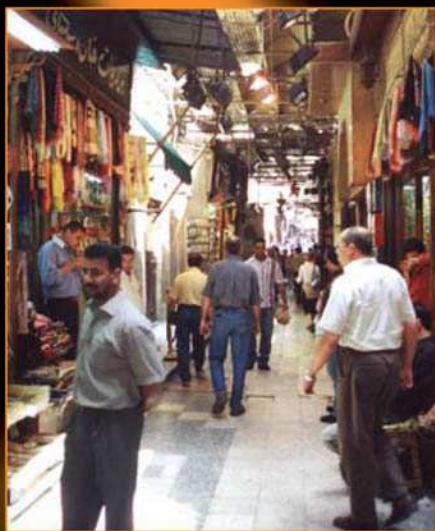# Tourism in the Middle East

Continuity, Change and Transformation

Edited by
Rami Farouk Daher

Tourism in the Middle East

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Preface

For the ancient Greeks, the world was essentially divided into an East and a West. This notion of a world of two halves was largely continued by the Romans, despite their forays into the North of Europe, and remains embedded in 'Western' public consciousness to this moment. The area we commonly refer to as the Middle East (and formerly, within a less expansive world, as the Near East) is thus at the very point of cross-over between these two 'halves' of the world; a wonderfully permeable, fluid, real and imagined expanse of lands, landscapes and peoples. In the European tradition, the Middle East marks the point where Europe stops being Europe and gradually, untidily, and somewhat uneasily, morphs into another place and culture. Here, globalization is not a new phenomenon.

Over the years a great imagining of difference relating to the Middle East has constantly veered from romanticized fascination and engagement, to that of suspicion and fear on both sides of this perceptual divide. Travelers, traders, and pilgrims to, and through, the region have long been an outcome and an expression of the region's strategic position, religious significance, and imagined mystique. Thus, the region is well-versed in providing the essential structures and cultures of hospitality, fed as they are through the religious and cultural values that intrinsically pervade all aspects of everyday life.

But within the modern world it would be wrong to portray the Middle East solely as a focus for the Orientalist explorer or spiritual traveler. Through Thomas Cook's Tours, the region was one of the first in the world to experience organized tourism and over the past 50 years or so substantive parts of the region have been engaged with the essentially modernist project of leisure tourism. A drive along the coastal highway of Lebanon, for instance, reveals a plethora of sites and facilities dedicated to domestic tourism and to an international tourism that flourished during the 1950s and 1960s.

It would be true to say, certainly from a European perspective, that when we think of tourism in the Middle East, we generally conceptualize it as a number of destinations: places where international/Western visitors go. In this process, we have been all too happy to reduce the complexity and richness of histories and cultures to a relatively small number of images and signs. Thus Jordan *is* Petra and the Dead Sea, Syria *is* Palmyra, and Egypt *is* Luxor and the Pyramids at Giza. Of course these are the very centres where international visitors do congregate; such is international tourism. But this view neglects three important dimensions. The first is the diversity of landscapes, sites, and locations, which also attract international tourists and have done for many years, such as the Syrian coastline for instance, and particularly the sea-port of Latakia, which is still a call for Mediterranean cruise ships, stopping for excursions to nearby Qalaat Saladin. The second is the incidence of regionalized or domestic tourism in the Middle East, which remains largely poorly understood. Over recent years, the internal patterns and flows of tourists within the region have increased due to significant levels of Arabs preferring not to venture out to European and American destinations. The third dimension relates to the tremendous changes that are taking place regarding the provision for tourism driven by high levels of external investment, particularly from, and in, the Gulf States. The levels of investment and development in tourism are, of course, tremendously uneven across the Middle East, ranging from the hyper-modern, capital intensive, high-rise hotels of Dubai to the development of small eco-tourism projects in Mount Lebanon.

It is these processes and dynamics of change that have long marked out the Middle East region as one of the most significant and indeed, sensitive regions of the world. But change is always set within the contexts of continuity and tradition to produce dialectics of complex engagement and encounter at a variety of levels. Tourism and travel are acts of transformation at the individual and institutional level. Throughout the Middle East region landscapes and lives are being transformed through the provision of infrastructure to support tourism and leisure, and in the process identities and local/global relations are being challenged and re-defined.

Sadly, in common discourse, discussion of tourism in the Middle East continues to fall between a number of extremes: persistent and pervasive Orientalist conceptions or peoples and places, somewhat disjunctive notions of massive post-modernist spatial transformations, and configurations of the region as a series of 'no-go' areas due to military and political instability. All such narratives are accurate to a degree, but between

these all too familiar focal points there is a much more complex, deeper and richer set of understandings about tourism and tourists. While aware of the meta-narratives relating to tourism, this volume is a fine attempt to get between the extremes and into the intricacies of tourism in the region. Through its insightful and varied chapters the book sets out to uncover and unravel the multifaceted nature of tourism in the Middle East from a variety of perspectives. Understanding tourism in the Middle East, as a form of social encounter and exchange, as well as in a context of spatial and historical transformation, is critical in helping to understand the region not as a boundary between two notional world halves, but as the very place that as binds them together.

Professor Mike Robinson
Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change
Leeds Metropolitan University

Acknowledgements

The Contributors

Peter Burns is a Professor of International Tourism and Development and Director of the Centre for Tourism Policy Studies (CENTOPS; www.centops.org) at the University of Brighton. He is a consultant anthropologist specializing in strategic policy-making for tourism in the developing world and emerging economies. He has extensive international experience in institutional strengthening and working with communities in helping them achieve better access to and participation in tourism enterprise. He is founding Chair of the Association of Leisure and Tourism Studies (ATLAS) special interest group in social identities and a board member of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO) Education Council. He is one of the first tourism scholars to be elected as an academician of the UK national Academy of Social Sciences.

Rami Farouk Daher taught architecture at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) and is currently teaching at the American University of Beruit (AUB), and practices architecture and heritage management through a private consultancy: TURATH, in Amman, Jordan. Daher is interested in research related to politics and dynamics of place and heritage conservation, tourism, and urban regeneration and has conducted research on these issues in places such as Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Daher is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Daher was awarded several research grants from places such as the Social Science Research Council and Fulbright and has published on issues related to heritage, politics of place, tourism, and urban regeneration. Daher has worked as a consultant for several heritage management and urban regeneration projects all over Jordan and abroad.

Xavier Guillot teaches architecture and urban planning at the School of Architecture in St Etienne in France and is a research associate at the

French Institute of Urbanism (University of Paris VIII). Xavier has worked and taught in different places including France, Jordan, Japan, Singapore, and the US. His research interest focuses on the relationship between globalization and the evolution of urban places including issues related to tourism. In parallel to his academic activity, he practices architecture through a private consutancy in the Pyrénées.

David Homa received his BA from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in Education and his MA from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in Anthropology. Homa has done tourism research in Egypt and Japan. He taught Cultural Anthropology in Tokyo, Japan at a branch of Lakeland College, Wisconsin. Homa currently teaches Anthropology and Economics at Los Gatos High School in Los Gatos, California.

Saba Al Mahadin holds a BA in English Literature and Linguistics from the University of Jordan, an MSc in Hospitality Management from Edinburgh University in Scotland and has recently completed a PhD in Tourism Studies from Brighton University in the UK. Her work focuses on the tourism sector as a field of legitimating discourses. Her work and research centers on Jordanian tourism and she has researched tourism in Aqaba and in other places in Jordan. Al Mahadin has also worked as a consultant for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Jordan and for Zara Expo.

