

ARCHAEOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Need for Holistic Planning, Case Studies from Jordan

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Abstract. The use of archaeological research and sites in developing countries as engines of development through tourism is a complex process involving many factors. Possible attractions must balance a range of local and global values and contexts (historical, political, social and economic) and construct a product that fits into the market and is financially sustainable. This paper presents how these factors and values have an interwoven relationship, which requires archaeologists and heritage managers to take an holistic approach of formal planning and monitoring. We will present two case studies from southern Jordan, both of which are attempting to sustainably develop archaeological sites and have been informed by distinct planning practices. At Shawbak, a tourist master plan is being developed through the ENPI CIUDAD project “Liaisons for Growth” to reinforce and manage a stream of international eco-tourism that reaches the Shawbak castle site. National tourism attraction and site use will also be promoted, through the communication of a national identity-related value. Secondly, the Neolithic Heritage Trail is a project aiming to increase awareness of sites and provide development opportunities for local people. Impact assessments have been carried out to understand how different tourism strategies will produce different economic effects, which in turn will interact with the local socio-economic contexts and values of the sites.

The use of archaeological research and sites in developing countries as engines of development through tourism is a complex process involving many factors. Possible attractions must balance a range of local and global values and contexts, and construct a product that fits into the market, provides appropriate impacts and is financially sustainable. This paper presents how these factors and values have an interwoven relationship, which requires archaeologists and heritage managers to take an holistic and data-driven approach of formal planning, monitoring and evaluation. Too often projects are set-up and delivered without quality data to guide decisions and assess success or failures. Standardised methodologies to create appropriate data for archaeological tourism projects are currently lacking and this work aims to advance practice in this area.

We will present two case studies from southern Jordan, both of which are attempting to sustainably develop archaeological sites: the ENPI CIUDAD project “Liaisons for Growth”, and the “Neolithic Heritage Trail”. Although the projects have been informed by distinct planning practices, they are based on shared theoretical principles.

Development is understood as the positive change in beneficiaries’ activity and positive change is defined through a participatory planning process involving representatives from each category of beneficiaries.

Through tourism, archaeology can generate different classes of positive change including social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and environmental. The archaeological asset that drives change is research, which constructs historical (so collective and sharable) meanings around archaeological resources and places archaeologist’s work of interpretation at the centre of the creation of the tourist product. The changes which tourism can bring, such as employment and exposure to other cultures, interact with the historical meanings and the preservation of the site in complex relationships, ultimately affecting the sustainability of the archaeology as an asset for development. Change should be measured using quantifiable indicators and inform planning, evaluations and management.

The project “Liaisons for Growth”, proposed within the context of the archaeological mission of the University of Florence “Medieval Petra-Shawbak Project”, aims to design a tourist master plan for the archaeological site of the Shawbak castle (Figure 1), to promote development within the Municipality of Shawbak.

The decision to take action came as a response to the criticalities that had emerged from consultations with authorities at different levels and with those who, at present, have activities that are directly linked to tourism or may benefit from it, from a pilot study of visitors to the site (through face-to-face interviews

based on a questionnaire), and from technical assessments of the state of conservation of the castle and of health and safety conditions on site. Such an appraisal, integrated with a study of data regarding the socio-demographics of the population of Shawbak and of Jordanian tourism, has allowed us to identify the types of positive change that need to be generated. These include: increased employment (through the opening of job positions), employability (thanks to the provision of professional training), social cohesion (through

The project sees the provision of economic benefits, and local identification and sense of ownership, as vital to the success of the project and preservation of the sites.

The presented research focuses on the area of Wadi Feinan, where two of the trail's sites are located.

Here the trail's developers have a range of available strategies on how to organise tourism. The different strategies will produce different patterns of economic impacts, which in turn will react with the local context and stakeholder values, which will affect the positive relationships the project is



Figure 1. The archaeological site of the Shawbak castle, Jordan.

the decrease of social tension, participation in planning and interpretation) and learning opportunities (through site interpretation), for the population of Shawbak.

To bring about these changes the master plan will attract tourist segments that can be managed in an environmentally and financially sustainable way: international tourists with a passion for adventure and nature, international cultural tourism and Jordanian cultural tourism. Besides the environmental value, two historical ones have been chosen to market the site and are now being tested, through audience research, as regards their attraction power and the way in which they may be developed to construct on site interpretation. Such values are 1) that of the site as symbol of the Medieval frontier, one of the common roots at the basis of contemporary Mediterranean identity, and 2) the one of symbol of the Ayyubid dynasty, which is important for Jordanian national identity. These lines of interpretation will be integrated with a third, that of local memory.

The 'Neolithic Heritage Trail' is a proposed tourism development of a series of Neolithic sites in southern Jordan, proposed by the Council of British Research in the Levant (CBRL) as well as other local and international archaeologists. The Trail is aiming to raise the awareness of this period of Jordan's past, as well as enable the local community to be involved and benefit in the presentation of cultural heritage.

trying to establish. The research, to be conducted in 2011, will create data through tourist questionnaires and local business interviews to be able to analyse current tourism economic impacts and therefore model the impacts of the different strategies for tourism development. This quantitative data will be combined with local community and other stakeholder interviews to understand how these economic impacts will affect behaviours which threaten or preserve the sites, and social and cultural values held by groups and individuals about the sites. It is the relationship between these factors which will decide if tourism allows the sites to be an asset for development and if resulting changes provide a positive relationship which incentivises the preservation of the archaeology. In this case, economic data is not isolated, but combined with knowledge of other values and contexts to provide a holistic understanding to inform all-round sustainability.

Both case studies aim to advance the methodologies available to archaeologists and heritage managers to produce data and indicators to help ensure development goals are identified and achieved.