

---

## Effective Methods for Collecting and Documenting Heritage in Deir Jebel Al-Tair Village Dr. Chiresteena Adel Fathi Kamel

### 1. Introduction:

Tangible heritage is one of the most important elements of a community's cultural identity, encompassing historical buildings, artifacts, archaeological sites, and traditional tools that reflect a long history and a rich civilization. In this context, the village of Deir Jabal Al-Tair serves as a living example of the significance of preserving tangible heritage, as it contains numerous heritage elements that showcase its deep history and cultural diversity. However, over time, this heritage faces significant challenges such as erosion, neglect, and environmental impacts that threaten its survival.

Given these challenges, there is an urgent need to adopt effective methods for collecting and documenting the tangible heritage of Deir Jabal Al-Tair to ensure its protection and preservation for future generations. Collecting tangible heritage involves documenting physical elements that represent the history and culture of the community, while documentation entails the precise and systematic recording and analysis of these elements.

The significance of this research lies in its aim to identify and develop effective methods for collecting and documenting the tangible heritage of Deir Jabal Al-Tair, contributing to practical solutions for the challenges facing the region's tangible heritage.

The research also aims to highlight ways to enhance community awareness of the importance of tangible heritage and how to involve the local community in the processes of collecting and documenting heritage. Through this, a balance can be achieved between heritage preservation and the enhancement of its cultural and touristic value.

In summary, this research represents an important step toward the effective preservation of tangible heritage in the village of Deir Jabal Al-Tair, ensuring its continuity as an integral part of cultural identity while enhancing the understanding of its historical and aesthetic value.

### 2. Research Problem:

The village of Deir Jabal Al-Tair is experiencing rapid changes due to urban and economic development, which threatens its tangible heritage with disappearance or alteration. This village possesses numerous tangible heritage elements closely linked to the cultural identity of the local community, requiring documentation to preserve this identity. Therefore, the research problem lies in exploring how to document and

analyze the tangible heritage elements of Deir Jabal Al-Tair to contribute to the preservation of its cultural identity.

### 3. Research Hypothesis:

The lack of documentation of the tangible heritage elements of Deir Jabal Al-Tair may lead to the erosion of the village's cultural identity.

Significance of the Study:

- Highlighting the importance of documenting tangible heritage as a means of preserving the cultural identity of Deir Jabal Al-Tair, contributing to the academic literature in tourism and heritage studies.
- Providing a scientific foundation for the preservation of the village's tangible heritage, which supports the strengthening of cultural belonging within the local community.
- Documenting tangible heritage can play a key role in developing cultural tourism in Deir Jabal Al-Tair, thereby enhancing tourist attraction and increasing interest in this unique area.

### 4. Research Objectives:

- Scientifically document the tangible heritage elements of Deir Jabal Al-Tair.
- Analyze the significance of these heritage elements in preserving the cultural identity of the local community.
- Provide recommendations that contribute to promoting sustainable tourism by leveraging the village's tangible heritage.

First: The Theoretical Framework of the Study:

#### 1. The Concept of Heritage:

The ICOMOS (1996) defined heritage as a broad concept that encompasses both the natural and cultural environment. It includes natural sites, historical places, built environments, as well as ancient and continuous cultural practices and living knowledge experiences.

Heritage is "the distinctive embodiment of a society's culture at a given time period. It is a valuable legacy characterized by permanence and continuity, encompassing aesthetic and spiritual values. Additionally, it is a tangible reality that has gained acceptance and respect within societies. From a cultural perspective, heritage serves as a reference and material evidence of a society's unique culture, human and intellectual features, and historical dimensions. From an environmental perspective, heritage acts as a true mirror reflecting the spatial characteristics and environmental features of a place."

#### 2. Heritage can be examined from multiple dimensions:

- Linguistic Perspective: The word heritage is derived from the verb inherit (waratha in Arabic), referring to everything passed down to heirs or inherited from ancestors,

including valuable objects and authentic attributes. It also encompasses opinions, traditions, and cultural patterns transmitted from generation to generation.

- Cultural Perspective: Heritage represents the intangible dimension of civilization, reflecting its human and intellectual identity across different eras. It includes all inherited elements of value that influence human life in one way or another.

- Temporal Perspective (Historical): Heritage serves as a representation of the past and its history, preserving the authenticity of peoples, their connection to a specific place, and their experience of a particular time period. This highlights the significance of both spatial and temporal dimensions in defining heritage.

- Economic Perspective: A building or site can be considered of heritage value if it generates or contributes to significant economic benefits for its surrounding environment—whether as a commercial, touristic, or artisanal attraction or through other activities.

### **Heritage Definition:**

Heritage can be defined as the collective values, beliefs, literature, arts, and knowledge associated with all human activities, both tangible and intangible. It results from the accumulation of societal experiences and serves as a witness to the history and circumstances of a nation. Heritage is characterized by its interconnected and integrated components, some of which are fixed while others evolve over time. It also includes both tangible and intangible elements.

Yahya Abdullah added a new dimension to the concept of heritage, stating that the essence of heritage lies in how the inheritor perceives the value and usefulness of what has been inherited. In other words, heritage is what the inheritor deems valuable, meaningful, and significant. It only becomes true heritage when it influences their life. Thus, heritage serves as a link between the inheritor, their ancestors, and future generations. Furthermore, it is not only about what is passed down from predecessors but also about newly created elements that are deemed valuable and beneficial for present and future generations.

### **3. Levels of Heritage:**

Heritage can be categorized into four main levels:

- Local or Regional Heritage:

This refers to heritage that a specific community considers its own, varying from one group to another due to differences in intellectual, material, social, and cultural aspects (e.g., the heritage of Cairo residents vs. the heritage of Sana'a residents).