Salam Al Mahadin is currently Assistant-Professor of English at Petra University in Jordan. Her research emphasizes critical discourse with a particular focus on Jordan and her previous work includes papers on the semiotics of Jordanian Personal Status law, Jordan in post-colonial theory, in power and polity in tourism, and gender and power in education. She is currently working on a book on the cultural aspects of the production of Jordanian national identity.

Scott MacLeod is a post-graduate student in Ethnology at the University of Edinburgh interested in research related to information technologies, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and the Internet. He holds a BA in the Social Science of Religion (1985) from Reed College, Portland, Oregon, and studied most recently at University of California, Berkeley (2000–1), and at the University of California, Santa Barbara (2001–3) before matriculating at the University of Edinburgh in 2003.

Birgit Mershen is an archaeologist teaching at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. Mershen has also taught archaeology at Yarmouk University in Jordan and has extensively researched the northern parts of Jordan

while living there. Mershen is also an active consultant on projects related to archaeology, tourism, and community development and is well-published on different topics related to archaeology and community involvements in heritage tourism.

Noha Nasser is Post-Doctoral Visiting Fellow at the Birmingham School of Architecture and Landscape, University of Central England. Nasser is an active researcher on issues relating to the architectural heritage of Egypt and the Islamic World and has published extensively on the architecture of Muslim societies in the UK. Nasser is also affiliated with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley where she has conducted research. Currently, she is publishing work on the effect of cultural processes on urban form, and the conservation and regeneration influenced by Islam.

Aylin Orbaşli trained as an architect and has specialized in conservation, tourism, and heritage management and is currently teaching at Oxford Brookes University in the UK. She works as an independent consultant and as an educator and has over ten years international experience of working with and advising on historic buildings and areas. Among numerous other publications, she is the author of the book *Tourists in Historic Towns: Urban Conservation and Heritage Management* (Spon, 2000). She chairs the ICOMOS-UK Education and Training Committee and is a member of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Training.

Abbreviations

AIC   Abdali Investment Company
APSAD   Association for the Protection of Sites and Ancient Dwellings
ASEZA   Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
ATLAS   Association of Tourism and Leisure Studies
AUB   American University of Beruit
BCD   Beirut Central District
CDR   (Lebanese) Council for Development and Reconstruction
CENTOPS Centre for Tourism Policy Studies
CHTUD   Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Urban Development (Project)
CPH   Cham Palaces and Hotels
DGA   Directorate General of Antiquities
EFF   Extended Fund Facility
GAM   Greater Amman Municipality
GCC   Gulf Co-operation Council
GDP   gross domestic product
GSM   Greater Salt Municipality
HTML   hypertext markup language
ICCROM   International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOM   The International Council of Museums
ICOMOS   International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICUN   International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IFPO   French Institute of the Near East
IMF   International Monetary Fund
JUST   Jordan University of Science and Technology
JVA   Jordan Valley Authority
KDC   Kerak Development Cooperation

KM	Kerak Municipality
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
MOTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
MPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Housing
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	non-governmental organization
PMU	Project Management Unit
QIZ	Qualified Industrial Zone
RSCN	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
SAL	Structural Adjustment Lending
SCA	Supreme Council of Antiquities
SCT	Supreme Commission for Tourism
SDC	Salt Development Cooperation
SWR	Südwestrundfunk
TDA	Tourism Development Authority
TDD	Technical Development Department
TOR	Terms of References
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UDP	urban development project
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	US Aid and International Development
WDI	World Development Indicator
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWW	World Wide Web
ZIH	Zara Investment (Holding) Co. Ltd

Chapter 1

Reconceptualizing Tourism in the Middle East: Place, Heritage, Mobility and Competitiveness

RAMI FAROUK DAHER

Introduction

Tourism is becoming an increasingly global and complex phenomenon, with political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and educational dimensions. Robinson (1998: 31) considers tourism to be the 'largest of multi-national activities.' When Lanfant (1995b: 26) explains about the omnipresence of tourism, she added that tourism on a world scale makes itself felt at geographical, ecological, and technological levels – as well as in the less visible and symbolic processes. Sheller and Urry (2004: 3) added that ' "Travel and tourism" is the largest industry in the world, accounting for 11.7 per cent of world GDP, 8 per cent of world export earnings, and 8 per cent of employment.' They emphasized that the mobility produced by tourism affects almost everyone everywhere. 'Internationally there are over 700 million legal passengers' arrivals each year (compared with 25 million in 1950) with a predicted 1 billion by 2010' (Sheller & Urry, 2004: 3). AlSayyad (2001b: 1) considers the twentieth century to have

> been the century of travel and tourism. Indeed, the inhabitants of the world in the last two decades have met more other people than at any time in known history. As travel around the world has risen to unprecedented levels, the number of tourists visiting certain countries and cities in a given year often exceeds the numbers of those places' native populations. Global travel has encouraged the phenomenal growth of the tourism industry.

The Middle East, regardless of how it is defined, has been identified as the geographic arena for this edited volume on tourism. Tourism in the

Middle East, within a global culture and competitive world economy, is faced with many challenges such as the leakage of tourism revenues and benefits into First World multi-national agencies and enterprises. Yet, tourism in the Middle East could also be the driving force for valuable opportunities leading to 'progress' and 'development.' The term 'Middle East,' which is politically charged and is considered a post-colonial construct by many intellectuals, has been chosen on purpose to elicit and evoke discontinuities and transformations within this significant region of the world.

Tourism is a multi-industry sector involving transportation, accommodations, attractions, cultural production, representation, distribution and many other sectors as well. Tourism research engages scholars and researchers from diverse fields such as anthropology, economy, geography, architecture, cultural studies, and tourism, which is evolving into a discourse of its own. Yet tourism-related research had mostly addressed tourism processes at the macro scale creating a vacuum and a need for more research that tackles local processes of transformation and change at the micro scale. Tourism is a vibrant vehicle of change that continues to influence the production and nature of 'cultural capital' manifested in heritage sites, cultural landscapes, folklore, and arts and crafts. Since tourism development takes place in real situations and places and affects real people, issues of place representation, authenticity, interpretation, socio-economic and spatial transformation therefore become significant areas for research and contemplation.

This edited volume on tourism in the Middle East embodies a multi-discursive approach to the study of tourism in the region offering not only different perspectives but also qualifying local knowledge and realities. The book reexamines the discourse of tourism within geopolitical contemporary regional realities. It reexamines tourism as a discourse linked to heritage and identity construction, national and global economies, and development of local communities. Alternatively, a new discursive approach to the understanding of tourism emerges out of invigorating and stimulating latent regional realities and the social histories of various towns, villages, and cultural landscapes within the contested and politically charged region of the Middle East. The book investigates issues of national identity, authenticity, definition of heritage, representation of cultures and regions, and tourism-related investments throughout a new vision for the region that transcends current geopolitics or national and formal historiographies.

