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Archaeological Museums Crossing Jordan*

Introduction

The idea of collecting valued objects dates back to the period prior to the arrival of Islam, Arabs having traditionally placed precious things inside the Ka'ba in Mecca for religious purposes associated with their idols. In addition, an Arabian poem called "Seven or Ten Suspended" (in Arabic *al-mu'llaqāt*) were inscribed on golden plates and suspended on the walls of the Ka'ba, especially in the annual cultural fair called *'ukadh* (Hitti 1974: 93). When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) conquered Mecca, he found inside the Ka'ba several precious things, such as a statue of Hubal, a famous Arabic God at that time (who might be called the God of Mecca), pictures of Jesus and Mary, a wooden dove and two horns of Abraham's ram (Bearman n.d.: 317-322).

Islam encouraged people to preserve property through the creation of *al-waqf*, which means preserving material goods for the benefit of society and to please God. The motive for *al-waqf* can be religious, such as the establishment of mosques, social, such as constructing hospitals or homes for poor people or for students, military, such as supporting armies, or cultural, such as creating schools and universities. Movable objects, such as books, illustrative materials, carpets, pots and religious manuscripts or the Holy Quran itself can also be donated to schools, mosques and homes (Abazah 1981:17).

Al-waqf began during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and has continued through all Islamic regimes from the Umayyad period until the present day. Currently, all Arab and Muslim countries have ministries of *al-awqāf*

(plural of *waqf*), which are responsible for Islamic / Arab cultural property, whether ancient or new, such as Islamic affairs, mosques, Islamic museums and monuments.

From the sixteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, Jordan and all Arab countries were under the control of the Ottoman Empire. During that period, there were no institutions or departments to protect the cultural property of the Arabs, except for what was preserved and kept through various collectors, churches and religious purposes, and *al-waqf*. Usually, any precious thing found during the Ottoman period was taken to Istanbul. It was not until 1844 when the Turkish government established a special law that dealt with antiquities and cultural property. It was called the 1844 Turkish Law of Antiquities (Abazah 1981: 21). In the nineteenth century, with the establishment of museums in the Arab world, most *al-waqf* collections and treasures were transferred to these new museums. For instance, extraordinary Islamic manuscripts, textiles, weapons and glass were transferred to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo and the Islamic Museum in Jerusalem from *al-waqf* in Cairo and Jerusalem.

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Ottoman Empire became weak, with its control over the Arab countries more nominal than real, especially in North Africa. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt. A Commission on Science and Arts was attached to the expedition to survey the area and to document the ancient monuments. The Commission's work attracted the attention not only of Europeans, but also of the local people. This led in 1835 to

* Part of this article has been submitted in the 6th International Conference on Science and Technology in Archaeology and Conserva-

tion, Rome, 9-14 December 2008.

the establishment of the Archaeological Museum of Cairo, which is considered the earliest museum in the Arab world (Muhammad 2002: 38-41). The remainder of North Africa (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya) was occupied by different European countries in the nineteenth century. Museums then appeared in these countries as a direct result of colonialism.

Cultural Heritage and the Department of Antiquities

Because of the status of the Holy Land, Palestine and various parts of Jordan received special attention from Christian missionary orders and individuals who wished to study places that were mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. They played a vital role in protecting the Holy Land's cultural heritage by conducting excavations and surveys, by preserving old churches, buildings and movable objects and by documenting many archaeological and heritage sites in the area. They saved and protected objects that formed the collections of the current museums in Palestine and Jordan. Examples of these missions are the Franciscans, who came to Palestine in 1333, the White Fathers, who arrived in Jerusalem in 1878, the Betharamite Fathers, who came to Bethlehem in 1879, and the Dominican Fathers, who established the *École Biblique d'Archéologie* in 1891. Several expeditions also arrived from Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Sadek 1994: 287-291).

Regarding individuals, Ulrich Jasper Sitzen of Germany and Johann Ludwig Burckhardt of Switzerland carried out surveys in greater Syria, which included Palestine and Jordan, from 1805 to 1807 and 1810 to 1812. Captain C.R. Condor also conducted surveys on the west and east banks of the Jordan River in 1881 (Ibrahim 1973: 3). In 1868, Dr. F. Klein, a Prussian missionary, saved the Masha Stele, which was found in Dhibān in southern Jordan. He recognized the value of the stele and purchased it from the bedouin. Later, the stele was displayed in the Louvre and is still there.

