

Revive the Circassian Cultural Heritage in the City of Jerash

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Abstract

Circassian played a major role in establishing the city of Jerash since 1878, they transfer their culture and traditions from their town (caucase) to the city of Jerach, Circassian heritage is rich with its history and culture, but it need to pay attention by people and institutions, it shows an important stage of the city's history.

The research will study the Circassians heritage in the city of Jerash, how they make a new additions in the heritage of the city, and how we can make a link between the scattered element to invest this heritage and activate the cultural tourism to rise the economic level for the local people by linking the tourism with heritage and culture to achieve sustainable economy in the city.

Keywords: Circassians, Conservation of Heritage Building, Heritage investment, cultural heritage.

1. Introduction

The true story of our area is the one worth telling. The story of the authentic contributions previous generations have made to the history and culture of where we live is the one that will interest visitors, because that is what distinguishes our area from every other place on earth. It's authenticity that adds real value and appeal. Our area is unique, and its special charm is what will draw visitors.

Circassians lived in Jerash before the founding of the Kingdom of Jordan, they had a clear imprint in the formation of the city of Jerash. Circassian heritage that tells us the story of Circassians since the arrival; their buildings, culture, life style, and their interaction with the existing community. Circassian heritage classified within the cultural heritage because it contains many of physical evidence and traditions that make it advantage for others (Jaimoukha 2011).

2. Methodology of Research

Study the historical background of the Circassians, how they lived in their country, their buildings design ,traditions and their lifestyle , then addressed to study the Circassians in Jerash by adopted analytical and descriptive approach, to explain the role of Circassians in building and enriched the heritage in Jerash.

3. Research Objectives

- Activate the historical role of the Circassians in the identity of the city.
- Benefit from the Circassian heritage and invest it to develop the tourism in the region and improve the economic level of the local people.
- Identify the problems and challenges that faced the heritage buildings in Jerash.

4. Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations (Jokilehto 2005).

Cultural heritage includes:

Tangible culture such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art, and artifacts.

Intangible culture such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge.

Natural heritage including culturally significant landscapes, and biodiversity.

Cultural heritage is unique and irreplaceable, which places the responsibility of preservation on the current generation. Smaller objects such as artworks and other cultural masterpieces are collected in museums and art galleries. Grass roots organizations and political groups, such as the international body UNESCO, have been successful at gaining the necessary support to preserve the heritage of many nations for the future (Jokilehto 2005).

5. Cultural Heritage Tourism

The National Trust's definition of cultural heritage tourism is "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources " (www.preservationnation.org).

Not every community can have a successful cultural heritage tourism program. Communities that have lost too much of their heritage, or not nurtured their cultural potential may not have the historic, cultural and

natural resources it takes to develop a program that will attract cultural heritage visitors (www.preservationnation.org).

6. Tourism as economic development tool

Tourism is a powerful economic development tool. Tourism creates jobs, provides new business opportunities and strengthens local economies. When cultural heritage tourism development is done right, it also helps to protect our nation's natural and cultural treasures and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike (www.preservationnation.org).

Linking tourism with heritage and culture can do more for local economies than promoting them separately.

That's the core idea in cultural heritage tourism: save your heritage and your culture, share it with visitors, and reap the economic benefits of tourism (National Trust for Historic Preservation).

Tourism + culture + heritage = sustainable economies

7. The Benefits of Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage tourism can have (National Trust for Historic Preservation):

- A tremendous economic impact on local economies. To economic benefits like new businesses, jobs and higher property values, tourism adds less tangible—but equally important—payoffs.
- It improves the quality of life as residents take advantage of the services.
- It promotes community pride, which grows as people work together to develop a thriving tourist industry.

8. Heritage buildings and investment

Investment of the heritage sites has many of Values:

- Economic importance in maintaining the existing activities and developed it, and activate anew activities.
- Social importance in by providing anew jobs for local people, and making Preservation of the indigenous people.
- Historical and Cultural importance by making the international identity for the country.
- Environmental importance by extending extensions networks, increase green areas and
- Provide places for waste collection.

9. Investment Fields for heritage sites

Investment for urban heritage sites divided into five fields:

- Investment existing heritage buildings.
- Investment next to the existing heritage buildings.
- Investment in sites with visual contact with the existing heritage buildings.
- Investment to establish heritage villages with distinctive architectural styles.
- Investment in establishing heritage buildings with distinctive architectural styles.

