of Jericho towards Jordan in the 1967, as their number shrunk from 200,000 Palestinian citizens to 55,000, making up the total number of citizens of the city and the Jordan Valley today. It is worth mentioning that Israeli colonies are widespread around the city, as there are 6000 settlers living a prosperous life at the expense of the citizens and the richness of this city (Ibid).

Jalaitta, indicates that the number of archaeological and touristic sites that are under Palestinian control is less than 40 sites, such as Hisham's Palace, Tel al-Sultan, Mount of Temptation, and the Sycamore Tree (Zakka Tree), which is related to the story of Zacchaeus and Jesus.

This means that most of the historical archaeological sites in Jericho are located in areas that fall under the Israeli control, or what is called according to the Israeli classifications (area C) such as the St. Gerasimos Monastery (Deir Hijleh), Herod's Palace and the Baptismal site at the Jordan River.

Jalaitta also mentions that many of the archaeological monuments in Jericho have been stolen, and many of them were subjected to destruction and confiscation before the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. He also mentions that many of the historical monuments of Jericho are now in international museums, as what happened to some of the contents of Hisham's palace that were found in German museums. Jalaitta explained that the city used to plant, produce, and export sugar. This can be shown through the different sugar mills which still exist until today. The mills are being restored and renovated to be tourist attraction. " (Hmaid, 2013)



7- The Most Important Historical, Cultural and Natural Attractions in Ancient Jericho:

- **Ancient Jericho: Tel Al-Sultan**

This site is located in the Jordan Valley plain, about ten kilometers northwest of the Dead Sea, and two kilometers from the actual city center and it is a large artificial plateau, rising twenty-one meters, and it covers an area of four thousand square meters.

Outstanding global value :

It gained a global importance for the reason that Jericho is the oldest city in the world which includes the oldest fortification system supported by a tower and an internal staircase. These well-preserved Neolithic monuments signify the early emergence of a developed political and social system

- **Mount of Temptation**

The Byzantine Jericho is located in and around the current modern city. Many monasteries and churches were discovered here. The Monastery of Qurmtul, located on Mount of Temptation, is one of the most important discoveries. The height of this mountain is about 350 meters located to the west of Jericho, which overlooks the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea. In this site, Jesus Christ spent 40 days and nights fasting and meditating, while Satan was tempting him. Additionally, there are many caves located in the eastern slope, numbering approximately 30 - 40 caves used to be inhabited by the monks in the early days of Christianity

- **Qumran Caves and the Dead Sea Scrolls**

Khirbet Qumran is located on the western coast of the Dead Sea; it is 24 kilometer to the south of Jericho. It is located on a protrusion standing on the foot of muddy land, bordered with the Qumran valley to the south, another narrow valley steeply sloping to the north and west.



Outstanding global value:

The Dead Sea Scrolls are one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the twentieth century. They contain the oldest known manuscripts of the Torah, in addition to important historical documents describing the life of the Essenes. At the same time, they are a major source for studying the history of Palestine and they shed light on Judaism and the roots of Christianity on the shores of the Dead Sea.

- **Monasteries in the wilderness and desert**

The wilderness is called the “wilderness of Jerusalem”; it is semi-arid and dry land, extending between the central hills of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron from the west, and the Dead Sea from the east.

Outstanding global value:

The wilderness here presents a cultural scene. The global importance of the wilderness is related to its strategic location in the Holy Land, on the Jordan Rift Valley (Ghor), and to its characteristics and connections, especially to Jesus Christ and the early Christian figures.

Its uniqueness lies in its special ecosystem created primarily by the arid semi-arid climate, which results in fundamental differences in the types of flora and fauna in the region, in the soil, land layers, and general landscape, including highlands, slopes and geological cliffs.

