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Towards a New Jordanian Architectural Conservation Vision: From a Neglected Archaeological Site to a Relocated One

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ABSTRACT

Jordan is full of archaeological sites from its north to its south, and due to the large number of archaeological sites, some of them may need to be appropriately cared for, restored, and preserved. As a result, there are neglected and forgotten archaeological areas that are difficult to reach by tourists and those interested. The research discusses the possibility of relocating some neglected antiquities inside Jordan and studying this subject by clarifying the mechanism, existing laws, and availability. Similar global and regional cases will be analyzed on the subject of transfer antiquities. Then, suggest some areas where this concept can be applied in Jordan. The research seeks to answer the main question: do the antiquities in the archaeological monuments in Jordan locatable? The aim of the research is to shed light on neglected archaeological monuments in Jordan and study the laws related to them.

Keywords: Neglected archaeological site, Architectural conservation, and Jordan.

INTRODUCTION:

Jordan is considered the cradle of civilizations, as the oldest archaeological discoveries in it, according to scholars, date back to one and a half million years ago, and several civilizations have succeeded in it, starting from the Stone Age and ending with the Islamic era in its various periods, through the Persian, Greek, Roman and Byzantine eras. The number of archaeological sites in Jordan in total amounts to about 15,000, making it difficult and costly to take care of them permanently (Mobaideen, 2023). The Jordanian archaeological chronology of sites has been divided into ten (10) main periods: Paleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Early Bronze Age, Middle, and Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, Early Classical (Hellenistic and Nabatean), Late Classical (Roman and Byzantine), Early Islamic (Umayyad through Mameluke) and the Late Islamic (Ottoman through modern) (Savage *et al.*, 2001).

The largest percentage of antiquities in Jordan suffers from neglect and destruction for economic reasons, and due to the lack of sufficient awareness of the importance of these antiquities and their role in building culture and civilization. The ownership of the largest part of the important archaeological sites in Jordan is considered within the duties of the Jordanian Public Antiquities Department, which is responsible for setting special legislation to preserve its antiquities and archeological sites (Abu-Khafajah, 2011). The solution could be to relocate these neglected antiquities to safer places to be preserved, maintained, and signed in a new, accessible place to be seen by locals and tourists alike.

Relocation of archeology sites\monuments

The subject of historic buildings or monuments relocation or “moving” as it is more popularly termed.

Possible only through the skillful application of the most modern technology available (Paravalos, 2006). Archeological monuments can be moved by tilting them to a horizontal ground level without dis-assembling them into parts. External tensioned cables are used to strengthen the structure against tension forces, which occur at the time of tilting (Şener, 2014). There are many international and local experiences in moving antiquities and changing their original places, including a case study of moving the Abu Simbel temple in Egypt, and moving dolmens will be discussed as a local case study.

Relocation of Abu Simbel- Egypt

The original site of the Abu Simbel temple was under threat from the rising waters of the Nile, which were about to result from the construction of the Aswan High Dam (Smith, 2011).



Fig. 1: Relocation of Abu Simbel (PATOWARY, 2020).

The rescue of the Abu Simbel temple began in 1964, through a UNESCO campaign. Between 1964-1968, the whole site was cut into large blocks (up to 30 tons and an average of 20 tons), which were dismantled and re-installed in a new location at an altitude of 65 m and 200 m above the river level, and it is considered by many to be one of the greatest works of archaeologies (Verner, 2013; Hossain and Akter, 2020).

Relocation of Dolmens- Jordan

Multiple monuments of the "Dolmens" fields located in Damieh, the Central Jordan Valley were moved from their original site to the museum of Jordan and the University of Jordan between 2010 and 2011. The process of transporting dolmens is not complicated, and this is due to the fact that this edifice has a simple structure and construction, and it was originally dis-assembled in its original location. It was reassembled and moved to the new sites with ease.