A Department of Antiquities was established in Palestine in 1920 under the British Mandate. In 1927, a museum was established in Jerusalem to house thousands of archaeological objects that were discovered in nineteenth and twentieth century surveys and excavations. Initially, the museum was located in an Arab-style building. Later, John D. Rockefeller Jr granted two million dollars for

constructing a new building and for operating expenses (Sadek 1994: 287-291). The Palestinian Archaeological Museum, as it was known, was opened to the public in 1938. It was one of the largest and richest in the Middle East, representing the history of Palestine from prehistoric times to the late Islamic period. From 1951-1967 the museum was operated by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities.

In 1921, with the establishment of the Transjordan Emirate, the government discussed the matter of how to protect thousands of archaeological sites that were scattered throughout the country. For this reason, in June of the same year, the Minister of Finance sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister asking him to establish a Department of Antiquities (DoA), like the one in Palestine. According to the memorandum, this department would play an important role in protecting archaeological sites from illegal excavation, illicit sales and export. It would also house movable antiquities and collections by establishing museums for this purpose. Consequently, the Department of Antiquities was founded on 27 June 1923 and is considered the earliest cultural organization in Jordan. It aimed to prevent damage to ancient cities in the country and to carry out conservation work and excavation (Mousa 1985: 109). On 15 September 1925, the legislation for the safeguarding of antiquities was enacted as the first Law of Antiquities (Abazah 1981: 31). This law has been amended many times, most recently in 2004.

The DoA was originally located in the Roman city of Jarash. In 1928, when Transjordan broke away from the colonial government in Palestine, the Department was transferred from Jarash to 'Ammān and Dr Rida Tawfiq, the Turkish philosopher, was appointed as its first director (al-Abedi 1972: 9). Since Jordan was under the British mandate, a British archaeologist, Gerald Lankester Harding, was appointed in 1936 as Chief Curator of Antiquities, a title subsequently changed to Director General of the Department of Antiquities. In 1956, a mission to dismiss all British leaders from the governmental sector was launched in Jordan. King Hussein started with Sir John Bagot Glubb, the British commander of the Jordanian army. In the same year, the British director of the DoA, Lankester Harding, was dismissed and replaced by the first Jordanian director, Dr Abdul Kareem Gharaibeh.

In 1945, Jordan participated effectively in estab-

lishing the Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) to protect cultural property in the Arab world. Jordan also participated in ALECSO conferences, from the first one, held in Damascus in 1947. The major topics dealt with during the conference included the law of antiquities in the Arab world, rescuing endangered archaeological heritage, studying areas which would be destroyed during the development of cities and towns, establishing museums to house and preserve antiquities, and training personnel in conservation, excavation and museum administration.

From 1948, excavations were conducted by Jordanians and 1950 saw the first issue of the periodical the *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* (ADAJ). This journal contains studies and reports of archaeological excavations and surveys conducted in Jordan by Jordanians or foreigners, as well as other archaeological activities. In 1980, the DoA held the first conference on the history and archaeology of Jordan at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. Since that date, this conference has been held every three years. The DoA conferences are published in a special journal called *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (SHAJ). The DoA has effectively participated in international exhibitions throughout the world by its loans of objects. For example, the exhibition *Jordan: Treasures from an Ancient Land* was shown in various countries including Britain, France, Tokyo, America and Singapore (Bienkowski 1991).

Museums in Jordan

The use and meaning of the word *mut-ḥaf* in Arabic is different from that of the word “museum” or its equivalent in developed countries. The word *mut-ḥaf* came from the root *tuhfah*, meaning precious thing. Most Arab people consider museums as places to display precious and ancient objects or traditional costumes. Part of the explanation for this may be that museums in Jordan and the Middle East began because of departments of antiquities and have continued to have a direct connection with them. This idea is mentioned by Carol Malt in her report of a project on museums in Jordan in 1999. She states that one of her first tasks was to define the word museum:

“Many there regard museum as synonymous with the word antiquities, as in this definition from a Jordanian museum curator: a museum should reflect the old civilizations. When I

asked others in the profession the question: what is a museum? I received such answers as: a museum is a place for the old things, for ancient things, things that show us the past and things we don’t use anymore” (Malt 2005: viii).

Historically, in 1923, under the British mandate, the first archaeological museum was established in Jarash at the same time as the founding of the Department of Antiquities (Oweis 1994: 171-174). The museum was located in one of the vaults of the Temple of Artemis. It reflects the beginning of interest in establishing a place to house archaeological objects rather than in establishing a museum to display objects for public or for educational purposes. It was a warehouse rather than a museum.