- National Heritage:

This encompasses heritage shared by different regions within a single country due to common intellectual, material, and social characteristics (e.g., Egyptian heritage, French heritage, or Chinese heritage).

- Global or Human Heritage:

This refers to heritage with universal historical value, recognized as significant for all of humanity (e.g., the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Egypt).

**4. Elements of Heritage:**

**A. Tangible Heritage:**

Tangible heritage includes artifacts, landmarks, buildings, artworks, and decorative elements. It can be divided into two main categories:

**Immovable Heritage:**

Includes heritage elements that cannot be relocated, such as:

- Historical buildings, archaeological sites, cave dwellings, villages, old neighborhoods, and architectural landmarks.
- Inscriptions and rock carvings.
- Historical centers, museums, libraries, and related institutions.
- Protected natural reserves, historical gardens, zoological and botanical gardens, and marine sanctuaries.
- National symbols and monuments recognized by the state.
- Natural heritage, including landscapes of exceptional beauty and geological formations of scientific and aesthetic value.

**Movable Heritage:**

Includes heritage elements that can be transported, such as:

- Artifacts, handicrafts, and traditional industrial products.
- Archaeological objects over 300 years old, such as inscriptions, coins, and engraved seals.
- Material possessions related to history, including scientific, technological, military, and social history.
- Rare collections and specimens from the animal, plant, and mineral kingdoms.
- Objects of artistic significance, such as:
  - Paintings and handmade drawings, regardless of the materials used.
  - Original sculptures and carvings.
  - Original engraved or lithographic prints.
  - Rare manuscripts, early printed books, and historical, artistic, scientific, or literary documents.
- Archives, including audio, photographic, and cinematic records.
- Furniture over 100 years old and antique musical instruments.

This classification highlights the importance of tangible heritage in preserving a community's history, identity, and cultural richness.

## Traditional Crafts and Industries:

Traditional crafts and industries have existed since ancient times. According to UNESCO, they are defined as:

"Products created by artisans either entirely by hand or with the aid of tools, provided that the manual effort remains the primary aspect of the production process."

Handicraft production is not restricted to specific quantities or materials, as long as the raw materials used are sustainable. The nature of a handcrafted product is defined by its functional, aesthetic, artistic, creative, cultural, decorative, or traditional purpose. It may also hold religious or social symbolism.

### B. Intangible Heritage:

Intangible heritage primarily consists of folklore and oral traditions, encompassing a wide range of cultural expressions created by people across generations. It includes rituals, beliefs, customs, traditions, and various forms of artistic and cultural practices that reflect a community's interaction with the universe and its historical wisdom.

Examples of intangible heritage include:

#### Local languages and dialects

- Music, poetry, chants, and folk songs
- Traditional dances, storytelling, and epic tales
- Proverbs and sayings
- Jewelry, traditional medicine, and handicrafts
- Architectural styles, traditional clothing, and culinary heritage

These elements represent the collective identity and creativity of a society, shaped by continuous interactions with other cultures. They have been passed down from generation to generation, evolving while maintaining their core essence.

The scholar Al-Jawhari examined various academic perspectives on the definition of folklore (popular heritage). Some researchers consider it an oral tradition, while others define it as the heritage of peasants and lower-class societies. Another group views folklore as the study of cultural traditions within historical communities. However, the dominant perspective is a comprehensive and comparative study of popular heritage, emphasizing its transmission from father to son and from neighbor to neighbor over time.



### The Importance of Heritage:

Heritage holds great significance in the history of nations and societies, as it contributes to various aspects, including:

- A- Playing a crucial role in presenting a nation's image to the world.
- B- Helping to build national identity.
- C- Strengthening the connection between society and heritage sites, linking the past, present, and future.
- D- Creating opportunities for employment and housing development.
- E- Enhancing tourism and supporting the growth of small and medium-sized businesses.
- F- Preserving and passing down cultural values, traditions, and ethical principles from one generation to another.

### Major Types of Heritage

#### A. Cultural Heritage:

The 1972 World Heritage Convention defines cultural heritage as follows:

- Monuments: Architectural works, sculptures, inscriptions, cave paintings, and archaeological structures of exceptional universal value from a historical, artistic, or scientific perspective.
- Groups of Buildings: Individual or connected buildings that, due to their architecture, unity, or integration into a landscape, hold outstanding universal value.
- Sites: Areas shaped by human activity or interactions between humans and nature, including archaeological sites with historical, aesthetic, ethnological, or anthropological significance.

Additionally, UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage defines intangible cultural heritage as:

"Practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills—as well as associated instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces—that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage."\*

Cultural heritage can be further classified into two main categories:

1. Tangible Cultural Heritage : This includes archaeological landmarks, historical buildings, and heritage sites .
2. Intangible Cultural Heritage : This encompasses traditional crafts, rural activities, customs, traditions, and societal values .

Heritage, both tangible and intangible, serves as a bridge between generations, preserving the identity and continuity of a society's cultural legacy.

#### B. Natural Heritage

Natural heritage refers to natural landmarks composed of physical or biological formations, or a combination of both, that hold exceptional value from an aesthetic or artistic perspective . It also includes:

- Geological and physiographical formations and well-defined areas that serve as habitats for endangered species of animals and plants, recognized for their scientific or conservation value .
- Natural sites or well-defined areas with outstanding scientific, conservation, or aesthetic importance .

Natural heritage encompasses landscapes, geological formations, ecological habitats, and areas of exceptional natural beauty or scientific significance. It includes national parks, nature reserves, zoos, aquariums, and botanical gardens .

