

# MANAGING PALESTINIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE: BETWEEN THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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## 1. Introduction

Cultural heritage does not only have relationships with the community that created it in the past. Today is evident the link from the past to the present and future. Cultural heritage is part of the current constitution of the Palestinian culture and creates the main foundation for social, cultural, and economic development for the Palestinian people.

Our region has been lived since millennia. Accumulation of civilizations gave it the shape of today. Each civilization was based on the previous ones and each conqueror learned from and left for the others. In churches, mosques, synagogues we found many similarities, not only in the building materials and techniques, but also in style, plan, decoration. The peoples of the region share same and mixed roots. This situation has created spaces, places, stories of great values that can be historical, cultural, artistic, architectural, social, religious, archaeological, etc. These values are a huge opportunity for the area.

Unfortunately at the moment the region is experiencing a management policy that tends to consider only the phase that interest one culture and one religion, which at the moment is the dominant. To not take into consideration other cultures or historical periods leads to the abandonment and neglect of part of the history of the region.

We should not underestimate the role of cultural heritage. It impacts in several areas and at several levels. Its positive effects can bring communities together; its negative aspects can divide them and cause tragic consequences.

## 2. Problems that limit Palestinian cultural heritage

Palestine today is in its nascent stage, and this period of transition involves rapid economic development and intensive construction in the

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