10. Jerash

Historical background

Jerash is the capital and largest city of Jerash Governorate, which is situated in the north of Jordan, 48 kilometers (30 mi) north of the capital Amman towards Syria. Jerash Governorate's geographical features vary from cold mountains to fertile valleys from 250 to 300 meters (820 to 980 ft) above sea level, suitable for growing a wide variety of crops.

In the latter Ottoman period, the city of Jerash's name was abandoned and changed to Sakib, yet this was not a permanent development, as the name "Jerash" reappears in Ottoman tax registers by the end of 16th century.

A strong earthquake in 749 AD destroyed large parts of Jerash, while subsequent earthquakes along with the wars and turmoil contributed to additional destruction. Its destruction and ruins remained buried in the soil for hundreds of years until they were discovered by German Orientalist Ulrich Jasper Seetzen in 1806. He began excavation and a return to life of the current Jerash by inhabitants of older villages. 70 years later, this was followed by the Muslim community, Circassians, who emigrated to Jordan from the Caucasus in 1878 after the Ottoman-Russian war. Subsequently a large community of people from Syria came to the area at the beginning of the 20th century (www.wikipedia.org).

11. The significance of the city

- Jerash as historical city

Recent excavations show that Jerash was already inhabited during theBronze Age (3200 BC - 1200 BC). Rolled on the city's many civilizations Greek, Romanian and then the Islamic, the historical Romanian city is considered

the most prominent of the historical places in Jordan (www.wikipedia.org).

- Jerash as Commercial center

That the location of the city average between two of the largest Jordanian cities, Amman and Irbid, helped it to increase trade with them. In the past, It was one of the Decapolis Union for its existence on caravan road, making it a prosperous trade center (www.wikipedia.org).

- Jerash have a variety of geographical features

The presence of Gold River in the city of Jerash make it a special place to attract people where the majority of the population worked in agriculture beside the river, it was the cause of attracting many civilizations in the region.

- Jerash as a city of cultures

In the early 1900s groups of Christian and Damascene settlers found home in Jerash amongst the Circassians. The variety of cultures make the city of Jerrash more significance (www.wikipedia.org).

12. Circassians in Jordan

They are one of the indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus. Circassian people fighter since ancient times, have included their customs arms and rehearsed it for young people (Allen 1932).

Through the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Many Circassians were exposed to forced migrations across to the Ottoman Empire under Russian threats of annihilation or transport and resettlement, the first wave of Circassian immigrants, who were mainly of Shapsugh extraction, arrived in Jordan in 1878 and took refuge in the old ruins of Amman. These were followed by the Kabardians who settled in Amman, Jerash (1885), Sweileh (1905), and Russeifa (1909) and the Abzakh and Bzhadugh who established settlements in Wadi-Sseer (1880), and Na'ur (1900) (www.wikipedia.org).

13. Circassians in Jerash

Jerash was an abandoned town when the Circassians chose to settle in its area in the second half of the 19th century. Plenitude of water, abundance of wooded areas, surrounding hills – were all physical characteristics of the environs of Jerash reminiscent of the geography of Circassia.¹ The boundary of the new village was defined by the Roman Wall to the east of the main ruins. A rough estimate is that between one thousand and two thousand Circassians found a new home in Jerash in the period 1878-1879 (Rayyan 1994).

The main occupation of the Circassians was agricultural and animal husbandry. Each extended family was allotted (pieces of) land to cultivate with areas of about 80-100 dunums.

Apart from the residential lots, each extended family owned cultivable plots of land and a share of the threshing floors (to the east of the town and bounded by the eastern section of the Roman Wall). 2004.

There were also a number of artisans, including blacksmiths, carpenters and gold- and silver-smiths.

14. Circassian's additions in Jerash

The arrival of Circassians to the city of Jerash in 1878 has led to clear change in the city, where they contribute in several fields:

- Architecture
- Agriculture
- Manufacturing

Their experience led to make improvement in the city and make people came to Jerash to buy a many productions and services from them.

14.1 Circassian's additions in Architecture

Circassians added a new style of building in jerash , These buildings enriched the existing urban fabric and gave it new value . The majority of the buildings is clustered in the center of the city and gives it a distinctive architectural identity. Circassian built their houses according to the Caucasus buildings style (as we seen in fig.1,2,3,4), they designed in a rectangular shape in two floors , the ground floor designed for services and animals. They had a south-north orientation with the main entrance on the southern side (Rayyan 1994).