According to UNESCO's Institute for Statistics , natural and cultural heritage covers various activities, including museums, archaeological and historical sites, cultural landscapes, and natural heritage . Cultural landscapes, in particular, represent a harmonious interaction between humans and their environment , reflecting a long-standing relationship between people and nature.

### C. Urban Heritage

Snowden (2008) defines urban heritage as a concept that integrates both natural and cultural environments . It includes archaeological sites, landscapes, historic buildings, biodiversity, and traditional cultural practices .

Urban heritage represents everything inherited from past generations that has proven its historical and cultural significance . Over time, it has resisted change and established itself as a visual and architectural reference that shapes the identity of communities.

Heritage is a shared human legacy, transcending civilizations regardless of their age. However, urban architectural heritage faces various external influences , both positive—enhancing its value—and negative—leading to deterioration.

To preserve urban heritage, efforts must be taken at both official and grassroots levels , balancing conservation and protection while utilizing heritage as a tool for urban and architectural development, creativity, and innovation .

A comprehensive development strategy for heritage areas is crucial, ensuring sustainable growth and the effective integration of historical elements into modern urban planning.

## D. Architectural Heritage

The draft charter for the conservation and development of architectural heritage in Arab countries defines architectural heritage as:

\*"All human-made structures, including cities, villages, neighborhoods, buildings, and gardens, that hold historical, architectural, urban, economic, scientific, cultural, or functional value. These structures are identified and classified as follows:"\*

### 1. Heritage Buildings:

- Structures with historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, or social significance .
- Includes decorations, fixed furniture, and surrounding environments related to these buildings.

### 2. Architectural Heritage Areas:

- Encompasses historic cities, villages, and neighborhoods with significant cultural value.
- Includes urban fabric, public squares, streets, alleys, and infrastructure .

### 3. Architectural Heritage Sites:

- Comprises buildings in unique natural settings , either preserved in their natural form or shaped by human intervention.

Architectural heritage represents the continuity of cultural identity , reflecting the relationship between buildings, open spaces, and the surrounding environment . Over time, these structures have proven their authenticity and resilience , serving as a living record of historical values and societal relationships .

Al-Sawat defined architectural heritage as the material aspect of cultural heritage, serving as a living testament to the authenticity of architecture and its strong connection to the local environment, customs, and balanced traditions. It faithfully reflects the social, cultural, and civilizational legacy and demonstrates deep positive interaction with prevailing climatic conditions, the surrounding environment, and locally available building materials.

This view is supported by Al-Zahrani, who stated that "architectural heritage is one of the most important aspects of cultural heritage, which every nation takes pride in, as it showcases authentic images of its civilization and serves as a true representation of the progress societies have achieved in various fields of life."

Ahmed Yahya approached architectural heritage from a different perspective, stating that "architectural heritage encompasses two types of values that distinguish it from



other natural and material resources. It combines economic material value, represented by the physical presence of heritage buildings themselves, which provides opportunities for their reuse. Additionally, it holds cultural value, reflecting the local community of heritage areas and their interaction with the building throughout history. It also expresses the aesthetic, spiritual, social, and historical values of heritage."

Standards and Specifications of Heritage Buildings According to Law No. 114 of 2006

In its efforts to protect architectural heritage, the state issued Law No. 114 of 2006 regarding the regulation of demolishing buildings and structures at risk of collapse and preserving architectural heritage. Article 2 of this law states:

"It is prohibited to grant a demolition or modification license for buildings and structures of distinguished architectural style that are linked to national history, a historical figure, a specific historical era, or those considered tourist landmarks."\*

The law defines these categories as follows:

# 1. Buildings and Structures of Distinguished Architectural Style:

These are collective or standalone buildings, structures, or gardens that hold artistic value, unique building materials, or distinct construction techniques and meet the following criteria:

- Constructed according to specific architectural concepts or schools.
- Reflect characteristics of a specific historical era.
- Represent vernacular architecture that expresses a local environment.
- Exhibit rarity and uniqueness.

Buildings and Structures Linked to National History:

These are buildings associated with significant and pivotal national events in Egypt's history.

Buildings and Structures Associated with a Historical Figure:

These include buildings connected to an Egyptian or non-Egyptian figure who had a clear impact in any field within society. The connection of the person to the building or structure may be due to birth, upbringing, continuous residence, work, or architectural design.

Buildings and Structures Considered Tourist Landmarks:

These are buildings and structures traditionally visited by the public for tourism purposes.

The evaluation of the significance of heritage buildings is fundamental in determining any actions or measures for their protection or enhancement. The importance of a heritage building can be assessed based on its value, facilitating the selection of an appropriate approach for its conservation and preservation.

#### Field Study of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village

Until the sixth century, Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village and its surrounding areas were known as the "Monastic Complex of Jabal Al-Tayr," extending from Al-Sarariyah to southern Jabal Al-Tayr. Today, the village covers an area of 2.5 km<sup>2</sup> and is located on the eastern bank of the Nile, approximately 15 km north of Minya Governorate. It is bordered to the north by Bani Khalid village (formerly known as Jarf Al-Deir), to the south by Jabal Al-Tayr Al-Bahariyah village and Al-Abed village.



Image 1: A section of Samalut Center's map showing the boundaries of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village.

There is often confusion between Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village and Jabal Al-Tayr village. Both are situated on the eastern bank of the Nile, north of Minya, near the river and on the edge of agricultural land. However, Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village includes the historic Church of the Virgin Mary and its surrounding area on the summit of Jabal Al-Tayr. In contrast, Jabal Al-Tayr village is located 5 km away from Deir Jabal Al-Tayr.

The term "Deir" (monastery) traditionally refers to monastic life, which once thrived in the area. However, by the 15th century, the monastic community had disappeared, and the area became inhabited by local residents. Despite this, the name "Deir" remains, although no monastic life exists there today.