Long before the wilderness became a desert, it witnessed the use of domestic fire in one of its prehistoric caves, which was the first use of fire known in Palestine. The long-term livestock grazing over large areas from the land exhausted the plant's life and exhausted the land, and contributed to convert it to what appears today, a barren rocky area. In this area, Herod the Great constructed his Fortress/Palace (Herodion) for strategic control of the area.

The attracting elements of the desert had brought Jesus Christ to it first, and then dozens of early Byzantine Christian monasteries were founded in the area. Those monasteries were established as a result of Christian traditions of asceticism and monasticism, and also as a continuation of their religious ties to the desert. Later the wilderness became a passage for Muslim pilgrims on the way to Mecca.

- **Hisham's Palace**

It is located on the northern bank of the Nuweima Valley, about 2 km north of Jericho's city center. It was built by the Umayyad Caliph Hisham bin Abdul Malik in the year (724-743 AD).



- **The Sycamore Tree and the Russian Museum**

This is the tree that Zacchaeus climbed up on, to see Jesus Christ on his way to Jerusalem.

- **House of Shahwan's Mosaic**

In 1936, a synagogue was discovered to the north of Tal al-Sultan, which is known today as the ground floor of the Shahwan's family home.

- **Sugar mills**

Sugar mills are located on the right side halfway between Tal al-Sultan and Mount of Temptation, known for the production and manufacture of sugar since the time of the Umayyads. The Crusaders have expanded the production of sugar to export to Europe, and for this, they built advanced sugar mills.

- **Na`ran**

Four kilometers northwest of Jericho is a small Byzantine city “Na`ran”, located next to the spring of Ain al-Dyuk and Ain al-Nuwaimah. The path of the canal that brought water to Hisham’s Palace can be tracked there. The great arch that links the edges of the valley near the springs is one of the remains that indicate the canal. Moreover, remains of an ancient Jewish temple were found at the bottom of a Palestinian house whose floors are filled with drawings and mosaics and date back to the fifth and sixth century AD.

- **Tulul Abu Al-Alayq**

The site was built between several low hills on both sides of Wadi al-Qelt. It is located at the southern entrance of Jericho connecting Wadi al-Qelt with the Jericho plain. The site can be reached by taking the Jerusalem / Jericho highway but it is also advisable to take the old Jericho road that borders the valley. The discoveries at the site of Tulul Abu al-Alayq dates back to the Copper Age 4500-3100 BC



- **The Good Samaritan Inn (Khan al-Ahmar)**

The Good Samaritan Inn is located 10 km east of the city of Jerusalem, on the main road to Jericho. This site is related to Parable of the Good Samaritan mentioned in the Gospel of Luke.

- **The Shrine of the Prophet Moses (Nabi Musa)**

The shrine of the Prophet Moses is located east the road connecting Jerusalem and Jericho, several kilometers west of the slopes overlooking the northern end of the Dead Sea, eleven kilometers south of Jericho, and twenty kilometers east of Jerusalem.

- **St. Gerasimos Monastery (Deir Hijla)**

It is located at road 90 north of the Dead Sea east of Jericho and 2 kilometers west of the Jordan River. It was founded by St. Gerasimos in the fifth century and restored in the 12th century. It is considered one of the oldest monasteries in Palestine

- **Wadi al-Qelt and the Monastery of St. Gorgeous Coziba**

It is a natural incline between the neighboring highlands; it is made up of high rock walls that extend 45 kilometers between Jericho and Jerusalem.

- **The Jordan River**

The Jordan River flows from Jabal Al-Sheikh (Mount Hermon) in Syria, a height of approximately 2800 meters above sea level and pours to the Dead Sea.

- **The Dead Sea**

The Dead Sea (Sea of Salt): It is a geological formation that belongs to the Great Rift Valley; it is located between the Jordan Valley in the north and Wade Araba in the south. It separates the Hebron-Jerusalem hills to the west, Ammon (Amman) and Moab hills in Jordan to the east. It is considered as a border point between Palestine and Jordan.