Place, Heritage, Tourism, and Geographic Categories

Defining and choosing a geographic area for research and comparative analysis can sometimes be a complex and difficult task due to continuously shifting geographic and geopolitical categories and their associated meanings and perceptions. As critical political geographers have shown, it is important to move beyond the acceptance of geopolitics as a reality of world politics and to examine critically the ways in which geopolitical terms are defined and the significant social meanings they hold (Marston & Rouhani, 2001: 101–2). Nevertheless, the following three geopolitical and geo-cultural categories of '*Bilad al Sham*,'[1] the '*Mashreq*,'[2] or the '*Levant*' (though different in meaning, genealogy, and connotations based on the privileged standpoint and the discursive practices that facilitated the inscription of such categories) refer to generally the same physically geographic region that encompasses the countries of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. While all of these geopolitical and geo-cultural categories are constructed and can be contested and become subject of scrutiny, some have emerged from within the region (such as *Bilad al Sham* or *Al Mashreq al Arabi*) and others have been part of colonial or neo-imperial *imagineering* of the region such as the Middle East or even the *Levant*. The Middle East as a geographical term, and according to Dalby (2003: 8), suggests the historical legacy of imperial specifications of the region. The term comes from 'earlier British designations of the world, which have been maintained on the maps and in the geopolitical imaginations of policy makers.'

In order to understand the genealogy of such geopolitical and geographic categories, one needs to understand and research the moments of transformation and rarity that the region of the Middle East witnessed over the past couple of centuries such as the destruction and replacement of the dynastic religious realm (represented by the Ottoman Empire) with the various post-mandate nation-states of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, and several other nation-states during the first half of the 20th century, and the consequences of such moments and transformations on the definition and practice of nationhood, heritage, and tourism.

When studying the formative influence of colonial encounters in the shaping of national cultures and nation-states, one ought to observe how the various political systems of the newly constructed Middle East, in an attempt to legitimize their new existence (represented in monarchies and republics) consequently constructed several official representations and narrations of national pasts at the expense of regional realities (Kandiyoti,

2002: 282). Such constructed pasts were grounded in a search for distant and ancient origins linked to a disassociation from and varying levels of rejection of the recent past (mainly Ottoman). Due to such ideological, territorial, and cultural transformations, the process of image building and heritage identification and definition became highly contested and problematic especially when it was limited by the physical and political boundaries of the various nation-states and the restrictive and exclusive dogma of nationalism.

The work of Edward Said in general, and *Orientalism* in particular, helps us understand such processes of construction or inscription of a specific *Orient* in the minds of Europeans, local nationals, and the world (Said, 1979). Inscription mechanisms (surveys, documentation, military surveys, travel literature, and others) work to create the 'Other,' the 'Opposite' to Europe, which legitimized and led to, through direct modes of imperialism, control, exploitation, and hegemony. Europe was made to be rational, scientific, virtuous, mature, and 'normal' while the Orient (the opposite) was imagined and made to be irrational, depraved, childlike, non-scientific but exotic and 'different.'

This had considerable ramifications on how the past and tradition were viewed by the community and by institutions of the state, and also on how heritage was defined or marginalized. Furthermore, this also affected how the image of each of the nations in the region was weaved and constructed to fit a particular desired reality through discursive practices such as heritage definition by institutions of the state or academia, education and schooling, archaeology, museums, and tourism. One is intrigued to ask questions such as: How do these inscription mechanisms work to create a certain image for the region? How are the images of each of the nation-states constructed and how is heritage defined accordingly? How does this geopolitical construction and inscription process affect tourism to the region and the choice of sites to be incorporated for tourism purposes and why?

The company Thomas Cook and Son contributed to the development of mass tourism to the *Levant* in the second half of the 19th century. Hunter (2003: 157) stated that

> starting in 1869, Thomas Cook and Son created the tourist trade of Egypt by developing the Nile transit service while simultaneously opening up Syria/Palestine to travelers. The Cook enterprise quickly expanded to other parts of the region. The establishment of tourist offices in Cairo (1872), Jaffa (1874), and Jerusalem (1881) was followed by the opening of Cook agencies in Constantinople (1883), Algiers (1887), Tunis (1901), and Khartum (1901).

Primarily, ancient ruins (e.g. Egypt's ancient Phaeronic sites) and biblical sites of Palestine or Syria were the highlights of such tourism. A typical journey from Europe covered Egypt's ancient monuments, the Nile, the holy sites in Palestine and prime locations in major cities such as Beirut, Jerusalem, and Damascus. Sites such as Temple of Jupiter in Ba'albeck, Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the ruins of Palmyra, and the rose-cut city of Petra were popular sites amongst tourists.

The definition of the region's heritage and the sites that were incorporated into tourism brochures or posters were confined to the classical, religious, and ancient monuments during mandate and early statehood period in the first half of the 20th century. Meanwhile, and according to Maffi (2002: 210–11), Daher (2002), and Schriwer (2002), the heritage of the recent past (manifested by its rural, urban traditions) was marginalized by official state discourses that attempted to disassociate from the recent Ottoman past and local realities and instead to construct legitimacy for the different, newly emerging state systems (Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon) by constructing inks with distant origins (e.g. Phaeronic in Egypt, Nabatean in Jordan, Phoenician in Lebanon). Philipp (1992: ix) had stated that each of the newly emerging nation-states of the Middle East were 'looking too frequently for a definite past for each of the new states within its own limited territory. For the sake of consistency and the desire to find causal connections we are inclined to search for local patterns in the past which will explain the local state of the present.' In the Middle East, the European 'discovery' of the Orient through tourism to the ancient and Biblical '*Levant*' in the 19th century also contributed to the definition of a specific and imagined '*Levant*' and worked to define heritage in the region in a manner that excluded the recent past and regional realties of this region that we now call the Middle East.

According to Said (1979: 2–3), *Orientalism*

> is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.' Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on.

Orientalism for Said was a 'corporate institution' for dealing with the Orient and making statements about it, describing it, and ruling over it

(Said, 1979: 3). The following quotation by Said illustrates how *Orientalism* is a whole discourse that worked to distribute a whole geographical awareness about the Orient into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, socio-logical, historical and philosophical texts and into a whole series of interests about the region. It is only by examining *Orientalism* as a discourse that one can understand the complexity of this 'systematic disci-pline' by which Europe was able to manage and even 'produce' the Orient in the 19th and 20th centuries.

> Therefore, *Orientalism* is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world. It is rather a distribution of geographical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, socio-logical, historical, and philosophical texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of 'interests' which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world. (Said, 1979: 12)

This exercise of power over the Orient could not have been made possible without the production of knowledge about the Orient. According to Foucault (1980), no power is exercised without the extraction, appropria-tion, distribution, or retention of knowledge. The network and web of power/knowledge are evident in many of his writings (Foucault, 1980). A classical example that might illustrate the relationships between the production of knowledge and the exercise of power is to consider the production of diverse knowledge by the European travelers, scientists, and geographers of the 18th and 19th centuries to North Africa (the *Maghreb*) and the ancient *Levant* (the *Mashreq*) in the form of maps, narra-tives, investigative reports, art, demographic studies, archaeology, social narratives and studies, military surveys, photography, postcards, and other forms of productions. That knowledge, which was produced in the light of discovery and subordination of the Orient, was used to manipu-late and exploit such regions and to rationalize domination and coloniza-tion. Colonization was rationalized on the basis of the European man transforming the citizens of these territories into modern and rationale

individuals. One of Thomas Cook's newsletters from the 19th century, the *Traveller's Gazette* of November 1928, features an article entitled 'France in Algeria: The Romance of Algeria' that developed the colonial theme of an ancient Roman land in Algiers rescued from barbarism and transformed into a 'happy country by the French' (Hunter, 2003: 164).