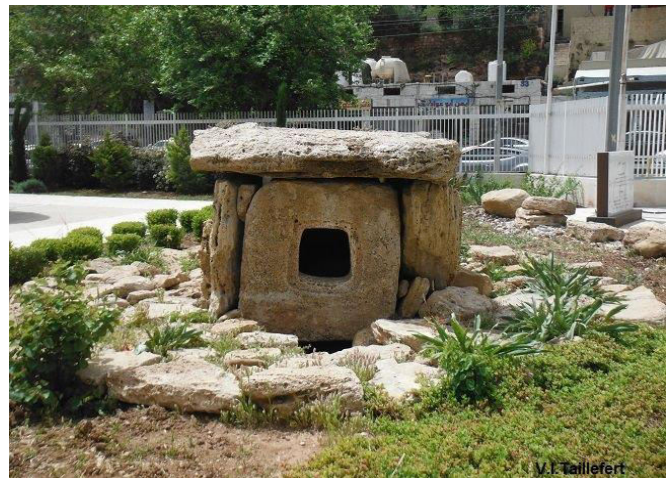


Fig. 2: Damiyah dolmen transported to the Jordan Museum in Amman, with the reconstitution of the elliptical base. G. Scheltema, www.megalithic.co.uk

Table 1: Relocation of archeology sites/monuments information (researchers, 2023).

	Moving distance from the original site	Transport and storage	Requirements	Possibility of application in Jordan
Abu Simbel temples	200 M	The whole site was cut into large blocks (up to 30 tons and an average of 20 tons), which were dismantled and re-installed in a new location	The artifacts were moved to a nearby place that does not exceed 200 meters, so it was sufficient to use giant trucks	Possible
Dolmens	55 Km	An appropriate temperature or humidity has not been set for transportation	An appropriate temperature or humidity has not been set for transportation	Possible

Archaeological monuments Relocation Legislation

There is a global interest in preserving antiquities, and many laws have been put in place to protect movable antiquities. The most important of these organizations is UNESCO, whose laws included the enactment of regulations and conditions for the transfer of antiquities, including It permitted the transfer of antiquities, whether small or large scale (Saba & Salamé, 1984). Locally; the Antiquities Act 21/1985 was passed in order for Jordan to fulfill its duties under the UNESCO Convention, which was amended in 2002, and to control and protect antiquities in Jordan. The Jordanian legislator issued Public Antiquities Law 21/1988 to impose legal protection for antiquities (Alkhasawneh et al., 2021). Jordan's laws distinguished between moveable and immovable antiquities and permitted private ownership of movable artifacts with few restrictions. It is considered that a previous permit from the relevant authorities is required for the movement of classified or registered mobile antiquities for the purpose of restoration, repair, or any other

essential preservation process, the same rules apply when moving mobile artifacts overseas for restoration, identification, or display. When the appropriate authorities grants the owner authorization to dispose of moveable antiquities, the deed is approved and no longer regarded as unlawful. The Jordanian legislator makes no reference of the third party to which antiquities may be transferred. Therefore, anyone, including a Jordanian, could be that third party. This indicates that any person, regardless of nationality, may make such disposal in compliance with the provisions of Article 25(b) of the Jordanian Antiquities Law (Alkhasawneh et al., 2021; Lash & Al-Syoof, 2022).

DISCUSSION:

There are many examples of neglected antiquities in Jordan, due to the large number of archaeological sites. The most important neglected Jordanian archaeological sites can be summarized as follows.

