The place of Jordan

Source: http://worldmaps/political.htm (accessed 7th July 2009)
Jordan as part of Bilad al Sham until 1921 (The Levant)

Jordan as an ‘independent’ political entity (part of the Middle East)

Source: http://worldmapspolitical.htm (accessed 7th July 2009)
The political map of Jordan as was identified in 1921 & 1965

(source: http://ordanmap/political; accessed 20 October 2008)
Jordan: the depth of time and place

The time span of Jordan

+50,000 BC  15th century BC  3rd century BC  7th century AD  1921
Ain Ghazal One of the first farmer settlements in the world (Paleolithic period).

General view of the site in 1982

One of the excavated rooms 1985 (courtesy of Gary Rolefson)
The time span of Jordan

Ancient past
+50,000 BC

Biblical
15th century BC
3rd century BC

Classical
7th century AD

Islamic

Present time
1921

Aaron Tomb (source: http://biblicaljordan/aarontob)

Mount Nebo (source: http://biblicaljordan/nebo)
The time span of Jordan

Ancient past

Biblical

Classical & Byzantine

Islamic

Present time

+50,000 BC

15th century BC

3rd century BC

7th century AD

The Roman City of Jerash

The Greek City of Jadara (Umm Qais)

(Source: the researcher 2005)

The Nabatean Petra (WHS 1985)

(Source: the researcher 2006)
The time span of Jordan

Ancient past | Biblical | Classical & Byzantine | Islamic | Present time

+$50,000$ BC | $15^{th}$ century BC | $3^{rd}$ century BC | $7^{th}$ century AD | $1921$

Mosaic floor at Umm al Rassas (WHS 2004)

Source: http://www.atlastours.net/jordan/st_stephen_mosaic.jpg

The Madaba Map (also known as the Madaba Mosaic Map) is part of a floor mosaic in the early Byzantine church of Saint George at Madaba.
The time span of Jordan

Ancient past | Biblical | Classical & Byzantine | Islamic | Present time

+50,000 BC | 15th century BC | 3rd century BC | 7th century AD | 1921

The Baptism site/ River Jordan

The time span of Jordan

Ancient past

Biblical

Classical

Islamic

Present time

+50,000 BC

15th century BC

3rd century BC

7th century AD

1921

Qusair Amra (WHS)
(Source: the researcher 2005)

Al Mushatta palace
(Source: the researcher 2005)
The time span of Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Reusing Greek Stone in an Ottoman Village (source: researcher 2001)

The deserted Ottoman village of Umm Qais (source: researcher 2005)
The time span of Jordan

Amman; the capital of Jordan

Le Royal Hotel/ Amman dominating the urban fabric of the city
Excavations and surveys during the colonial period

Source: http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photos/Q_220.htm

Source: http://www.cemml.colostate.edu/cultural/09476/images/iraqsites-611-172.jpg

A Western archaeologist and a local worker in Iraq in 1911
(adopted from http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/, Album q, photo no. 218)
The Government’s approach to the past: Marginalising a past and highlighting another

- The Classical past was highlighted because “it sells” (MoTA spokesman: 2003). Also, it is a ‘neutral’ heritage (DoA member staff: 2003).

- Although it is a WHS since 1985, Qusair Amra was absent from the Map!

- Every effort is made to distance Jordan from things Islamic and from the particular fragrance of danger they seem to carry [in order to create] a landscape as free as possible of any hint of threat or discomfort.

- Jordan is alienating itself from its Arab and Islamic culture to be identified with the West.
Jordan as presented by MoTA to the World


The Arab world as presented by the orientalists to the West

The Government’s approach to the past: Displacement for ‘development’

The Department of Antiquities of Jordan (DoA) was established in 1924. Since 1965, DoA was identified as part of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA).

The Law of Antiquities was established in 1942 to protect the archaeological sites that were dated before 1750 AD.

The primary concern of the law was to protect the monumental sites with aesthetic values such as Petra, Jerash and Umm Qais.

This meant the displacement of the local communities in order to conserve the sites of Petra and Umm Qais.
A child from Al Bdoul selling souvenirs in Petra (where her parents used to live) and showing a note given to her by a tourist.
The Government’s approach to the past: The ‘promise’ of development through tourism

Taebet Zaman Village: “a perfect location for a 5 stars hotel with special experience” (The investor, 2008)
Taebet Zaman: Displacing the people and inventing the ‘exotic’ and the tourist appealing hotel
A previous resident of Taybet Zaman the Hotel, now allowed to graze his sheep at a ‘safe’ distance from the hotel
The Government’s approach to the past: “The `wow` factor is all what matters”! (Ahmad, 23rd year-old male from Ain Ghazal, 2008).

“Sites like this do not sell! We want sites that attract tourists; beautiful things, you know” (MoTA spokesman, 2008)
The sign that indicates the Suwaifyyeh chapel (the researcher 2004)

The Government’s approach to the past: “They don’t even speak our language”! (Ali, 50 year-old male from Amman, 2008).

Excluding the local community by writing the sign in English (the language of the tourists). There is no other sign for the site written in Arabic (the official and the local language of Jordan).

Only the mosaic floor was highlighted and the rest of the architectural element of the Chapel were ignored.
The Government’s approach to the past: alienating the local community

The plan is to draw the tourists into the living city of Jerash by establishing a souvenirs market in it! But what about the previous shops (the grocery store, the baker, the shoe maker, the butcher? Where are they leaving to? What will happen with the souvenirs market that is already there?
Where are we heading to with our heritage in Jordan?

The Government’s approach to cultural heritage in Jordan is:

- Money and tourism-oriented;
- Jeopardises its cultural continuity in time and place;
- Marginalises local communities;
- Emphasises the ‘wow’ factor;
- ‘Neutralises’ itself.

How to mitigate the situation?

- Critical engagement with the Government’s approach;
- Effective involvement of the local communities in the process of defining and approaching heritage;
- Approaching heritage not as a commodity for tourism but as a source of cultural identity and social empowerment.

UNSUSTAINABLE APPROACH.