Said (1979), who adopts Foucault's concept of discourse to explicate and understand *Orientalism* also adheres to this notion of power/knowledge in the production of the Orient by the discourse of *Orientalism*. Said had elaborated that

> to believe that the Orient was created – or, as I call it, 'Orientalized' – and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. . . . The Orient was Oreintalized not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered common place by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it could be – that is, submitted to being – made Oriental. (Said, 1979: 5)

Tourists coming to the constructed *Levant* in the 19th century imagined themselves coming to a cultural landscape that had not changed since antiquity, or since ancient Biblical and Byzantine times. Tourism posters and advertisement in general emphasized the antiquities of the region, and furthermore, romanticized a non-changed village life in Palestine and Syria. Fuchs (1998) elaborates on what he terms the 'timeless paradigm' of Orientalists who systemized an Orient that had remained unchanged for millennia, thus marginalizing centuries of change and transformation, especially during the recent periods before the 'European discovery' of the Orient. In his studies of the Palestinian Arab House of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Fuchs (1998: 157–6) elaborated that

> one problematic aspect of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century descriptive literature is its predominantly biblical-archaeological inspiration: many authors regarded the landscapes of Palestine as illustrations of the Scriptures, and their texts are frustratingly burdened with biblical quotations. Behind this attitude, lay the assumption, often taken for granted, that traditional life in Palestine had remained unchanged for millennia.

As a consequence, the urban and rural realities were either marginalized or not even included in this *imagineered* discourse of the *Levant* and the region.

This notion of geopolitical *imagineering* of regions and creation of geographic categories is not restricted to the past or to the imperial colonial

legacy. More recently, this region, and precisely the geographic region of the Southern Mediterranean encompassing countries such as Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Tunis, and Algiers, has been inscribed and incorporated through a new European discourse as part of the Euro-Mediterranean space. To understand this neo-liberal geopolitical *imagineering*, it is crucial to analyze *Euromed* partnership[3] and collaboration in areas related to the cultural heritage and to heritage tourism[4] and its efforts in construction and production of a new understanding of the region: the new Mediterranean. By *imagineering*, the author intends a new term he coined for the process that combines an engineered imagining of geographical space made possible through a discursive practice that uses heritage, trade, collaborative research projects, information technology (IT), and tourism as its tools to inscribe this new geographic category.

The author argues that most *Euromed* initiatives depend on a digital representation of space, heritage, and tourism with minimal physical effects on the ground but, yet, with such serious socio-political and ideological consequences. One of the major socio-economic and political consequences of this geopolitical *imagineering* is the recruiting of the Muslim part of the Mediterranean (Southern and Eastern Mediterranean represented by Middle East and North Africa) as an extension to Europe within a geopolitical framework of pan regions. *Euromed* collaboration is benefiting from the latest developments in IT[5] and particularly in multimedia systems to authenticate this new engineered/imagined region. This new geopolitical *imagineering* of the Mediterranean has several socio-economic and cultural consequences on this part of the Middle East in terms of how heritage is defined and how it is articulated and incorporated into tourism.

If the discourse on *Orientalism* (researched by Said) was meant to create the *Other*, as a demarcation of East and West, the recently evolving discourse on *Euromed* heritage is one of integration rather than demarcation within a power network of pan regions. To elaborate, while both discourses deploy mechanisms of *inscription* for purposes of control and socio-economic and cultural hegemony, the nature of the *inscription* and *imagineering* in each case is different. In the discourse on *Orientalism*, inscription mechanisms (surveys, documentation, military surveys, travel literature, and others) work to create the 'Other,' the 'Opposite' to Europe, which legitimized and led to, through direct modes of imperialism, control, exploitation, and hegemony. In the discourse on *Euromed Heritage*, *inscription* of the new 'Mediterranean' acts to create an integrated *pan region* (an extension to Europe) that is still inferior, but nevertheless, is influenced and dependent on superior European advancement in high

technology, IT and multimedia. Ultimately this discourse legitimizes and leads to an indirect form of imperialism. The various inscription processes act as a grid for filtering ideas and practices that ultimately establish the positional superiority of the European countries over Southern Mediterranean ones.

Many years later after colonization was over in the Middle East around the middle of the 20th century, and nation-states emerged in a grand attempt to forge national identities and images for each of these states, it is ironic that the same Orientalists and colonial discourses perpetuate. One only has to look at any tourism brochure or poster, or watch any promotional video that defines and promotes each of the countries within the Middle East to find out that practices of governments in the region through their ministries of tourism work to define the region mainly through its classical traditions marginalizing local regional realities of the recent past in particular. One example comes from Jordan Tourism Board brochures where sites such as Petra and Jerash are still the highlights of any tourism trip coming to Jordan; only recently very little attention is directed to promoting Jordan's more recent heritage realities such as agricultural villages in the north, the vernacular, and urban and social heritage of various Jordanian towns such as Salt or Amman. Publications of the Jordan Tourism Board such as the *Map of Jordan* (Jordan Tourism Board, 1998) or the *Visitors' Guide: Welcome to Jordan* (Jordan Tourism Board, 2000) (see Figure 1.1) highlight primarily Jordan's antiquities sites (such as Petra, Jerash, Byzantine Churches of Madaba, and the Umayyad Desert Castles) and Jordan's significant nature attractions (such as Wadi Rum and Dana nature reserves, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Dead Sea).

Gregory (2001: 112) explores some of the ways in which the fatal attractions of colonial nostalgia are inscribed within contemporary cultures of travel and heritage definition in Egypt. He believes that what makes the histories of colonialism nostalgic is the 'seductiveness of colonial power.'

> Those seductions continue to exercise an extraordinary power at the start of the twenty-first century, which is why I prefer to speak not of the condition of 'postcolonialism' but instead of 'the colonial present', and why I wish to explore some of the ways in which the fatal attractions of colonial nostalgia are inscribed within contemporary cultures of travel. (Gregory, 2001: 112–13)

To illustrate his point of view, Gregory uses two late 20th-century exhibits: one is based on a 1994 guidebook to Egypt by Gallimard, which
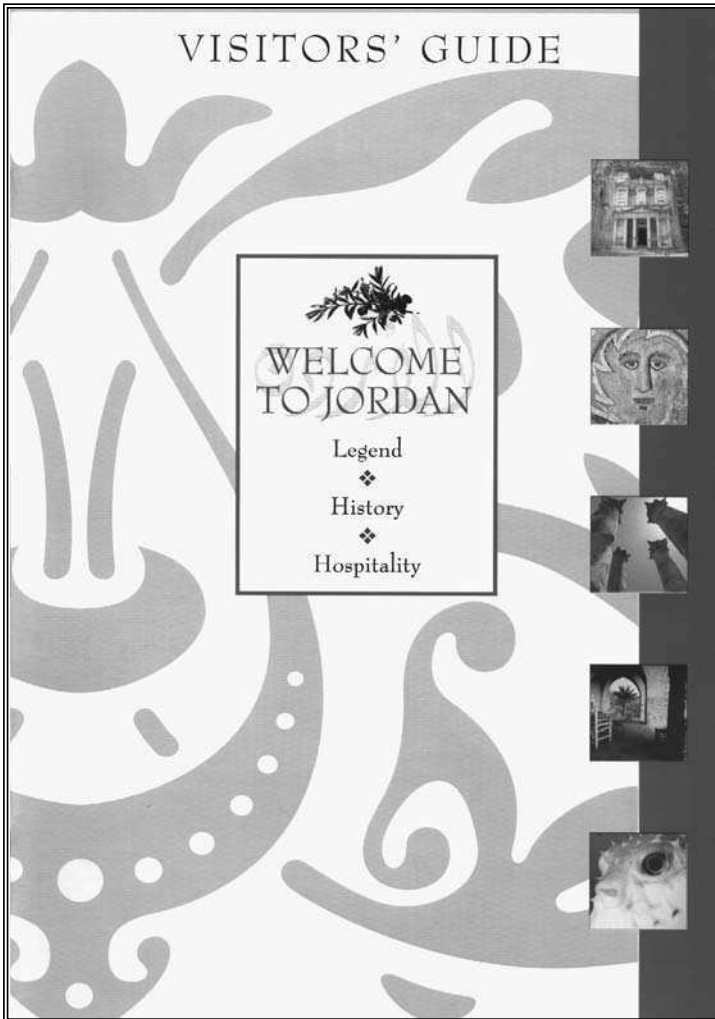
Figure 1.1 The cover of a 'visitors' guide' brochure for Jordan produced by the Jordan Tourism Board. Jordan is defined primarily through its ancient and classical heritage such as Petra and Jerash or through nature sites such as the Dead Sea and the Desert. Other realities of Jordan's heritage such as the rural and urban sites from the recent past are not incorporated in the formal definition of what Jordan is.