The Supreme Council of Antiquities has designated a protected perimeter around the church, defining its buffer zone as follows:

- Western side: Up to the edge of the mountain, extending 20 meters.

- Northern side: Up to the cemetery, extending 8 meters.
- Eastern side: Up to the residential houses, extending 20 meters.
- Southern side: Up to the residential houses, extending 11 meters.

Since its establishment, the area has remained a significant religious destination for a large segment of Egypt's population, particularly for the residents of Minya Governorate and its villages, especially during festivals related to the historic visit of Jesus Christ to the region.

In this context, the area has also evolved into a religious and cultural tourist attraction, centered around the historic Church of the Virgin Mary. The site's exceptional location at the summit of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr enhances its appeal, offering stunning panoramic views of the Nile River and its picturesque surroundings.

#### 1. The Ancient Church of the Virgin Mary and Its Buffer Zone:

The Supreme Council of Antiquities has designated the church's buffer zone, which includes the open space surrounding it, as follows:

- Western side: Extends up to the edge of the mountain, covering 20 meters.
- Northern side: Extends up to the beginning of the cemetery, covering 8 meters.
- Eastern side: Extends up to the residential houses, covering 20 meters.
- Southern side: Extends up to the residential houses, covering 11 meters.

Since its establishment, the area has remained a significant religious destination for a large number of people from various Egyptian governorates, particularly from Minya and its surrounding villages, especially during religious festivals related to the visit of Jesus Christ to the region.

Within this context, the area has also become a religious and cultural tourist attraction, primarily centered around the historic Church of the Virgin Mary. The site's unique location at the summit of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr provides exceptional visual features, overlooking the Nile River and its picturesque landscape.

#### 2. Urban Characteristics of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village (The Archaeological Surroundings):

The village has two main entrances. The northern entrance, for visitors coming from the north, is located near Bani Khalid and passes under the mountain. It follows an asphalt road from Bani Khalid, passing through the quarries of the iron factory. This road originates from the Eastern Desert Road and meets the Minya Agricultural Road near the iron and steel factory.

The eastern entrance comes from the Eastern Desert Road and leads to the village via a dirt path.



Image (2): Streets of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village

#### a. Building Patterns, Conditions, and Open Spaces:

The architectural styles in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr vary. Some buildings are newly constructed as part of the recent development projects in 2022, while others are still under construction. The general building height does not exceed five floors. There are vast open spaces, but they are unorganized and unplanned, with no clear purpose. These spaces remain unused throughout the year except for the one-week celebration of the Holy Family's entry into Egypt, during which street vendors occupy these areas.

A field study of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village has allowed for the evaluation of its urban structure, which can be categorized into several types:

- Residential buildings that are structurally unsound and should be demolished and rebuilt.
- Residential buildings with irregular urban planning that require reorganization.
- Areas used for purposes unsuitable for their location, such as cemeteries at the entrance of the ancient church, which should be studied for relocation to functionally appropriate sites and replaced with other uses under a strategic plan for the area.
- Areas with high aesthetic and economic value, such as the facade overlooking the historic church, which should be preserved.
- Small, random, abandoned housing units that are only used for two weeks per year, particularly those built above some cemeteries. These should be removed and repurposed.

- The historic church and its surrounding archaeological area.

b. The village, in general, can be divided into the following areas:

- The first area overlooks the Nile and contains cemeteries and graveyards for the local villagers and Coptic communities of Samalut, with the Church of the Virgin Mary, the Family Hotel, and Al-Majour located in the center. The state has developed this area.
- The front section of the village includes a large open space known as the Celebration Grounds, which belongs to the monastery's endowment.
- The third area consists of the old residential houses of the village's inhabitants, located in an elevated region. Most of these houses have been renovated, with their heights varying based on the financial capabilities of their owners.
- The fourth area is a steeply sloped region extending to the floodplain, also containing some village homes.
- The fifth area is an elevated region with houses belonging to the local villagers and some residents from surrounding areas who stay there during celebrations.
- The final area includes the slaughterhouse, the primary school, and the youth center of the monastery in the southern section. It also contains new cemeteries belonging to the Samalut Diocese, with most of their owners being newcomers.

### 3. Documentation of Tangible Heritage Elements in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village

Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village is rich in tangible heritage that reflects its deep history and cultural diversity. This tangible heritage includes a collection of landmarks and sites that highlight the depth of local civilization and its history, including historical buildings, traditional architecture, ancient tools, and archaeological sites. This introduction provides an overview of the most significant tangible heritage elements in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village and the importance of their preservation and documentation.

#### 1. The Historic Church of the Virgin Mary and Its Contents

It is an ancient building registered as an Islamic and Coptic monument under Ministerial Decree No. 10357 of 1951, published in the Egyptian Gazette, Issue 115, on December 17, 1951. The Historic Church of the Virgin Mary is one of the most significant archaeological sites where the Holy Family sought refuge during their escape to Egypt after leaving the Monastery of Al-Muharraq in Assiut. They hid in a cave within this mountain for three days in the first century.

The church contains several archaeological features, including:

##### a. The Ancient Cave



This is the cave where the Holy Family took refuge in the early first century (year 3 AD) when they visited Egypt and stayed there for three days.



Image 3: The ancient cave after the latest restoration in 2023.

#### b. The Ancient Baptismal Font

The church contains a unique baptismal font located within the body of the central rear column. It is one of a kind, as it is carved into one of the church's columns and dates back to the fifth century AD. There is no similar structure in any other church. However, it is no longer used due to the presence of salty water, which erodes limestone and almost caused the column to collapse, leading to its discontinuation.