Malt discusses the positive side of colonialism in establishing cultural institutions, noting that Jordan benefited from the expertise of foreign experts in the establishment of their museums. According to her:

“Although the government may have desired and planned museums throughout the country, it was often private enterprise and foreign support and expertise that initiated them and made them reality. The British have long played an important role in the development of cultural activities. Affiliations with British museums, archaeological institutes, and cultural councils guided the early establishment of museums, such as the Jerash Archaeological Museum and the Jordan Archaeological Museum in Amman” (Malt 1994: xxv).

Henrique Abranches describes the colonial museum as a warehouse rather than a museum. Objects were displayed in a way that caused them to lose their true spirit and the people who created them were treated as unimportant. Specifically in relation to Arab culture, Abranches states that “Arabs have been dispossessed of their own artistic creations and their museums do not reflect the greatness of the Arab peoples. The Arab’s cultural identity is smothered when seeking his own essence and originality, and his identification with his past is blurred by colonialism and lingering colonialist attitudes” (Abranches 1983: 19-31).

The true picture is rather more complex: the exportation of antiquities certainly deprived local populations of them, but it ensured their survival and preserved them for study, which in turn led to recognition and local protection. This contributed

to the Arabs themselves recognising and valuing the heritage of their cultures and civilisations, and facilitating in particular the creation of Arab museums and cultural organizations.

However, for three decades from 1923, no new museums were established in Jordan, for various reasons. First, the Emirate was young and the government was concentrating on building the country rather than establishing cultural institutions. Second, there was political, economic and social instability. Third, there was a shortage of archaeologists and a lack of awareness of the role of museums. Finally, foreign archaeologists and their institutions at that time focused their work on Palestine more than Jordan.

Saifur Dar discusses the way in which developing nations focus on building the country rather than creating cultural institutions. According to him, “[Pakistan] is a developing country and as such more attention is being paid to the establishment of industries and communications, development of agriculture and education rather than on purely cultural matters like museums. Besides, in Pakistan, cultural programs have suffered from the political instability, internecine wars, internal disruptions, natural calamities etc.” (Dar 1981: 13-26).

After independence in 1946, the British control over the country did not cease completely, as the DoA remained under the British director, Lankester Harding. In 1949, Harding nominated the British architect Austin Harrison, who had designed and built the Palestinian Museum in Jerusalem, to design and build a Jordan Archaeological Museum at ‘Ammān Citadel. The museum, which was completed and opened to the public in 1951 (Balqar 1994: 155-157), was built to reflect the East Bank’s history and cultures and to establish a balance with the West Bank museum in Jerusalem, in order to encourage visits to ‘Ammān and the East Bank. The museum was considered the first national museum of Jordan and has played an important role in establishing and developing all archaeology museums in Jordan by supporting them with archaeological collections. The Jordan Archaeological Museum is one of the few in Jordan that was built to be a museum and whose showcases were made to fit the space. It contains objects from the Palaeolithic age to the Ottoman period which have come from archaeological sites in Jordan, some of them from the West Bank before 1967.

During the rest of the 1950s no new museums

were built in Jordan. As a result of the unification of the West and East Banks in 1951, the government concentrated on developing the economic situation, industry, education and infrastructure, rather than establishing museums. Also, since the West Bank is particularly rich in religious places, archaeological sites and museums, the government gave little consideration to establishing new museums in the East Bank. However, in 1954, the DoA was enrolled in the UNESCO list of state parties which ratified the 1954 Hague Protocol and Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Moftah 2004).

A University Archaeology Museum

Jordan University was established as the first national university in Jordan in 1962. At the same time, an Archaeology Museum was established on the campus with generous support from the Department of Antiquities, which donated the archaeological objects, while the University offered a place to house them (JU 2005: 297). This is a clear indication that Jordan University, like universities in the Middle East and worldwide, played an early role in establishing museums in Jordan. For example, the first university museum and one of the first museums in the Middle East is the Archaeological Museum of the American University of Beirut, which was founded with a collection from Cyprus donated by General Cesnolla, the American Consul in Cyprus, to the newly founded American College in 1867 (Bader 1994: 207-210).

Before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, with an increase in archaeological activity all over the country, the DoA created two branches in Petra and Irbid, in the south and north of Jordan respectively. As a result, the Petra Archaeological Museum was created inside a Nabataean cave in al-Habis mountain in 1963, while the Irbid Archaeological Museum was created on Tall Irbid in 1966 (DoA 1994: 9). The establishment of these museums reflects the economic and cultural development in Jordan which began in the 1950s, as well as the DoA’s policy of protecting archaeological sites, of promoting the awareness of archaeology and heritage and of creating archaeology museums throughout the country.