Source: Jordan Tourism Board, 2000. www.see-jordan.com

Figure 1.2 Thomas Cook's offices in Heliopolis near Cairo, Egypt.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, May 2005.

similar to several 'comparable texts, it exquisitely aestheticizes and commodifies a particular visual economy of travel.' The book opens with a view of 'Boats on the Nile' with 'Tourists returning from Karnak'. The second exhibit 'is a tourist brochure produced for Thomas Cook's 1997–98 season on the Nile. In the gracious days of Edwardian cruising, prospective clients are reminded' of Thomas Cook's palatial and luxuriously finished paddle-steamers, which dominated the Nile in the 19th century and represented the era's best in comfort and technology (Gregory, 2001: 113). Figure 1.2 shows Thomas Cook's offices in Heliopolis near Cairo. AlSayyad elaborates that

> Gregory's project is to ask how these images of colonial nostalgia were constructed and, more importantly, what colonial histories are hidden from the views they presented. Eschewing the term 'post-coloniality', Gregory prefers to explore what he calls the 'colonial-present', and to ask why and how, at the end of the 20th century, people may still be seduced by such stories of colonial power. (AlSayyad, 2001b: 20).

Constructed Heritage Places and Emerging Tourist Sites: Marginalization and Qualification Processes

When studying the formative influence of colonial encounters in the shaping of national cultures and nation-states (Anderson, 1983; Kandiyoti, 2002; Maffi, 2000), one ought to observe how the various political systems of the region of the Middle East, in an attempt to legitimize their new existence (represented in monarchies and republics) consequently constructed several official representations and narrations of national pasts at the expense of regional realities. Such constructed pasts were grounded in a search for distant and ancient origins linked to a disassociation from and varying levels of rejection of the recent past (mainly Ottoman). The multi-layered process through which nations, heritage and images are defined, produced, and constructed takes place and emerges with the circulation of official/dominant, popular (local), academic/elitist, and geopolitical discursive practices. Mechanisms for such a construction included several discursive practices, different institutions of the state such as ministries of education, culture, and tourism, and ranged from school curricula to stamps, museums/heritage definition, and tourism attraction and other areas of representation. This process of construction resulted in manufactured images formulated by how each of these states conceptualized itself.

In general, and throughout several places in the Middle East, such rejections of and disassociations from the recent past had roots in pre- and post-mandate and colonial periods when *modernity* was introduced as ever-changing and progressive, and it was contrasted with *tradition*, which was presented as static, non-changing, anti-progress, non-scientific, and non-individualistic (Horner, 1990). The separation between the recent past and present led eventually to a dilution of people's awareness and knowledge of the past, its various moments of transformation and change and the role it played in their everyday life. Out of this separation, the past and heritage become molded into constructed and esoteric periods of 'then' and 'now.'

This dichotomy between past and present occurred in different parts of the world as well. Graburn (1998) shows how history and heritage (the past) could be molded into constructed periods of 'then' (distant) and 'now' (recent) in museums and collection interpretations, thus denying another interpretation of the past that could have addressed significant moments of discontinuities and transformations in the Inuit's history (Inuits of the Central and Eastern Canadian Arctic). He elaborates on the emergence of a 'generalized' and 'total' Inuit history, which is imagined,

reproduced, and constructed in most other museums of the Central and Eastern Canadian Arctic.

The various political systems (nation-states) of the current Middle East, constructed official representations and narrations of national pasts and forged 'constructed' national identities at the expense of regional realities. In the process, the recent past and heritage of the region was led into a state of paralysis. Many historic studies on the Ottoman period in the Arab world uncritically lumped it into one long period and labeled it as four centuries of alien domination, neglect, and deterioration. According to Rogan (1994: 32), several national narratives attempted to incorporate the conviction that the Ottoman period was insignificant to the region and that it amounted to 'four centuries of neglect.'

The official rhetoric of post-mandate nation-states, and in their desperate search for foundation, legitimacy, and origins, attempted consciously to create links with the distant, antiquarian, ancient past. Several newly erected 'national' and foreign archaeological institutions facilitated the search for such distant origins. Archaeological museums flourished in the newly constructed ancient *Levant*, the official discourse highlighted the interconnections with such distant 'constructed' points of origins that were conceived to have operated in the past within an approximate territorial boundary similar to that of the contemporary national-state. Maffi (2000) highlights one example that explicates the Jordanian/Hashemite fascination with ancient Nabbattean civilizations that operated in a geographic territory similar to today's modern Jordan.

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983: 1–2) believe that 'traditions' that appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented:

> 'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable past.

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983: 14) also believe that

> we should not be misled by a curious, but understandable, paradox: modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities to 'natural' as to require no definition other than self-assertion.

They also believe that 'the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983: 14).

Reilly (1999: 62) criticizes those who speak of a decisive break between the past and the present in his study of *Bilad al Sham* during contemporary and Ottoman periods. Instead he believes that his study shows that 'elements of contemporary reality were present in the past.' Reilly feels that we are witnessing a critical paradigm shift in Arab historiography. In general, critical historians are turning away from political history to social and economic history. The history of the Syrian lands does not 'consist of a series of famous personalities, they write but of "the people" who produced nourishment and daily necessities for the inhabitants' (Reilly, 1999: 46). This paradigm shift in Arab historiography emerged through socio-economic and ideological change and is part of a larger transformation shared not only by some historians but also by a group of philosophers, critical thinkers, and social scientists in general. This is gradually affecting how critically heritage is being redefined and how new sites are incorporated into the realm of tourism within the region.

One particular outcome is the qualification and granting voice to certain regional realities that were not incorporated into the 'national definition' of heritage or in the promotion agendas of ministries of tourism such as the vernacular villages that transcend national boundaries in places such as the villages in the Hauran between Syria and Jordan or, for example, tracing the heritage of domestic architecture and its evolution throughout the Eastern Mediterranean region. Or they might include 'sites' that had predominantly stayed outside the realm of popular sites promoted by the state for purposes of tourism such as social history of cities (as oppose to official state history), urban heritage of the recent past such as historic city cores in Salt, Jordan, in Muharraq, Bahrain, or in Tirpoli in Lebanon; or the newly emerging sites of heritage, art, and culture that are patronned by rich families evoking different forms of authority and patronage and tackling the social issues and the history of the everyday such as the Soup Museum in Saida, Lebanon or *Darat al Funun* (houses of the arts) in Amman, Jordan. Furthermore, such sites also include heritage corridors, travel and pilgrimage routes such as the Hijaz Railroad Line, which crosses Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia with its various train stations that date to the turn of the 20th century but also with its Hajj forts dating to the beginning of the Ottoman period in the region.