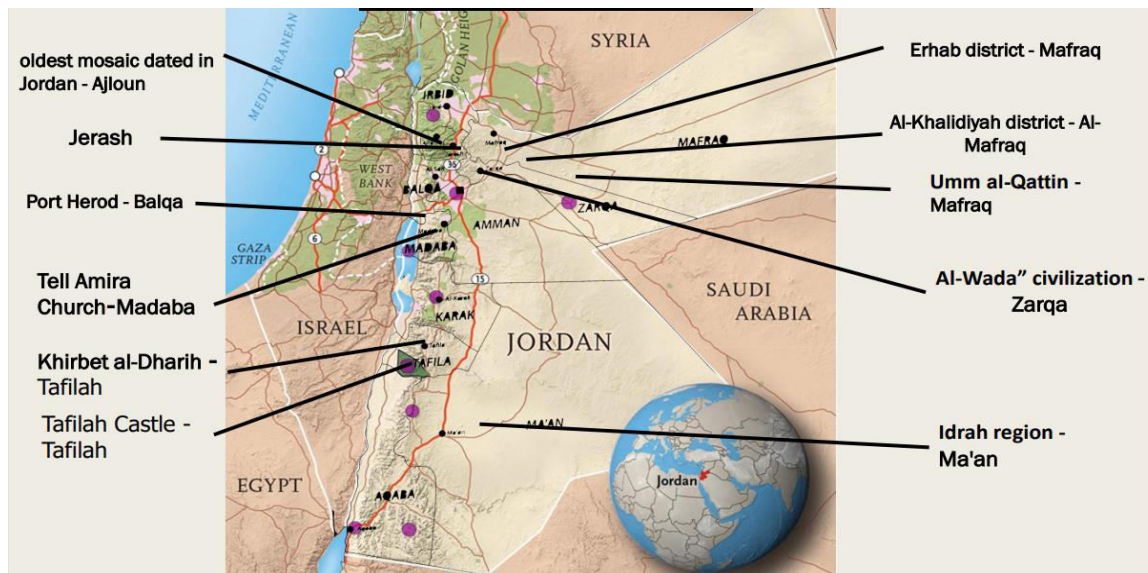


Fig. 3: Neglected Antiquities Map of Jordan (Researchers, 2023).

There are many neglected archaeological areas from which it is possible to move antiquities and put them in a new place, including dolmens which are considered the most neglected monuments in Jordan, whose size is commensurate with transportation to other sites since their size and the nature of their stone construction are simple. Dolmens are distinguished by their spread in more than one location in Jordan and their large number. Rujm al-malfouf monuments spread in several

areas in Amman-Jordan (Atiyat, 2015). Its construction dates back to the Iron Age. Its Plan is distinguished by being closer to the circular one. Most of these stone monuments are neglected. The mosaics of the neglected archaeological churches that are distributed in the north, middle and south of Jordan are among the antiquities that can be transferred and preserved. Numerous historical locations, dating from the Stone Ages to the late Islamic eras, are encompassed by the

Tafila Governorate but suffer from marginalization, neglect, and modest excavations. These locations are vulnerable to destruction by treasure seekers and exploitation by people who are unaware of their significance for archaeology. Idrah-Ma'an is brimming with significant sites that are recorded for a historical stage of the region, but it lacks the elements of tourism and non-existent facilities to draw tourists, indicating that its sites date back to successively ancient times. There are castles, fortresses, and palaces that lament their misfortune many archaeological sites in the district of "Rehab" are neglected, and they appeared as pens for sheep, as they are without supervision or oversight from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, which is the authority responsible for them.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Jordan places great importance on the preservation and conservation of its cultural heritage, and efforts are made to safeguard these treasures for future generations to appreciate and learn from. Like many other nations, Jordan has laws and rules in place to safeguard its cultural heritage and stop the illicit sale and trafficking of antiquities. Following the law and acquiring the necessary approvals are requirements for moving artifacts from Jordanian archaeological sites. The Jordanian Department of Antiquities, which oversees managing, conserving, and recording the nation's archaeological sites and monuments, usually keeps an eye on this procedure.

- Some of the antiquities in Jordan are easily transportable or suitable for transportation.
- The Jordanian Antiquities Law allows the transfer of antiquities within conditions.
- Most of the antiquities suitable for transportation date back to the Stone Age, and they are mostly neglected, due to the remoteness of their places and the simplicity of their construction.
- The main purpose of antiquities transferring is to preserve them and facilitate access to them by residents and tourists alike.
- Transferring some antiquities can provide a temporary economical solution until conditions are in place to restore care and preserve the entire original archaeological site.
- The researchers suggest moving some of the neglected antiquities, especially those dating back

to the Stone Age, to a central place in the city of Amman that is easy to reach, in which these antiquities are displayed and preserved.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

No conflicts of interest have been disclosed by the author.

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