Image 4: The ancient baptismal font after the latest restoration in 2023.

#### c. The Ancient Lakan (Water Basin)

Located in the center of the church nave, this basin is used three times a year during special religious ceremonies: on January 19 (Epiphany), Holy Thursday (between April and May), and July 12 (Feast of the Apostles).





Image 5: The ancient Lakan after the latest restoration in 2023.

#### d. The Ancient Iconostasis

The church contains remnants of the ancient iconostasis, originally made of carved stone featuring images of the apostles and various Coptic symbols. According to church elders and oral tradition, due to the simplicity of the local people, some would take pieces of the iconostasis as a blessing. During the renovation of the church under Bishop Sawiris, the remaining parts of the iconostasis were collected and placed above the western entrance.



image 6: The iconostasis after the renovation.

#### e. The Ancient Coptic Icons

The church contains three ancient icons painted by the artist Anastasi Al-Roumi in the year 1554 of the Martyrs' Calendar (19th century AD). These icons include:

- The ancient icon of the Virgin Mary, with Jesus Christ depicted on her right. It is painted in the Coptic artistic style and is inspired by the icon originally painted by Saint Luke the Physician in the first century AD.
- The icon of Saint Demiana and the Forty Virgins and the icon of the martyr Prince Tadros, both of which are valuable historical artifacts inside the church.



Image set 7: The ancient icon of the Virgin Mary, followed by the icon of Saint Demiana and the Forty Virgins, and finally the icon of Prince Tadros Al-Shatby in the Church of the Virgin Mary in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village.

## 2. Other Heritage Landmarks in the Archaeological Surroundings of the Historic Church of the Virgin Mary

### a. The Nile-facing facade of the historic church

The Church of the Virgin Mary in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr overlooks the Nile River, making access via a Nile journey one of its most attractive touristic features. This facade enjoys a stunning natural view that can be utilized in various ways for tourism purposes. Additionally, there is a dock that facilitates the transport of cars, individuals, and goods, which could be developed for tourism.



Image 8: The natural view overlooking the Church of the Virgin Mary in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village, photographed by the researcher.

### b. The Pulley

This is a natural protrusion in the mountain that originally overlooked the Nile but now faces a green strip next to the river at an altitude of approximately 100 meters above the Nile's surface. It was carefully carved and consists of a nearly square base carved into the mountain, measuring 160 cm in depth from the surface of the location, 160 cm in length from east to west, and 140 cm in width from north to south. At the center, there is a rectangular section measuring 105×70 cm with a wooden tongue fixation slot in the mountain, 10 cm deep. It is accessible via four stone-carved steps, each 65 cm wide. The base of the pulley is about 16 cm away from the natural rock fissure.

(Ishaq Ibrahim Al-Bagoushi, 2015, p. 6).

The pulley was once an essential access route to this monastery.



Image 9: The current view of the mountain edge where the wooden box with the pulley used to be.

#### c. The Majour (Stone Basin)

This is a stone basin carved into the rock, possibly used in the early centuries for storing water. Visitors consider it a blessed relic, believing it to be "the Virgin's Majour," which she used during her stay at the monastery.

The Majour is located 200 cm from the base of the pulley and has a diameter of 80 cm from north to south, 70 cm from east to west, with a bottom diameter of 30 cm and a depth of 70 cm. Pilgrims visit it for blessings, particularly during the feasts of the Virgin Mary and at various times throughout the year. (



Image 10: The Majour, where visitors seek blessings, located near the monastery's pulley.

#### d. The Rock Cavity

This is a carved hollow in the rock mentioned by Al-Maqrizi. It is shown in Image 11, depicting its interior.

A folk tradition in recent years was associated with this cavity: barren women would enter and move around inside it from one side to the other. It was said that they would miraculously conceive afterward, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the blessings of the saints of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr. After being widened, cleaned, and cleared of dust, this cavity was converted into a church.



Image 11: The interior of the rock cavity.

#### e. The Ancient Quarries

The quarry site is located east of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village, south of the Saririya quarries and the Hathor Chapel built by Pharaoh Merneptah. The site is famous for its extensive quarrying activity, containing approximately 200 quarries extending from north to south with depths ranging between two and three meters.



Image 12: The interior of the ancient quarries.

The quarrying techniques varied, indicating that the site was used during multiple historical periods, most notably the Coptic era, as evidenced by numerous crosses carved into the rock. In some cases, chisels and hammers were used, and chisel marks are still visible on the stone.

#### f. Qurma Al-Mutran (Bishop's Platform)

This is an elevated rock formation rising three meters above the surrounding surface, covering an area of approximately 300 square meters. It is located at the intersection



of the Beni Khaled road and the monastery. Nearby, there is an open space of five feddans.

According to oral traditions, bishops would pray at this site during their visits to the monastery. Among them were Bishop Thomas of Minya and Ashmunein (1904–1928) and Bishop Sawiris of Minya and Ashmunein (1930–1976). Elders and village elders recount this tradition, and some people still visit the site for blessings.



Image 13: Qurma Al-Mutran.

#### g. The Hathor Chapel

Located 1,200 meters north of the Church of the Virgin Mary in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village, this Pharaonic temple is open for visits and falls under the supervision of the Ministry of Antiquities.



Image 14: Raised-relief carvings inside the Hathor Temple.

#### h. The Hermitage of Father Abde Al-Thalouth Al-Habashi

Father Abde Al-Thalouth Al-Habashi, an ascetic monk, resided at Deir Jabal Al-Tayr from 1934 until 1984. Oral tradition tells us that he lived in a dedicated space in the village, located 200 meters north of the historic church. He mentored Father Timotheos Al-Suryani and Bishop Mina of Girga. This place covers approximately 700 square meters.