It is very interesting that even though there have been many studies on culture, heritage, and tourism addressing these interrelated independent political units or nation-states (sometimes termed quasi-states) that

once enjoyed the sovereignty of a common region in many places of the world (e.g. East and West Germany, North and South Korea, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and others) (Butler & Mao, 1995), there has been little scholarly work on the region of the Middle East or the Arab world and its various newly erected nation-states regarding similar issues and concerns. Despite the fact that, currently, each of these nation-states constitutes a separate political entity, there had been always, and continuously, during the 20th century and before considerable travel between them. This creates significant methodological and ideological challenges for research on heritage and on tourism regarding the inherent differences, conflicts, and unresolved issues concerning the definition of *the heritage in between* historically and culturally defined vs. politically and functionally defined regions/nations.

The Heritage Industry and the *Kan Zaman* Genre in Middle East Cultural Tourism

One significant cultural change that affected the definition of heritage and the celebration of different types of sites was the shift from modernity to post-modernism where, according to Urry (1990: 82), boundaries between high and low cultures, and also between different cultural forms such as tourism, art, education, shopping, and architecture were dissolved. While modernity, as a mode of cultural ideology, differentiated between high and low art, post-modernism practiced a 'democratic' de-differentiation and the same way it celebrated high-class architecture by other modes of cultural production, it also celebrated the ordinary, the popular, and the folk of everyday. So the same way that tourists can visit and appreciate the splendor of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, they could celebrate the local cultural experience provided by the city's ordinary historic houses. And visitors to Cairo can enjoy the Pyramids but also the house where the late notorious singer Abulhalim Hafiz used to reside.

According to Urry (1990: 85), this process of de-differentiation caused signification to become increasingly more figural or visual during which tourists are gradually dealing more with the iconographic reality of places. Also, this process of de-differentiation is leading to a democratization of heritage sites, where the 'ordinary' is now celebrated and becomes subject of the tourist gaze. A visit to Damascus is not complete today without a visit to the *Naufara*, a traditional coffee shop where one enjoys drinking tea or coffee in historic Old Damascus while listening to

the *Hakawati* (narrator of historic biographies or storyteller) in the same way that a tourist visiting Istanbul will make sure to visit Ayub Çami (Mosque) to watch the celebrations after male circumcision. Urry (1990: 101) adds that the gaze is socially constructed and 'that both production and consumption are socially organized, and that the gaze must be directed to certain objects or features which are extraordinary, which distinguish that site/sight of the gaze from others.'

   More recently, and within the past 20 years or so, it has been interesting to note the emergence of several global trends within the different countries of the world. One very important trend is the appeal of heritage tourism to many governments in developing countries, where heritage is becoming an industry, in attempts to achieve successful economic restructuring signaling a shift to the service sector in a late capitalist era with consequences on heritage/tourism relationships and privatization dynamics (Chang *et al.*, 1996). Robinson (2001: 40) elaborates how 'for developing economies whose natural resource base is depleted, tourism would appear to provide a rather rapid way of generating hard currency and creating employment. Indeed, utilizing the cultural and ethnic resources of a nation or region for tourism may be the only way out.'

> In the presence of such trends, and amidst of the monotony of global high capitalism, at a time when standardized products and services are increasingly marketed world wide, there is an increasing demand for built environments that promise unique cultural experiences. Many nations, meanwhile, are resorting to heritage preservation, the invention of tradition, and the rewriting of history as forms of self-definition. Indeed, the events of the last decade have created a dramatically altered global order that requires a new understanding of the role of tradition and heritage of social space and the shaping of city form. (AlSayyad, 2001b: 4)

This is not a new phenomenon, it had occurred in developed countries as well. Tourism developments continue to play a major role for developed countries in their attempts to restructure and readjust from a manufacturing to a service-sector base (Robinson, 2001: 40). This is evident in many ex-industrial and manufacturing small- and medium-size cities shifting their economy to tourism industry and the service sector.

   Kan Zaman in Jordan from the late 1980s is actually one of the very early examples of the heritage industry in the Middle East that used heritage and tradition coupled with entertainment to promote a new heritage tourism product in the region. It represents the adaptation of a *Khirbet* (estate or farm) from the 1850s in the Yadoudeh area outside of Amman that

belonged to one landowning family (the Abu Jabers) into traditional restaurant and coffee shop.[6] The old stables, where the traditional restaurant is located, and landowners estate has become a popular tourist attraction for locals and foreign tourists alike where in addition to eating and drinking, they can enjoy niche shopping at the different local crafts and souvenir shops within the same premises. The project, financed in 1989 by Jordan Tourism Investment, became a model for similar adaptations all over the country and elsewhere in the Middle East to the extent that similar places adopted the same name such as Salt Zaman and Madaba Zaman in Jordan where *Zaman* could be loosely translated into English as 'bygone days' and *Kan* is the past verb for being, so *Kan Zaman* could mean 'happened in bygone days.'

One example of invented tradition comes to us from Southern Egypt's village of New Gourna near the ancient site of Luxor. New Gourna was planned by the famous Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy in the 1950s as the new home for residents of the settlement the Egyptian government wanted to evict from their houses among the archaeological sites of the ancient Theban necropolis in Luxor. 'Fathy designed the village using elaborate mud-brick structures that he imagined represented indigenous tradition' (AlSayyad, 2001b: 21). In his search for the ideal vernacular, Fathy turned to the geometries and proportions of Islamic styles that had flourished in Cairo several centuries earlier and these resulted in the use of unfamiliar forms in the use of domes and vaults for example. Kamel (2000) had added that Fathy used the Nubian indigenous architecture as precedent because he was seeking solutions for the crises in architecture and urban environment of the time. The solution was found by re-rooting one's self in tradition and the vernacular. According to AlSayyad (2001b: 14) and 40 years later, his architecture became an invented tradition by becoming the adopted architecture for tourism development, hotels, and resorts, in different places on the Red Sea in Eastern Egypt such as in Al Gourna, Qusair, and Hurghda.

Kamel (2000: 147) added that the famous American architect Michael Graves was commissioned for the design of hotels in Al Gourna on the Red Sea that were inspired by Fathy's designs resulting in a collage of styles and meanings where a combination of the Fathy's Nubian vernacular and 'Pharaonic Monumentalism' served as precedents for his hotel resorts and other tourism developments. In another location on the Red Sea, similar transformations and tourism developments, which were derived from the architectural aesthetics of Hassan Fathy, are taking place. Kamel (2000: 152) also elaborates that in 1989, Orascom, an Egyptian construction corporation established a sister company, Orascom

Projects and Tourist Developments to develop 500 hectares of purchased land 22 kilometers north of Hurghda, the fast developing tourist town at the Red Sea. The aim was to capitalize on the climate, clear waters, and coral reefs of the Red Sea to create a large-scale resort project. The new village and resorts had to display a uniquely exotic attraction not only in services, but also in their image and experience.