Meanwhile, Jordan was planning to establish four other museums in the West and East Banks. According to the Seven Year Programme for Economic Development of Jordan 1964-70, “The new

policy of the DoA is to establish local museums in every important antiquity site that is frequently visited by tourists.... The Seven Year Programme calls for the establishment of four others during the first four years. Jerash and Kerak museums are to be established in 1964 and 1965 [in the East Bank]. Hebron and Nablus museums are to be established in 1966 and 1967 [in the West Bank]" (JDB n.d.: 186). Unfortunately, none of these museums was opened during that time, as a result of the war.

In fact, the DoA prepared a project in 1966 to establish a folk museum in the old city of Jerusalem, but because of the war the project was not completed (Abazah 1975: 5). In 1971, the DoA re-launched the idea in 'Ammān and the Museum of Popular Traditions was established by Mrs Sa'deyyah al-Tall, the chair of the Heritage Club of Jordan.¹ The DoA provided the building and staff, while Mrs al-Tall, through the Club, raised funds and purchased collections of the costumes, jewellery and weaving of the East and West Banks of Jordan (DoA 1994: 4). This was the first semi-governmental Museum in Jordan with its own budget. It was managed by a committee including al-Tall, the Director General of the DoA and a representative each from the ministries of Culture and Finance (Malt 2002: 28). The Museum is located in one of the vaults of the Amman Roman theatre. In 1975, another Folklore Museum was opened by the DoA in 'Ammān through the efforts of Hadyieh Abazah and located in the opposite vault of the same theatre (al-Qudah 1994: 165-166). Both museums aim to collect, preserve, document and display the cultural heritage of Jordan in order to increase the cultural awareness and affiliation of the people. Their collections, dating from the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, represent the traditional life and costumes of the people of Jordan.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the growth of the population and increasing urban and industrial development led to several archaeological and historical sites and monuments in Jordan being damaged or destroyed. As a result, the DoA adopted a new policy to protect such sites around the country. First, it compiled lists of archaeological and historical sites and buildings. Second, the DoA allocated an amount of money from its annual budget to purchase land containing ruins and historical

buildings, or adjacent to sites of antiquities (Rida interview, 2005).

Normally, the owner of such land is compensated by the DoA, but the value is often estimated regardless of its archaeological importance. One of these properties was a number of old houses containing Byzantine mosaic floors in Mādabā, 20km south of 'Ammān. In 1974, to gain publicity and to increase the awareness of Jordanians, the DoA renovated these houses and turned them into the Madaba Museum, which comprised Archaeological and Ethnographical museums, as well as the Old House, representing a traditional village family room of the nineteenth century. His Excellency Prince Hassan officially inaugurated the museum in December 1978.

In 1974 and 1975 the DoA approved, signed and ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Consequently, in 1976, in order to reduce the large number of antiquities accumulated illicitly and to stem the flow of cultural property leaving the country illegally, the DoA prohibited both dealing in and possessing antiquities. According to Hadyieh Abazah:

"The DoA cancelled all trading licences, and all dealers were required to hand over to the DoA all registers of antiquities in their possession within two months. The Department bought the important antiquities in the possession of the dealers for a price agreed by the Minister and the dealer" (Abazah 1981: 95).

The 1970s was a decade of growth in all sectors in Jordan and this was reflected in the museums as well. In addition to archaeology and folk museums, several museums were established with new disciplines under various authorities. For instance, the Jordanian military forces established the Martyrs' Museum, while the Ministry of Posts and Communications created a philately museum. In turn, Jordan University, as a result of founding new faculties, established three university museums: the Animal Museum in the Department of Biological Science, 'Aqaba Aquarium and Marine

¹ The Heritage Club of Jordan is a private organisation formed by wealthy Jordanian women to collect traditional objects, cos-

tumes and jewellery and to display them in museums.

Science Station on the Red Sea, under the Faculty of Science — which was the first off-campus university museum — (Majdoubeh and Sweiss 1997: 66) and the Insect Museum in the Department of Horticulture and Plant Protection of the Faculty of Agriculture (JU 2005: 602). The private sector also participated in establishing two contemporary art galleries in the Intercontinental Hotel and the Plastic Art Association.