This history aligns with the strong spiritual connection between Ethiopians and Copts, rooted in the early centuries of Christianity. Tradition states that Saint Pachomius sent bishops such as Anba Yohannes Kama, Anba Mati, and Anba Libanos to Ethiopia at different times to teach the people and establish monasteries. Many of these churches and monasteries later became pilgrimage sites. Notably, Deir Jabal Al-Tayr was not only home to Father Abde Al-Thalouth Al-Habashi but also hosted many Ethiopian monks throughout history. Some of these monks later returned to Ethiopia and built churches modeled after Deir Jabal Al-Tayr. There are also writings from Ethiopian monks confirming this connection. Additionally, there was a chapel known as the "Ethiopian Chapel," which was adjacent to the northern wall of the historic church but was demolished in recent years.



Image 15: The Ethiopian Chapel after its demolition in the last decade.

#### Fourth: Documenting the Most Prominent Intangible Cultural Landmarks of the Community

The customs, cultural traditions, lifestyles, and values that make the site unique include the following:

##### 1. Oral and visual heritage

This consists of stories about lesser-known areas whose secrets are preserved by the elderly villagers and are not found in books. It also includes joyful folk songs performed at weddings and during festive seasons, traditional mourning practices, and heritage hymns sung after the baptism of children.

2. Traditional games such as horseback riding contests and entertainment activities, along with preparations for the holiday season at the entrance of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village.





Image 16: Preparations for the holiday season at the entrance of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village.

3. Traditional old swings, the popular "Saqiya" (waterwheel) game, and shooting games.

Image 17: A scene of the "Saqiya" game in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr village during the holiday season.

4. Tattooing on hands and needle-engraving of crosses on the skin, although there are concerns regarding this practice due to the risk of transmitting diseases such as AIDS.



Image 18: A villager tattooing an image on her hand.

5. Handicrafts, celebrations, and special occasions.

Baptism celebrations take place after the baptism of children, accompanied by distinctive songs.



Image 19: Celebrations outside the baptismal area after the baptism of a child.

## 6. Rolling inside the rock cavity

The practice of rolling is not new in Upper Egypt. In Ansina, this tradition is carried out on the Martyrs' Mountain to seek blessings from the land soaked with the blood of martyrs during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian. Similarly, rolling in the rock cavity is believed to bring blessings from the Holy Family, which, according to local beliefs, passed through this place.

## Fifth: Proposed Mechanisms for Collecting and Documenting the Tangible and Intangible Heritage of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village

### 1. Mechanisms for documenting the intangible heritage of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village

- Preparing lists of archaeological or heritage buildings that require protection to issue decisions for their preservation. This would ensure that these sites fall under legal protection, allowing for the application of relevant penalties outlined by the law.
- Conducting archaeological or heritage surveys in the area designated for protection to assess the historical, artistic, and archaeological significance of its buildings. This includes creating preliminary plans, documentation, and photographic records.
- Intensive monitoring: Research and legislation alone may not be sufficient to protect historical buildings. Owners of heritage buildings may undertake restorations that damage their authenticity, historical, architectural, or artistic value. Some may misuse these buildings, causing harm, or even demolish them to repurpose the stones for government or private buildings. Architectural and decorative elements may also be stolen and smuggled abroad. To address this, policies and protection systems are necessary.
- Awareness campaigns: Educating citizens on the cultural and economic value of heritage sites and engaging them in heritage conservation efforts by fostering an appreciation for their historical significance.
- Encouraging community involvement in heritage preservation by integrating them into government and non-governmental committees and institutions that oversee this

mission. These entities help raise awareness among residents and property owners of heritage buildings and coordinate with relevant authorities such as local councils, local governance bodies, ministries, and the parliament to address heritage protection issues.

#### Working with the local community

- Workshops and seminars: Organizing community workshops and seminars to collectively document customs and traditions.

- Youth engagement: Encouraging young people to participate in the collection and documentation of intangible heritage to enhance awareness and interest.

#### Mechanisms for Documenting the Intangible Heritage of Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village

- The government and local authorities should enhance policies for preserving tangible heritage and enforce laws that protect heritage sites from deterioration or encroachments.

- Engaging local residents in the documentation and preservation process through workshops and educational initiatives that help them understand the significance of heritage.

- Encouraging researchers and academics to continue studying and analyzing the village's tangible heritage, producing research that contributes to cultural identity preservation. Their field studies will involve conducting personal interviews, digital documentation, and written records.

- Conducting personal interviews with village elders to collect stories, folk tales, and traditions.

- Gathering testimonials: Documenting individuals' experiences and perspectives on customs, traditions, and cultural practices.

#### Digital Documentation:

- Audio and video recording: Utilizing recording technologies to document oral narratives, songs, and dances.

- Creating a digital database: Storing recordings in an accessible digital archive for future reference.

#### Analysis and Classification:

- Categorizing the collected information based on heritage type (customs, songs, handicrafts, etc.).

- Analyzing data to identify significant patterns and trends in intangible heritage.

#### Written Documentation:

- 
- Reports and articles: Recording information from interviews and recordings in reports and articles.
  - Guides and encyclopedias: Creating comprehensive guides and encyclopedias on the intangible heritage of the village.

#### Collaboration with Researchers and Institutions:

- Partnering with universities and research centers to work with academics and cultural heritage experts for expertise and support.
- Collaborating with cultural organizations to benefit from the experience of local and international heritage preservation institutions.

#### Field Documentation:

- Visiting heritage sites where traditions and customs are practiced to gather information on their execution.
- Working with artisans to study traditional crafts and techniques, collecting details about manufacturing methods and traditional practices.