   Similar 'inventions of tradition' are taking place in other tourist locations in the Middle East. In Jordan, for example, and on the shores of the Dead Sea, Movenpick, the famous hotel chain operators appropriated the Jordanian vernacular, or even the traditional architecture of villages in the region of Bilad al Sham juxtaposed with a flavor of the local mud sandy architecture of the Dead Sea as precedent to create its notorious luxurious hotel and spa on the Eastern shores of the Dead Sea with a twist of tradition (see Figure 1.3). The new hotel complex is divided into

Figure 1.3 Movenpick Hotel and Resort on the Eastern Dead Sea Shore in Jordan. The historic precedents for the architecture fall between Jordan traditional vernacular architecture in the north with its courtyards and village spaces and the local mud architecture for which the Dead Sea area is famous.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 2002.

courtyards (similar to village spaces) and narrow alleys with water drinking fountains before opening up to the sea view. The color and material give the impression of the local mud architecture that the region is famous for. This 'manufactured heritage' became the object of the gaze for a lot of tourists who simply prefer to remain within the premises of the luxurious hotel and rarely venture outside. It also became a preferred topic for photographs where it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between this appropriation of heritage and the real thing; the real thing could have never existed in this form or juxtaposition.

The different examples presented before exemplify how tradition can be subjected to consumption by governments or individuals to create a certain national identity or a different identity and sense of pride. The examples show also how on several occasions, heritage can be subjected to varying degrees of manufacturing where it becomes a mean for capital accumulation by individuals and investors. AlSayyad believes that

> although the two activities, consuming tradition, and manufacturing heritage, are thus produced by different agents, one cannot separate them from each other. In this global era, the consumption of tradition as a form of cultural demand and the manufacture of heritage as a field of commercial supply are two sides of the same coin. And many countries are now actively inventing or re-creating their own heritage, and using tourist revenues to do so. Their design agenda thus has two components: one politically self-serving; the other economically sustaining. (AlSayyad, 2001b: 15)

Yet, the heritage industry can take different forms and engage various types of initiators and actors that also play a role in broadening the definition of heritage and work to qualify and grant voice to subjugated realities and histories. One particular significant actor in the region are elite and notable families who are turning to heritage, culture, and the intelligentsia for their philanthropist endeavors and projects in different places such as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Palestine, and Egypt. One prominent example comes from Saida, Lebanon. Endowed by the Audi family in Saida, the Audi Foundation transformed the old family residence (which also functioned before as a soap factory) into the headquarters of the Foundation and into a thematic museum of handmade soap (Daher, 2004). This thematic museum asserts to relate the history of soap to the region at large stretching between Trablus (Lebanon), Haleb (Syira), Nablus (Palestine), and Salt (Jordan) and to show the various stages of its manufacturing and the diversity of its shapes. Furthermore, the family's involvement in the city included the renovation of the façades of the

neighboring historic El Chakrieh street and the rehabilitation of various traditional housing units in the same historic neighborhood.[7] In fact, one of its very interesting features is its emphasis on the events of everyday life and histories of the local ordinary citizens. Places such as the Soap Museum in Saida are gradually becoming significant tourist attractions offering the tourist a different angle on local history and culture. Of course, the Soap Museum marks one of the early examples of such projects; several started to appear in Lebanon such as the Bsous Museum, which narrates and displays the heritage of the silk industry in the country (Dahdah, 2004).

First World–Third World Relationships and the Politics of Tourism Development

A recent World Tourism Organization (WTO) report credited domestic and international tourism in 1995 with the creation of 200 million jobs worldwide and an 11.4% contribution to the world's gross domestic product (GDP) (Cheong & Miller, 2000: 372). Yet, tourism is a First World industry presenting uneven and unequal development between First World and Third World economies. People from the First World make up the significant bulk of international tourists and it is they who have the resources to make relatively expensive journeys for pleasure or in seeking cultural difference. In addition, processes of uneven development are reflected through the growing elite and newly wealthy classes in some Third World countries that are now able to participate in tourism. According to Titley (2000), and based on statistics from the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourist industry is providing one in nine jobs and 80% of travelers come from just 20 countries. 'In other words, in a changing global economy, tourism is a matter of economic imperative for the Majority World and privileged mobility for the Minority' (Titley, 2000: 79).

With the growth of the service sector within a global economy, many developed countries see in tourism the answer in a shift to a service-sector base. With an increasingly competitive global market, many developing countries also view tourism as the vehicle for economic development and growth. The following quotation by Robinson (2001: 45) sketches the realities of uneven development in tourism between the First and the Third Worlds:

> Various researchers have positioned the phenomenon of international tourism as a manifestation of neocolonialism and imperialism. Similarly, in a neo-Marxist vein it is possible to conceive of

the 'pleasure-periphery' idea of tourism as representing the funda-
mental structural dependency of the developing nations upon the
developed nations. The ideas of neocolonialism and global imbalance
are borne out not only in terms of the direction of tourist flows from
First to Third World, but also by the fact that the necessary enabling
elements for world tourism – the means of production, the ideology
of consumption, capital, credit, and information – are chiefly located
in, and controlled by, the developed nation. (Robinson, 2001: 45)

Whether or not such a competitive global market is part of a deliberate
policy objective of global capital and First World countries is yet to be
seen. But, nevertheless, it is forcing many developing countries into
lowering socio-economic conditions (e.g. labor wages, environmental
standards) in pursuit of 'competitiveness' and First World corporate
tourism investments. One predominant characteristic of tourism policies
in some Middle Eastern countries is the gap between proposed policies
and strategies on one side, and realities and implementation on the
ground on the other. This poses a challenge and a threat to the success
of the tourism industry in the Middle East. While most governments
adopt a *modernist* developmental paradigm that centers on economic
growth and an apparent bias towards the formal tourism sector, the
informal tourism sector is generally excluded from national policies
regardless of the high initial capital cost and leakage to outside economies
characteristic of the formal sector. For example, several national tourism
policies in different parts of the Middle East support the establishment of
key international hotel chains and attempt to attract large tourism invest-
ments while small- and medium-size tourism endeavors such as hotel
businesses in the form of 'bed and breakfast' or local family tourist busi-
nesses in both urban and rural areas are not encouraged or supported, or
even included in national visions for tourism development in general.

At the national scale of Jordan, the new millennium triggered the
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) to start thinking seriously
about its tourism strategies. The rhetoric and objectives of the strategy are
reassuring. The Mission Statement for 1999–2000 is 'Sustainable Tourism
Development towards Economic Prosperity.' Tourism objectives include
developing an advanced tourism industry utilizing its competitive advan-
tages, developing archaeological and tourism sites and resources to
enhance the tourism product, expanding the role of the private sector,
and upgrading the quality of tourism services to the highest international
standards (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 1999). In reality, when
it comes to implementation, very few of these objectives are actually

achieved. In addition, implementation strategies do not even come close to fulfilling such objectives. Tourism developments continue to be driven by multi-national capital and large investments, tourism policies and strategies continue to be manipulated by foreign aid endeavors that are conditioned with privatization and induce high leakages of the tourism revenues to outside the country. National tourism strategies seldom accommodate small- and medium-size tourism developments and investments that can be more likely linked to genuine community development.

In the developing world, and with increasing economic problems and mass unemployment, tourism is gradually becoming an attractive sector to invest in because, first, it does not demand huge investments, second, nor does it demand high technology that is not available for most of such countries. AlSayyad (2001b: 3) stated that in the Third World, and due to economic problems and pressures coupled with mass unemployment, 'tourism is an attractive sector to invest in as it does not demand huge investments nor high technology.' Furthermore, many governments of the world turn to tourism as it is often 'presented as the last chance' (Lanfant, 1995a: 3). Tourism plays a significant role in the budgets of different Middle Eastern countries. Table 1.1 illustrates selected Middle Eastern countries' economic dependence on tourism. Syria is seriously starting to provide an 'appropriate environment for tourism investment.'[8] In several occasions, the Syrian Minister of Tourism had declared recently that Syria is very serious about attracting inward investments. Syria invited tenders for more than 100 tourism sites during the Tourism Investment Market, which was held in Damascus in April, 2005.