At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the DoA participated in establishing archaeological museums not only in Jordan, but also in other Arab countries. For example, several archaeological collections were donated to the Abu Dhabi Museum and Kuwait National Museum. In order to market its culture and heritage worldwide, the DoA also loaned several objects to international museums in Britain, America, France and Germany. In cooperation with the Royal Court, it also gifted numerous archaeological objects to presidents, kings, princes and official visitors. This indicates that museums in Jordan played a political role in impressing political leaders who visited the country.

In conclusion, the 1970s marked a basic phase in the development of museums in Jordan, seeing a new diversity in the types of museum, in governance and in concepts. The 1980s may be seen as an extension of the 1970s in terms of the growth of museums. This reflects the development of the economic situation arising from political stability. Many archaeological and tourism projects were started in cooperation with national and international organisations. In 1980, the DoA re-launched the idea of establishing Karak Archaeological Museum, 120km south of ‘Ammān, locating it in the vaulted hall of a Crusader castle. This museum, which was inaugurated by Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein, had been included in the 1964-70 Economic Plan and was to have been established in 1965, but was delayed because of the 1967 war.

The DoA continued its policy of decentralising its museums by establishing local museums in every major city of the country. Accordingly, in 1983, al-Salt Archaeological Museum was established in the city of that name 30km north-west of ‘Ammān to house material excavated in the as-Salt and al-Balqā’ districts. Four years later, the al-Salt Folklore Museum was established and attached to the Archaeology Museum in a restored villa, built *ca.* 1892. The museum was inaugurated by His Majesty King Hussein during a visit to as-Salt city. The

DoA, in cooperation with the German Protestant Institute for the Archaeology of the Holy Land, also established the Umm Qais Archaeological Museum in a renovated house on the acropolis of the Umm Qais archaeological site, 120km north of ‘Ammān, in 1987. This museum was also inaugurated by Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein. According to Nazmeyyah Rida:

“The DoA’s policy in establishing archaeological and heritage museums around the country was to activate the role of the DoA’s branches in different cities, spreading the awareness of archaeology and heritage everywhere in the country, to house archaeological objects of every city or region in their local museums, and decreasing the pressure on the Jordan Archaeological Museum, the only archaeology museum in Amman with limited facilities and storages” (Rida interview, 2005).

Another important reason was the large number of archaeological objects the DoA purchased in the second half of the 1970s as a result of prohibiting the trading and possession of antiquities — these objects needed many museums around the country to house them. What also facilitated this policy was the nature of the museums. They did not cost the DoA much money, since the archaeological objects, places to house them and employees were available. The DoA also displayed objects in simple showcases, without paying attention to museological issues such as environment, collection management or education.

The DoA, through its policy of supporting other Jordanian ministries and departments in creating their museums, participated in establishing the Numismatics Museum in the Jordan Central Bank. The Museum houses a collection of coins representing those circulating in Jordan from the fourth century BC to the Hashemite Kingdom (DoA 1994: 5).

The 1980s is considered a productive decade in establishing various university museums, as a result of the founding of new universities with new faculties and disciplines. In 1980, Jordan University established the Folklore Museum and attached it to the Department of Sociology, later transferring it to the Archaeology Department (JU 1986: 6-8). The purpose of the Museum is to preserve Jordanian heritage as evidence of the activities of Jordanian society and to provide a resource of Jordan’s heritage for the University’s students, local and national school

pupils, University visitors and the local community (al-Asad 1990: 1). It houses objects representing the evolution of the traditional life of Jordan from the nineteenth century and illustrates the lifestyle of Jordanian societies in villages and *badia* before the spread of western civilisation (Majdoubeh and Sweiss 2002: 91). The museum displays various objects of material culture and focuses on the representation of traditional agriculture, domestic tools, food preparation and costume.

Yarmouk University in Irbid, in its turn, founded the Museum of Jordanian Heritage with new concepts and perspectives in 1984. The museum has played a unique role in the history of Jordanian museums in general and university museums in particular. This museum has reflected the broad economic and professional climates that have shaped museum developments. This was as a result of the development of concepts and perspectives, of the general evolution in Jordan in the 1970s and 1980s and of the availability of internal and external funding. The museum also understood the need to engage with audiences rather than become wholly consumed by objects and collections. It understood the role of each component of those audiences. The result was not simply a rapid rise in public profile, but a developing role regionally as a cultural centre. Ultimately, its great success has depended upon a staff with vision and energy, which this museum appears to have had at the moment it most needed it.

