

Ancient Terrace Practices in Jordan Workshop 10-11/09/2017

“Ancient Terrace Practices in Jordan Workshop”

September 10-11/09/2017

German Jordanian University

Amman- Jordan

Outcomes and Recommendations

Introduction

After two days of intensive deliberations and field visit, the workshop entitled “**Ancient Terrace Practices in Jordan**” has concluded its work. The event, organized jointly by the German Jordanian University, Center for the Study of Natural and Cultural Heritage and the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, with the support of the German Archaeological Institute. The event was patronized by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

Around ten specialists from various sectors presented the outcome of their projects, both from Jordan and abroad, representing German, Swiss, Italian, American and Jordanian institutions.

The workshop was set to achieve several goals:

- Gather local and international specialist working on ancient terraces and indigenous agrarian practices in Jordan;
- Bring attention to the importance of human-made landscape features;
- Build a network of collaboration between specialists;
- Exchange experience and knowledge of various methodologies and approaches applied to investigate ancient terraces and fields.

The main outcomes

- Terraces and field systems are widely spread in different geographical regions, and different periods.
- Although terraces can be studied for their own sake, their full understanding cannot be perceived without the understanding of the surrounding as part of settlements or environmental systems.

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- Although the importance of terraces is both, historically and functionally accepted, there are challenges that hinder their preservation and protection.
- The participants highly valued the experience of Battir- Palestine in protection of cultural landscape as part of the local identity and the high role UNESCO played in inscribing Battir on the World Heritage list.
- Human role on modifying landscape is much larger than previously understood.

Recommendations

- The importance of applying multi-disciplinary approaches in studying landscape in general and the terraces in particular.
- There is a need to preserve not only the archaeological remains of terraces itself, but also the cultural practice of terraces as part of larger systems within the context of a site.
- Promotion of ancient terraces as touristic attractions as they are part of the larger story that explains human settlements and the management of resources.
- There is a great need for promoting cultural heritage and promote best practices of traditional knowledge.
- Spread the awareness within the local communities for the importance of the landscape, and to include them in decision-making process.
- Promote policies for cultural education.
- Create a network for exchange for scientific analysis and laboratories references.
- Establish a national committee to stipulate regulations for the protection of cultural landscape such as quarries, megalithic structures and terraces amongst others comprised of national and international experts to promote regulations for their protection, inscribing.
- There was some caution regarding issues of sustainability, as reviving terraces is a costly process and requires specific strategies for the long run.
- Efforts should be stressed on establishing better techniques and approaches for dating terraces and to try to improve and use suitable dating techniques for dating them.

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- As reviving and maintaining terraces is a costly process, an initiative including all possible stakeholders in such a process should be launched in order to develop a promising strategy for marketing the products originating from terrace cultures. Goal of such a strategy should be to highlight the uniqueness of the reconstruction methods, which brings consumer and producer closely together. The initiative should furthermore stress that terrace cultures are an outstanding way of supporting needy communities living in neglected/ arid areas. Such an initiative would also give the opportunity to focus the attention of customers on the enormous variety of species of vegetables and fruit growing in Jordan, many of them absolute rare species, which deserve much more affection from the market. Such an initiative, also, has the potential to raise much more awareness to species of certain agricultural products that are sold and consumed. Nowadays, almost everywhere in Jordan only imported “apples”, “plums”, apricots” or “tomatoes” (only as samples) are sold, nowhere in shops can you find the required information which species of these fruits or vegetables are presented to the customer, not to add their locality. The “terrace culture” initiative has the great potential to change this superficial behavior and to emphasize the quality and uniqueness of at least a certain local production.