#### Media Documentation:

- Producing documentaries: Creating films about the intangible heritage of the village.
- Publishing information online: Sharing records through websites and social media to increase accessibility and awareness.

#### Community-Based Documentation Projects:

- Launching community-driven documentation projects: Engaging community members in heritage documentation initiatives.
- Organizing cultural festivals: Highlighting and promoting intangible heritage to foster appreciation and interest.
- Establishing local archives: Preserving collected materials to ensure their longevity.
- Continuous updates: Regularly reviewing and updating information to maintain accuracy and relevance.

#### Findings of the Study

The architectural heritage in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr Village has suffered from multiple challenges over the decades, including:

- Deterioration of urban and social fabric in heritage areas.
- Ongoing social mobility, leading to the displacement of original residents and the arrival of newcomers with different social, economic, and cultural values.

- Lack of heritage conservation economies in historically significant sites such as "Epona Abda El-Thalouth Al-Habashi's retreat" and "Qurma Al-Mutran site," which are not included in monastery visit routes.

The study found that the village's tangible heritage is threatened by various factors, including a lack of community awareness regarding its preservation, as well as unregulated urban and tourism development, which may lead to the deterioration of heritage landmarks.

The research revealed an absence of comprehensive and systematic documentation efforts for tangible heritage elements, increasing the risk of their loss due to urban changes.

Additionally, the study emphasized that tangible heritage in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr plays a vital role in preserving the cultural identity of the local community. Elements such as ancient quarries, buildings associated with historical figures, religious landmarks, and traditional tools (e.g., ancient pulleys) serve as cultural symbols linking residents to their history and identity.

The study also highlighted that cultural tourism in the village is underutilized, and proper documentation of tangible heritage could enhance the village's attractiveness as a tourist destination, thereby increasing awareness of its value and contributing to its preservation.

## Recommendations

1. Government and academic collaboration: The Ministry of Culture should collaborate with researchers and the local community to launch comprehensive and systematic documentation programs that cover tangible and intangible heritage elements in Deir Jabal Al-Tayr through written, audio, and visual documentation of historical buildings, heritage landmarks, and cultural traditions.
2. Oral and visual heritage collection project: A field-based initiative should be launched to systematically document oral and visual heritage, particularly folk beliefs, traditional songs, and narratives, in cooperation with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina's heritage documentation experts and private investors in heritage-rich Egyptian villages.
3. Establishing a National Heritage Documentation Center: The Ministry of Culture should set up a center dedicated to documenting Egyptian folklore and traditional knowledge using video, photography, and written records.



4. Publishing heritage materials: Heritage content should be widely published through books, brochures, and scientific journals specializing in folklore studies.
5. Creating folk heritage museums: Museums should be established or existing museums expanded to include sections dedicated to folk heritage, featuring traditional artifacts and crafts. The village should also participate in heritage exhibitions inside and outside Egypt to showcase its tangible cultural elements.
6. Training centers for documentation and archiving: Special training programs should be developed for researchers, students, and media professionals on collecting, documenting, and archiving heritage digitally to prevent loss.
7. Documenting traditional lifestyles and customs: Efforts should focus on recording traditional living patterns, customs, and festivals, as they are key attractions for cultural tourism and can generate economic benefits for locals.
8. Integrating heritage studies into education: Heritage education should be introduced at all academic levels to ensure the transmission of cultural knowledge.
9. Heritage awareness campaigns: Awareness campaigns should be conducted in the village to educate both locals and visitors on the importance of tangible heritage in preserving cultural identity.
10. Developing a sustainable tourism plan: Authorities should create a sustainable cultural tourism plan to protect the village's tangible heritage from degradation. This should include tourist routes that highlight the significance of heritage sites and promote their preservation.
11. Encouraging investment in heritage conservation: Both local and international investors should be encouraged to participate in projects aimed at conserving and developing tangible heritage, such as restoring historical buildings and establishing museums and cultural centers.
12. Collaboration with international heritage organizations: Authorities should partner with global heritage institutions such as UNESCO to secure technical and financial support for heritage conservation and possibly register the village's heritage on the World Heritage List.
13. Establishing a digital heritage database: A comprehensive digital database should be created to store all available information on the village's tangible heritage, making it easily accessible to researchers and enabling periodic monitoring and updates.

### references list:

( ) ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a global non-governmental organization that provides advisory services to the World Heritage Committee regarding cultural properties proposed for inclusion in the World Heritage List. It will be addressed in the following chapters.



( ) Nasreen Rafiq Al-Lahham, 2007, \*Tourism Planning for Heritage Areas Using Environmental Impact Assessment Techniques\*, Cairo: Dar Al-Nil for Publishing, Printing, and Distribution, p. 31.

( ) Amr Mostafa Al-Halfawi, 2003, \*The Economic Dimensions of Conservation Processes in Valuable Areas: Towards an Approach for Continuity in Development and Conservation Processes\*, Cairo University: Faculty of Engineering.

( ) Nashaat Mortada, Susan Bakri Hassan, 2009, \*Managing Heritage Tourism Components and Their Impact on Community Development: An Analytical Study Applied to Alexandria Governorate\*, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, \*Arab Universities Union Journal for Tourism and Hospitality\*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 2.

( ) Nahed Naga Abbas Al-Ebiary, 2006, \*Urban Growth of Egyptian Cities and Its Impact on Archaeological Sites\*, Master's Thesis, Tanta University: Faculty of Engineering, Department of Architectural Engineering, p. 26.

( ) Nasreen Al-Lahham, 2007, \*Previously Cited Reference.\*

( ) Yahya Abdullah, 1988, \*The Architectural Journal\*, Issue 9.