Mu'tah University in Karak, originally a military establishment, added a civilian wing in 1986. Two years later, the Department of Archaeology and Tourism was founded and affiliated to the Faculty of Arts. Accordingly, when the Archaeology Museum was founded it was affiliated to this Department. The museum aims to support the educational programme and to serve the University community (Malt 2002: 37). As with the archaeology museums in Jordan and Yarmouk Universities, the DoA supported the museum with archaeological collections in 1989 and 1996. The museum has also acquired objects from the DoA's excavations in southern Jordan. Since the date of establishment, however, the Faculty and the University have failed to provide a permanent place to house its collections, which are still located in the Faculty's corridors. The museum should therefore be considered a departmental col-

lection, rather than a museum proper.

From 1987, the DoA, in cooperation with the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, started a series of archaeological excavations in Aqaba on the Red Sea in southern Jordan. The expedition discovered the Islamic city of Ayla and hundreds of related archaeological objects, which were exhibited at the Oriental Institute, the DoA and Yarmouk University. From this travelling exhibition, the idea of establishing the Aqaba Archaeological Museum was launched in 1990. The Museum is located in the former house of Sherif Hussein Bin Ali next to the Mamluk castle, which was built at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Aqaba Archaeology Museum contains archaeological objects from the mid-seventh to twelfth centuries that have been excavated at 'Aqaba and Wādi Rum (Malt 2002: 44f).

In 1995, Āl al-Bait University established the Samarqand Museum and attached it to the Institute of Islamic Arts as a pedagogical, research and academic centre (Sa'id 1997: 28). It was intended to preserve, maintain and enrich the heritage of Islamic civilization (Obaidat 2001: 43-46).

In the mid-nineties, the DoA and the private sector group Friends of Archaeology participated in an international project called "Museums with No Frontiers". This virtual, cyberspace project was launched by the European Commission in order to foster cultural relations among fifteen Mediterranean countries (<http://www.discoverislamicart.org>). It is an on-line museum of Islamic art which aims to establish a vast transnational museum that presents Islamic works of art, architecture and the archaeological context in which they were created (Najjar 2007). It provides an opportunity to learn about and enjoy the shared cultural heritage of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East in a completely new way. Every country was asked to work on a particular historical period. Thirty five monuments and sites from Jordan connected to the Umayyad, Early Abbasid, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods were included in the database (Naghaway 2007).

In 1999, Jordan witnessed the establishment of the first archaeology museum by the private sector. This was the Numismatic Museum at the Jordan National Bank, which houses the special coin collections of Dr Nayef Qsus.² These were collected

* Dr. Nayef Qsus is a dentist and one of the most active numismatic collectors in Jordan and the Middle East. He is member of the Royal Numismatic Society in the UK and the American Numis-

matic Society in the USA. He was awarded the prize of the Royal Numismatic Society in 1996 for his book "Umayyad Coins".

over 40 years and represent the development of numismatics from the Lydian period to modern times. Dr Qsus sold his private collections to the National Bank to establish the museum under the supervision of a committee from the DoA. The museum contains a specialised library on the science of numismatics (Qsus Interview: 2005).

During the 1990s many other museums were founded by the DoA, the government, the private sector and universities. For example, the DoA continued its policy of establishing archaeological museums in every city in Jordan by founding the 'Ajlun Archaeological Museum in the north and Ma'raq Archaeological Museum in the east. It also converted the house of King Abdullah the First in Ma'ān, southern Jordan, into a historical museum and gave permission to the College of Archaeology at Al Hussein bin Talal University to manage it (Rida interview: 2005). The DoA supported the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in establishing the Abu 'Ubayda Islamic Museum in the Jordan Valley, by supplying Islamic objects.

Despite the severe political and economic instability suffered by the country during this decade, twenty five museums were established in Jordan during the 1990s. This high number was possible because of a number of factors: the majority of these new museums relied on available objects and existing buildings; some were galleries without permanent collections; none of them paid attention to museological issues such as environment, collection management or educational programmes; finally, those affiliated to universities were educational collections rather than true museums. Therefore, one could say that these museums were developed in quantity rather than quality; they concentrated on providing exhibition space and housing objects as warehouses, more than on educating people.

The new millennium started with the construction of a number of semi-and fully-governmental museums. At the beginning of the 1990s, Jordan received a grant from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to develop several archaeological and heritage sites. Part of this grant was made to establish a National Museum and to develop other museums in Salt, Karak and the Dead Sea area (JICA 2000: 1). Five other institutions were launched: the Dar as-Sarāya, Fidān, Baptism, Children's and Police museums.