They used the clay, bricks and straw to built their houses, their buildings were more strong than the local buildings in jerash although the local buildings used the clay and the bricks in building.



Figure 1. Circassian buildings in Caucasus (Source: Rayyan. Raja .1994.conservation of the historic urban architectural fabric of the Suq area and selected buildings in contemporary city of Jerash)



Figure 2. Circassian buildings in Jerash (Source : researcher 6/4/2014)

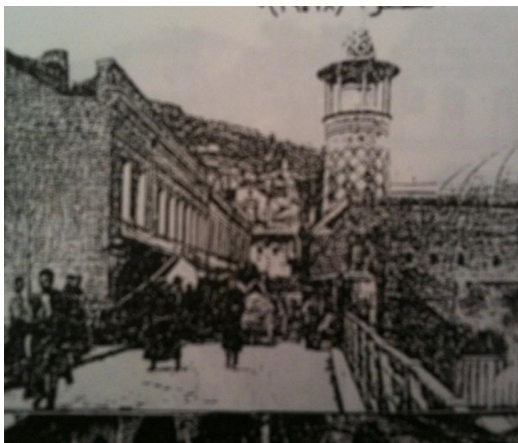


Figure 3. Mosque in Caucasus city built by circassian. (Source: Rayyan. Raja .1994. Conservation of the historic urban architectural fabric of the Suq area and selected buildings in contemporary city of Jerash)

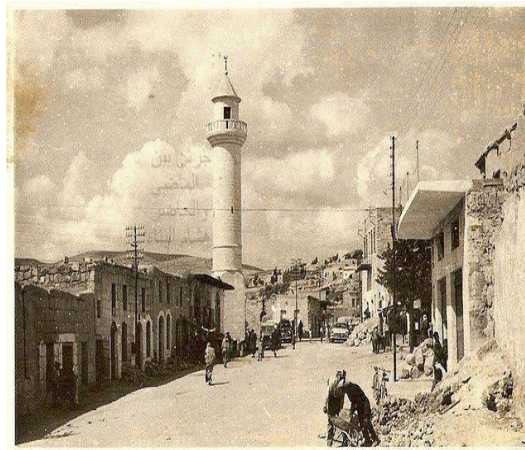


Figure 4. The first mosque in the city of jerash built by circassian in 1879. (Source: history of Jordan (www.facebook.com))

Local people in jerash affected by Circassian architecture, this influence became clear in the city and played a major role in building the identity of the city (as fig.5).



Figure 5. Al Hashemi mosque built near the circassian mosque by local people in 1926. (Source: researcher 6/4/2014)

14.2 Circassian's additions in Agriculture

The majority of the Circassians who came to Jerash work in agriculture, they bring their experience in this field to the area, where they had a new techniques (such as Supplying farms and homes with water, Storing wheat and hay, and Milling Wheat by building a wind mills and water mills), and new tools (such as Carriages, iron head for plow and The use of mules in tillage which helped in the development of agricultural activity and improve the quality of production.

These additions give the city a special identity, it was a energetic in architecture and agriculture, the research aims to revive this potentials and use it for heritage tourism investment.

14.3 Circassian's additions in Manufacturing

There were a number of artisans, including blacksmiths, carpenters and gold- and silver-smiths. Carpenters and blacksmiths manufactured agricultural implements and tools', including carts, ploughs, yokes, axes, pick-axes, shovels, etc. Carpenters fashioned Circassian tables ('ene; round, small, three-legged) and cradles (gwsche). Gold- and silver-smiths decorated weapons, belts and gunpowder cases (hezir). 'Circassian émigrés brought niello work on silver to Jordan' (John Onians).

These crafts gave the city excellence and made it as attractive point for people from neighboring cities, this character need to revive and develop to make it a point of attraction for tourists.

15. Al atique market or Circassian area

Market is located in the center of the city of Jerash, between the old houses of the Circassian, it Contains a twenty heritage buildings; Eighteen shops and two houses (as fig.6and7).

▪ Shops

Differ in terms of its area, some shops is divided into more than one shop to make the total shops Twenty-two shop, the majority of the shops used as storages, the other used to sell some used clothing or shoe repair (Rayyan 1994).

▪ Status of construction

For the majority of the buildings is not good due to negligence and lack of maintenance, they need to Periodic maintenance operations and repair

▪ Services

All the services are available for the area of storm water and sewer , telephone and electricity and water (Rayyan 1994).