( ) Ayman Azmi Jibrán, 2009, \*Mechanisms for Activating Public Participation in Architectural and Urban Conservation Projects (Case Study: West Bank)\*, An-Najah National University, Faculty of Graduate Studies, p. 49.

( ) Nahed Al-Ebiary, 2006, \*Previously Cited Reference\*, p. 29.

( ) Ayman Azmi Jibrán, 2009, \*Previously Cited Reference\*, p. 49.

( ) Abdul Nasser Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Zahrani, 2008, \*Saudi Arabia's Experience in Heritage Resource Management\*, Symposium on \*Modern Trends in Heritage Resource Management\*, organized by the Arab Organization for Administrative Development, 1–5 August 2008, Marrakech.

( ) \*UNESCO Conventions and Recommendations on Cultural Heritage Protection\*, 1985.

( ) \*Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage\*, 1972, pp. 64–65.

( ) Abdul Nasser Al-Zahrani, 2008, \*Previously Cited Reference.\*

- ( ) Mohamed Al-Johari, 2006, \*Preserving Cultural and Civilizational Heritage and Ways to Develop It\*, First Edition, pp. 28–30.
- ( ) Nashaat Mortada, Susan Bakri Hassan, 2009, \*Previously Cited Reference.\*
- ( ) \*Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage\*, 1972, Article 1, available at:  
[<http://www.arcwh.org/arA-1972hjthrdm>](<http://www.arcwh.org/arA-1972hjthrdm>)
- ( ) UNESCO, 2003.
- ( ) Géraud Châtelard, \*Workshop on the Management of Heritage Sites and Crafts\*, Petra, Jordan, May 2010. Euro-Mediterranean Heritage Program, funded by the European Union. Available for download at:  
[[www.euromedheritage.net/.../THE\\_Background\\_paper\\_-\\_GChatela](http://www.euromedheritage.net/.../THE_Background_paper_-_GChatela)]([www.euromedheritage.net/.../THE\\_Background\\_paper\\_-\\_GChatela](http://www.euromedheritage.net/.../THE_Background_paper_-_GChatela))
- ( ) \*Same Previously Cited Reference.\*
- ( ) \*World Heritage Convention, 1972, Article 2.\*
- ( ) UNESCO, 1972.
- ( ) \*UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)\* is the statistical agency of UNESCO and serves as the UN repository for global statistics in education, science, technology, culture, and communication. It was established in 1999 and is headquartered in Montreal, Canada.
- ( ) \*UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics, 2009\*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Available at:  
[<http://www.uis.unesco.org/culture/Documents/framework-cultural-statistics-culture-2009.pdf>](<http://www.uis.unesco.org/culture/Documents/framework-cultural-statistics-culture-2009.pdf>)
- ( ) Abdul Baqi Ibrahim, 1968, \*Previously Cited Reference.\*
- ( ) Mohamed Abdel Fattah Al-Issawi, December 2012, \*Enhancing Heritage Areas with Value: A Comparative Study of Urban Heritage Conservation Policies\*, Faculty of Engineering, Fayoum University, available at:  
[<http://www.fayoum.edu.eg/Engineering/Architectural/DrMohammadE.aspx>](<http://www.fayoum.edu.eg/Engineering/Architectural/DrMohammadE.aspx>)
- ( ) \*Draft Charter for Urban Heritage Conservation and Development in Arab Countries\*, December 2003, Saudi Arabia, Supreme Commission for Tourism, General Secretariat, Article 1.
- ( ) Ahmed Yahya Rashid, 2013, \*Investment as a Pillar for Conservation Processes in Heritage Areas (Case Study: Al-Muizz Street, Cairo)\*, \*Third National Urban Heritage Forum\*, Madinah 1435 AH.
- ( ) Riham Al-Khodrawi, 2006, \*Previously Cited Reference.\*, p.
- ( ) Abdul Nasser Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Zahrani, 2012, Riyadh 1433 AH, \*Urban Heritage Management\*, \*Archaeological Studies\*, Issue 7, a peer-reviewed scientific series published by the Saudi Society for Archaeological Studies, p. 28.

- 
- ( ) \*Same Previously Cited Reference, Same Page.\*
- ( ) Ahmed Yahya Rashid, 2013, \*Third National Urban Heritage Forum\*, Madinah 1435 AH, \*Previously Cited Reference.\*
- ( ) \*Arab Republic of Egypt, Law No. 114 of 2006 Regarding the Regulation of the Demolition of Non-Endangered Buildings and the Preservation of Architectural Heritage\*, available at:  
[[www.urbanharmony.org/rule%20144%20for%202006.pdf](http://www.urbanharmony.org/rule%20144%20for%202006.pdf)]([www.urbanharmony.org/rule%20144%20for%202006.pdf](http://www.urbanharmony.org/rule%20144%20for%202006.pdf))
- ( ) \*Special Report by the Governorate Tourism Office, 2014/2015.\*
- ( ) \*Egyptian General Authority for Surveying, 1948 Survey, Part of a Topographic Map of Beni Mazar Center.\*
- ( ) \*The slaughterhouse is state-owned and was established around 2009.\*
- ( ) \*A playground and recreational park were developed with the assistance of the local council and community over the last five months (June 2020); this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter of the book.\*
- ( ) \*The slaughterhouse is state-owned and was established around 2009.\*
- ( ) \*The slaughterhouse is state-owned and was established around 2009.\*
- ( ) Shenouda Rizqallah and others, 2013, \*Report on the Southern Quarries of Al-Sirriya Area near the Monastery of the Virgin Mary at Jabal Al-Tayr\*, Unpublished Report.
- ( ) \*The slaughterhouse is state-owned and was established around 2009.