Outstanding global value:

The Dead Sea represents the lowest point on earth; its basin forms a complicated and unique geological formation. It represents the natural diversity of each species in the ecosystem, the fundamental diversity of species, soils, geology. The Dead Sea is a manifestation of nature acting powers within the Syro-African depression.

The uniqueness of the Dead Sea Basin is that it forms an important attraction to bird migration and biological diversity. This uniqueness is related to the diversity of geology, climate, and habitat as attractive locations for migratory birds and local birds that stay during winter. The rainy wetlands surrounding the coasts of the sea are suitable for several species of birds, such as the sparrow which is a local bird in the Dead Sea region. (Justifications for the global value of the distinct archaeological and natural sites in Palestine", 2019)

8- Promoting and Developing Cultural Tourism in Jericho:

This dense explanation about Jericho, its historical, natural and cultural uniqueness, is just a model of the richness and diversity that Palestine contains. The richness of the Palestinian geography in history, nature, diversity and culture requires making detailed plans to invest and develop them in a reasonable way. The detailed plans should include strategies for preservation, restoration and promotion in order to become a pillar of social, economic and cultural development, along with its role in preserving the identity and heritage of Palestine to encounter the Israeli policies.

Investing in cultural heritage is considered one of the most important fields of investment in modern-day economies. Many countries in the modern world have taken notice of that region with a view to develop and invest in it, not only because it is an illustration of national identities, nor because of the historical periods that this or that community has gone through, but rather, it is a national treasure. This treasure can be used as a boost for development, specifically in countries that have a rich history of civilization and culture that has moral and aesthetic value.

Nonetheless, investing in heritage, cultural and historical attractions in any society is not an arbitrary and spontaneous issue, but must be in the context of a scientific vision for the relationship between heritage and cultural tourism.

The importance of heritage and culture plays a role in enhancing social and economic development, including tourism, in order to respect harmony between preserving heritage on one hand, and the requirements of tourism and its development over time on the other hand.

In Palestine, where the tourism sector plays a dominant role in preserving the Palestinian national identity, with its historical and cultural depth, to its role in confronting the policies of the Israeli occupation aimed at erasing and distorting Palestinian history. Tourism is one of the most important resources for the Palestinian national income; religious sites, archaeological sites, historical city centers, and ecological and geographical diversity, all of which form important factors of attraction for religious and cultural tourism.

The tourist attractions of Jericho give it a great value of significance. This is considered a national wealth, characterized by its richness and diversity as it forms a magnet for tourists of different interests and backgrounds. This includes the unique nature: the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea, the valleys, the Jordan River, as well as the religious sites of churches and monasteries, as well as palaces, water canals, and mosaics, in addition to medical and recreational tourism.

However, due to the limited Palestinian national economy, tourism collides with many obstacles and distortions as a result of the abnormal conditions imposed by the occupation. So it is necessary to direct attention towards cultural heritage with all its elements (historical architecture, monuments, archaeology, folklore, and arts and crafts production) in order to invest in the potentiality of cultural heritage. Some call the cultural heritage in Palestine "the white oil" because it carries with it unlimited dimensions, qualifying it to be an economic lever and an important social development wheel ("Cultural Heritage in Palestine", 2019).

However, the effective investment of this entire historical, cultural, religious heritage, whether in Jericho or in Palestine in general, faces a number of obstacles that can be summarized as follows:

I- The Policies of Israeli Occupation:

- Confiscation of the Palestinian lands, with all its cultural and historical treasures.
- Closing large areas of land on security pretexts or because of their classification as green areas, and denying Palestinians from accessing them or investing in them.
- Controlling the Dead Sea and the Banks of the Jordan River.
- Movement restrictions and the spread of barriers and apartheid wall, which led to the Israeli occupation taking control of more historical and cultural sites.
- Controlling the movement of tourism to Palestine and dominating the tourism industry.