As far as the National Museum is concerned,

the idea of establishing such a museum arose in the 1960s. In pursuit of this project, numerous committees were formed by representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Culture, the National Resources Authority, various Jordanian universities and private sector interests including architects, artists and archaeologists. Over the years, many suggestions have been made concerning concepts, objectives and locations for such a museum (Ibrahim 1991: 1-4), but the idea was not realised due to the lack of experts and funding. The Jordan National Museum is now at last under construction and is expected to be opened in 2009. The Department of Antiquities enacted a temporary law for the museum and added it to the Law of Antiquities.

To conclude, sixty six different museums have been established in Jordan since 1921. The largest category is archaeology museums, which reflects the desire of the DoA to establish a museum at every major archaeological site. Although many private universities have been created, no museums have yet been established on their campuses. Of the 66 museums in Jordan, 59 are governmental and only seven are private.

Museums in Jordan were developed slowly because they are governmental ones. They totally depend on the government budget, which is very low. They also do not benefit from their income; that goes directly to the Ministry of Finance rather than back to the museum. Jordanian museums are not yet interconnected or represented by any official association. There are no museum councils, commissions, or university museum group like the ones in the west. The absence of these organisations has seriously limited the development of museums in Jordan. Such associations promote the interests of collections and museums, and provide umbrella organizations for their implementation (Hill 2005: 68).

Another important reason for this slow development is that as the governmental museums are attached to a department or ministry, they are managed by that department or ministry. Museum staff do not have the right to make decisions in order to develop their museums. This idea was mentioned by Kate Hill in connection with the relations between English local councils and the curators of municipal museums in the nineteenth century. According to her, "the slow development of curatorial authority is reflected in the fact that curators con-

tinued to face conflict with councillors and members of scientific societies” (Hill 2005: 64). Moreover, public museums lack qualified staff. On the one hand, curators and their staff often do not have degrees in museum studies, having attended only general training courses. On the other hand, they are considered employees like those of any other government department and do not participate in the power structure or in the planning and evaluation processes. They do not even have an official job description. The curator carries out every task in the museum, such as administration, research, the curating of exhibitions, collection management, public relations, teaching and tour guiding. Malt adds that:

“The development of museums in Jordan has been done slowly because there has been a general lack of interest by the people and the power structure in the monuments and relics that are so prevalent in the region. Muslims generally had an attitude of benign neglect for the architectural monuments of previous cultures found in their territories and only began to appreciate and seriously preserve them some fifty years ago. This interest in their heritage also coincides with the surge of interest in museums and private collecting” (Malt 2005: xviii).

Asem Barghouthi, the director of the National Museum project notes that “as a result of lack of awareness of the role of archaeology and heritage, establishing museums in Jordan was not taken seriously by either the government or the general public” (Barghouthi interview, 2005). Another reason is a social one: the problem of habituation and familiarity. This means that the lack of interest in archaeology and heritage comes from the level of habituation around archaeological sites. People think that they know everything about the ruins and there is no need to visit these ruins or museums to see what they see around them every day (al-Hunaiti interview, 2005).

Other factors in the slow development of Jordanian museums are the economic situation, political instability, the Arab-Israeli and Gulf wars, demographic changes and population movement. These issues apply not only in Jordan; they are common in many developing countries. According to Saifur Dar, “museums are institutions of slow growth; this growth is much slower in developing countries than in developed countries. This is as a result of the lack

of attention from government, wars, political instability and the lack of cooperation between the government and private sector” (Dar 1989: 13-26).

The situation is different for the private museums in Jordan. According to Malt, Darat al-Funun (or Home of the Arts), which is a private museum, is a successful because of its “funding, staff and leadership. Guaranteed a percentage of profit from the Arab Bank annually, the Dara’s programs, record keeping, maintenance, staff salaries, utilities — and all other aspects of its operation — are maintained, and new initiatives can be developed as well. The staff members are qualified, professional, and dedicated. They exude an attitude of helpfulness and competence, and are multilingual” (Malt 2005: 51). The Numismatics Museum at the Jordan National Bank, which is the only private archaeological museum, is another successful example of a private museum in Jordan as a direct result of available funding and staff.

It is notable that the private sector in Jordan has focused on contemporary art galleries, while there is only one private archaeology museum, which was established in 1999 as the result of an individual effort. This may be explained by the fact that establishing archaeological museums is the responsibility of the DoA. Also, the idea of creating non-profit institutions in Jordan, such as museums, is still taking root. It needs motivation from the government by facilitating the laws and regulations and special support from the private sector by making donations to this kind of institution.