▪ Construction materials

Structural style is different for each building with a common factor s among them are a thickening of the walls, the style of the holes and the materials involved in the construction where it is a stone and mud (An inner layer and an outer layer of stone and clay layer between them) Either the roofing way is different from building to another (Rayyan 1994).



Figure 6. Al atique market in the 20th
(Source: jerash between the past and present (www.facebook.com))



Figure 7. Al atique market at present
2014 (Source: jerash between the past and present (www.facebook.com))

16. The residential houses

The first one built according to circassian style in 1890. The building designed in two levels the upper for residents, the other for animals. Recently, a part of the building destroyed and rebuild in another materials, it used from Egyptian's worker, the building seemed not good because of the and lack of maintenance (Rayyan 1994).

The second one built according to shami style in 1890, it contains a three rooms, ewan and court , now the building used by Jordan chamber of commerce , they added anew second floor to the building to make it

suitable (Rayyan 1994).

17. The challenges of Circassian heritage preservation

Many of the Circassian buildings are exposed to distortion and destruction and removal (as we seen in fig.8), because they do not fall under the law of conservation of historic buildings and heritage (Rayyan 1994), which led to a distortion of the general appearance of the city and we didn't benefit from this heritage of the area, where there are more than 20 buildings in the center of city belonging to the period of the arrival of the Circassians, the stage which we cannot be overlooked.



Figure 8. circassian heritage buildings (Source : researcher 5/4/2014)

18. Approaches of investment the Circassian heritage in jerash

Existing Constituents for Investment:

- Circassian heritage buildings
- Special traditions of the Circassians
- Beautiful nature

The needs of the region:

There is amassing Lacking for tourist's restaurants, cafes and hotels, the reason that reduces the tourism investment in the best way.

19. The proposal

Revive the Atique market by restoration, maintenance and investment, and link it to roman city in urban planning, then establish services for tourist as cafes, restaurants ,hotels, workshops for Circassian handicrafts and shops selling there's products, in addition making a presentations for Circassian folklores to make the market as a point of attraction for tourists and provide appropriate services to them and to the people of the region , thus we can raise the economic level of the people of the region ,promote heritage tourism and benefit from them.

20. The potentials of the site:

The site have many significance heritage buildings, mosques, public plaza, markets and monuments, all these elements make the investment more successful.



Figure 9. Al Hashemi mosque (Source : researcher 6/4/2014)



Figure 10. Romania ancient baths (Source : researcher 6/4/2014)



Figure 11. the first mosque in the city of jersh built by Circassian (Source : researcher 6/4/2014)



Figure 12. roman monuments (Source : researcher 6/4/2014)

21. This investment needs to:

- Include Circassian buildings under the law of conservation of historic and heritage buildings.
- maintenance and preservation for the Buildings
- Connect the old market area to the roman monuments area to facilitate the arrival of tourists and invest it correctly.
- Connect the old market area to the all heritage buildings by the urban planning.
- Marketing for the region to encourage internal and external cultural heritage tourism

22. Example for heritage buildings investment: Hai Al Darife Project

the project located in Saudi state , it aims to develop the area be highlighted it as a historic archaeological museums integrating the aspects of the width between the evidence of architectural and natural environment of the area as well as interactive displays and live activities, within the foundations concerned with the concepts of conservation and restoration, it contain the most important features Dir'iya historic embrace monuments, palaces and historical monuments for the first Saudi state .

The World Heritage Committee agreed to record the historic district Dir'iyya Interestingly, in the World Heritage List of UNESCO, during a meeting of the Committee at its fourth session, held in the month of August 1431 in Brasilia, Brazil.

The project contains:

- Museums.
- Administrative buildings.
- Heritage Market.
- Restaurants.



Figure 13. Hai Al Darife (Source: www.arriyadh.com)

23. Conclusion

- Jerash have natural and cultural potentials to create successful cultural heritage tourism.
- Heritage preservation projects are successful projects when it includes change management in a sustainable manner.
- We must understand the urban context before we put any plans to maintain proposed historic buildings.
- We have to take the problems of social, economic and environmental assessment of local people and take in account the architectural important of the site.
- Raise public awareness of cultural issues and increase the sense of belonging through public involvement in decision-making to revive the heritage regions through interest in heritage is one of effective methods to achieve sustainable development.
- Encourage local investors to contribute in heritage preservation projects.
- It is necessary to change the attitudes of professionals – of economists, architects, planners, developers and administrators.
- Create a changed political environment in which historic centers are rehabilitated in their true value, and where policies and practice of government are modified accordingly.

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