2- At the Palestinian Level:

- Lack of financial resources allocated for the preservation of heritage, as well as historical and cultural sites.
- The many institutions involved in the management of the heritage sector, such as culture, tourism, and heritage, resulted in overlapping tasks and responsibilities.
- Lack of specialized and qualified human resources for this sector.
- Lack of awareness on the important role of heritage and cultural tourism by media and community bodies.
- Lack of identification and specification of sites that include the various local heritage species, as an indication of richness and diversity.
- Not including heritage in the educational programs university and colleges, such as traditional songs and handicrafts, or field researches and studies.
- The weak capacity of relevant institutions and the absence of heritage conservation strategies.
- Lack of events and forums related to heritage.

Conclusion

Developing tourism in Jericho in general and cultural tourism in particular, requires the identification of Jericho's characteristics and its cultural treasures. This should be done through comprehensive strategic plans that allow the Palestinian society to realize the importance of this wealth, and to invest them in an effective and scientific manner, without prejudice, sabotage and distortion. Domestic tourism in Jericho plays a major role in its advancement and turning it into a model for learning and developing awareness. Internal tourism is not limited to recreational journeys, but rather it must be expanded and diversified in order to become an educational cultural tourism that includes the natural, cultural and historical monuments in the city. This calls for qualifying tourist guides through providing them with specialized educational and training courses based on correct information, knowledge of the contexts of the development of Jericho and its historical position, in addition to organizing cultural forums in the city. The professional supervision of tourist sites is important to protect them from tampering and theft. It is important to continue exploring the treasure of the region which are not found or discovered yet.

As for the external tourism, this requires comprehensive efforts by the national and private institutions to prepare brochures and documentaries that show the history, importance of all natural, historical, religious and cultural tourist places in Jericho, and the importance and the special aspects of each of them. In addition to developing services and infrastructure: communications, transportation, road renovation, hotels, parks, hygiene and health supervision, as well as making paths for tourists and enhancing the security on these paths, all of these are conditions for attracting the tourists with different interests.

Recommendations

1. Provide databases of cultural tourist sites in Palestine to cover the different cultural aspects in all regions.
2. Developing strategic plans to attract tourists; those plans should focus the cultural and ecological importance of Jericho and Palestine (Workshops, festivals, conferences, trails, folkloric and artistic events).
3. Making a systematic and continuous media plan for tourism promotion in Jericho, including documentaries, brochures, maps, photo galleries, writings and scientific researches, to provide accurate information about tourist heritage in Palestine.
4. As much as it is necessary to attract tourists from different places of the world, high attention must also be paid to local and domestic tourism, and making it part of the policies and programs of the ministries, especially the Ministry of Education, universities, NGOs, municipalities, and local councils.
5. Linking cultural tourism with social development without harming or distorting the cultural heritage in Palestine. This means that Palestinian citizens in every city and location should feel that they are benefiting from this heritage in a way that strengthens their motives, and raises their awareness to preserve this rich heritage.



6. Making and providing academically specialized staff in preserving and maintaining heritage and cultural attractions in Jericho and the other cities. Tourist guides have sufficient and accurate information about each archaeological, religious or cultural attraction, which will help them presenting a coherent and correct Palestinian narrative verses the Israeli claims.
7. Incorporate and activate heritage in the Palestinian social, economic and cultural reality and to know the reasons and problems that form an impediment to the development of cultural tourism.
8. Developing the Palestinian heritage and cultural tourism industry, whether as services or as souvenir products, with attention to the need to preserve the spirit of that heritage and not distort it. The process of mutual influence between heritage and tourism may lead to the emergence of tourist products based on commercial and financial standards which sometimes take away their characteristics and cultural values. For example, traditional handicraft industries could be subjected to changes and interventions that make them lose their cultural characteristics.
9. Confronting the occupation's policies that aim to confiscate the lands in Jericho, and seize their natural and cultural resources. This requires for calling the international community to stand against these policies and support the rights of the Palestinian people to invest their heritage and historical and cultural treasures.



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