The majority of museums in Jordan were not built for their present purposes. Many are located in old buildings or at ancient historical sites, such as monuments, public buildings, castles, theatres and houses. For example, the Petra Archaeological Museum is located in a cave, the Folklore and Popular Tradition Museums are located inside the eastern and western vaults of the Roman theatre in ‘Ammān, while the Irbid Archaeological Museum occupies a renovated Ottoman prison called as-Sarāya. This constitutes a critical problem facing Jordanian museums.

Even those museums housed in purpose-built accommodation fall short of international standards in terms of architecture, planning and controls. They lack necessary museological requirements, such as stability of environment or appropriate facilities for display and storage. Several scientific studies of the environment of Jordanian museums

have examined the extent to which Jordanian museums conform to the recommended measurements and international standards for places in which to preserve valuable collections. They concluded that as a result of poorly equipped museums and high fluctuations in relative humidity and temperature inside museums, archaeological objects and other sensitive materials are under the imminent threat of damage. Other environmental factors have a negative effect on artefacts, particularly light, dust, and micro-organisms, in addition to the human factor (al-Rousan 1998: iii; al-Ghazzawi 2003: viii; Khasawneh 2006: v).

In addition, Jordanian museums face a number of other obstacles:

“These obstacles are the financial difficulties, the absence of qualified museological professionals, the need for modern technology, absence of coordination between museums and other institutions, inadequate exhibition spaces, lack of complementary activities such as seminars, lectures and educational programs, competition with other forms of entertainment, absence of museum publications, references, and brochures, and lack of public awareness and interest in archaeology and museums” (Rishaidat 1994: 175-181).

These obstacles are not restricted to Jordanian museums; they apply throughout the Middle East (Merzhan 1993-1994: 77-98). To overcome them, museums in Jordan need publicity through media, publications, guides and educational programmes. They also need administrative autonomy, the creation of a training centre for museology, financial assistance, the development of special organizations for museums, new ideologies, cooperation among themselves and with schools and universities, and the development of facilities such as new computers technology and software for collection management.

Jordanian museums do not have policies of interaction with local communities and schools. They and other third world museums are facing isolation in the community. To overcome this obstacle, “we need to encourage public, individuals and organisations to become familiar with museums, especially the educational fields. We need to organise field visits to archaeological sites, and enable students to participate in excavations. We have to increase the role of the media to help raise public awareness” (al-Tall 1994: 187-188).

The effectiveness of students’ visits to archaeology museums in Jordan was studied and drew a number of conclusions. First, school visits lack comprehensive planning to acquaint students with the significance of archaeology. Second, there is no coordination between the Ministry of Education and the DoA’s museums. Finally, school visits are subject to teachers’ interpretations; the teachers who conduct the visits do not have sufficient information about the museums or sites they visit. Therefore, such visits are considered as entertainment. Consequently, several recommendations were presented to improve school visits to archaeological museums, such as adding archaeological studies to school curricula, creating educational units in archaeological museums, developing museum facilities, producing educational materials for students and increasing the numbers of television programmes about archaeology and museums (Rida 1994: 183-185).

The communication of Jordanian archaeology museums with surrounding communities, the extent of public interest in museums and the depth of understanding of their importance were studied. This study concluded that “Jordanian museums ... lack ... staff specialized in the field of museums and education [which has] led to the absence of [a] clear framework for an education policy. This is very clear through the severe shortage of activities, presentation techniques, display layout and design, education programs, and educational strategies for school children”. This study also notes that the DoA and the Ministry of Education have paid little attention to encouraging interaction between students and museums (Badran 2001). Many recommendations were adopted in this study such as “establishing education departments that include [staff] specialized in museum education, increasing the DOA’s [financial] support to its museums... [Furthermore], the Ministry of Education should consider museums as educational institutions and create special programs of collaboration between schools and museums” (Badran 2002: 83-89).

Concerning university archaeology museums and their visitors, those in Jordan — like most university museums in the world — form part of academic departments or institutions and are designed as exhibition facilities for educational purposes. These museums are described in Jordan as “teaching collections”. According to Malt, “since their primary purpose is to serve students, they

are properly ‘collections’ rather than museums” (Malt 2005: xxi). What has been written is correct to some extent, but most university museums are open to the public, even if not in a systematic or organised way.

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