In 1996, the tourism sector provided more than 770 million Jordanian Dinars in revenues amounting to more than 12% of the GDP of the country to the extent that it had been defined as Jordan's number one foreign exchange earner (Daher, 2000a: 22). Lebanon's whole economy was always dependent on tourism, especially inward Arab tourism from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. In fact, after September 11, the circulation of Saudi and Gulf capital investment, after it was no longer welcomed in the US and Europe, found its way to the Lebanese tourism market in the form of several international chain hotels such as the Movenpick of Beirut, but also the Rotana Group of hotels, which is funded by United Arab Emirates (UAE) emirs and sheikhs.

Robinson (2001: 48) states that enclave tourism resorts 'being separate from the ordinariness of the surrounding environment also allows tourist enclaves to develop, ostensibly removing tourists from contact with the host community.' Furthermore, Oppermann (1993: 540) stated that the 'spatial concentration of international tourism in developing countries,

Table 1.1 Selected Middle Eastern countries' economic dependence on tourism

Country	Tourism Industry Share of Country GDP		Tourism Industry Jobs Share of All Employment		Tourism Visitor Exports Share of All Exports	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Bahrain	2.5%	6	4%	5	1.7%	10
Egypt	7.0%	1	3%	6	54.0%	1
Israel	2.9%	5	3%	7	1.2%	12
Jordan	6.9%	2	7%	1	6.5%	7
Kuwait	1.9%	9	2%	9	2.2%	9
Lebanon	3.4%	4	7%	2	33.9%	2
Oman	2.2%	7	3%	8	19.5%	4
Qatar	3.7%	3	4%	4	24.5%	3
Saudi Arabia	1.6%	10	2%	10	17.7%	5
Syria	2.1%	8	5%	3	7.3%	6
UAE	1.1%	12	1%	12	1.4%	11
Yemen	1.1%	11	2%	11	2.9%	8
MENA*	2.5%		3%		6.5%	

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2004: 21)

Note: * MENA stands for Middle East and North Africa.

combined with the typical standardization of the tourism product in mass tourism' usually result in the establishment of 'enclave' resorts. According to Sharpley (2000: 10) tourism investments are regularly influenced by power relations that are concentrated within enclave resorts or 'tourist ghettos', thereby 'contributing to socioeconomic inequalities through a developmental process which is, ironically, often promoted by the central governments of the countries in which the resorts are located.'

In spite of its high initial capital costs and high leakage to the outside, the formal sector, within tourism developments, is usually favored by most tourism agencies that promote tourism developments in the Third World. It is a well-known fact amongst tourism experts that the informal sector, manifested in local small- and medium-size endeavors, is capable

of higher integration into the local economic structure; it is 'capable of producing a high multiplier effect on the local economy than the formal tourism sector' (Oppermann, 1993: 544). The informal tourism sector is symbolized by its 'open structure' instead of the 'enclave structure' of the formal tourism sector (Oppermann, 1993: 544). In addition, over-dependence on the formal sector within tourism developments leads to a high foreign participation and dependency, for example, through international hotel chains:

> Within developing countries, participation is restricted to the upper class, which has the required funds and insights into the needs and wants of international mass tourists. The upper circuit operation entails high leakage in the form of profit transfers, repatriation of funds from foreigners in managed positions, large imports of food, and other general items. This does not even include all the imports of furniture and decors when international standards hotels are built. (Oppermann, 1993: 534)

Sharm al Sheikh is a new emerging resort city on the Red Sea in Egypt. Large influxes of tourists from different parts of the world dictated the creation of an international airport that receives tourists who directly fly to Sharm (as it is called) from various destinations from Europe and else-where in the world. Each one of the resorts and international chain hotels had created its own enclave; tourists rarely venture outside the domains of the resort, and if they do, they remain within a shared space locally called 'Hotels Promenade,' a promenade street between the hotels and the beach which restaurants, clubs, and cafes of the different chain resorts open onto. Though it is interesting to walk along this street promenade, especially at night, in reality, you are not in the city but within the enclave domain and space of the international chain hotels and resorts.[9] Several similar tourism development endeavors in the Middle East, such as in Aqaba, Jordan for example, are starting to consider Sharm al Sheikh as the ultimate example for tourism development to be adopted in the region with maximum leakage of tourism revenues to the outside.

In Jordan, the Eastern Dead Sea Shore Development Project (between Sweimeh and Zara) is located on the Eastern shore of the Dead Sea starting from the town of Sweimeh, then stretching southward to provide infra-structure to existing and planned tourism developments along side the Dead Sea and urban and infrastructure services for Sweimeh village and its future extension. In different parts of the Third World, many tourism development-planning policies are still embedded within 'modernization' paradigms that, according to Sharpley (2000) center on 'economic growth'

that, presumably, enables countries to advance through 'stages from traditional to an age of mass consumption. The benefits of economic growth "trickle down" or diffuse through the spread of "growth impulses" or "poles" of growth' (Sharpley, 2000: 4).

The previous primes of economic growth and modernization developmental theories could be critiqued at different levels and on a number of grounds. The 'trickle down' effect in Third World countries remains a myth due to power relations and the fact that 'development' and the right to investment is in the hand of few national elite. The masses (workforce) are exploited as cheap labor and are seldom initiating their own development initiatives. Particularly, the modernization development paradigm could be criticized for its use of 'traditional and modern as ambiguous ideal-type classifications with Western ethnocentric overtones, the modernization paradigm continues to underpin the rationale for tourism-induced development' (Sharpley, 2000: 4–5). Yet, and as explained earlier, many tourism ministries in the Arab world that still adhere to a *classical* 'modernization' development paradigm, depends highly on multi-national large tourism investments (e.g. international five-star hotel accommodations, enclave resorts) with high initial capital cost and leakages of tourism benefits to the outside. In addition, within the tourism industry and its several areas of transportation, accommodation, distribution, and production, First World corporations and transnational companies dominate the scene.

Guillot (2003) focuses on one aspect of the tourism industry: the luxury hotels through the study of entrepreneurs behind their development. He presents a critical comparison between two chains: one local and one international operating between Jordan (Zara Investment Holdings' Movenpick) (Figure 1.3) and Syria (Othman Aidi's Cham Palaces and Hotels) (Figure 1.4). Zara Investment (Holding) Co. Ltd (ZIH) was founded in 1994 by the late Khalil Talhouni (a businessman and banker) along with a group of independent investors, local bankers and investment companies. Cham Palaces and Hotels (CPH) was founded by Osman Aidi (an expatriate who resides between Paris and Damascus) in 1977 as a semi-private and semi-governmental company. The Ministry of Tourism holds 25% of the shares, while the remaining 75% is held by 20,000 private shareholders. One of their very early examples is the Cham Palace in downtown Damascus. Zara had contracts with an international managing company and signed a management contract with Movenpick to operate the hotel in the Dead Sea (Zara's largest in Jordan) (Guillot, 2003).

One aspect of comparison between the two chains is the percentages of tourism revenue leakages to the outside of the country. In the case of
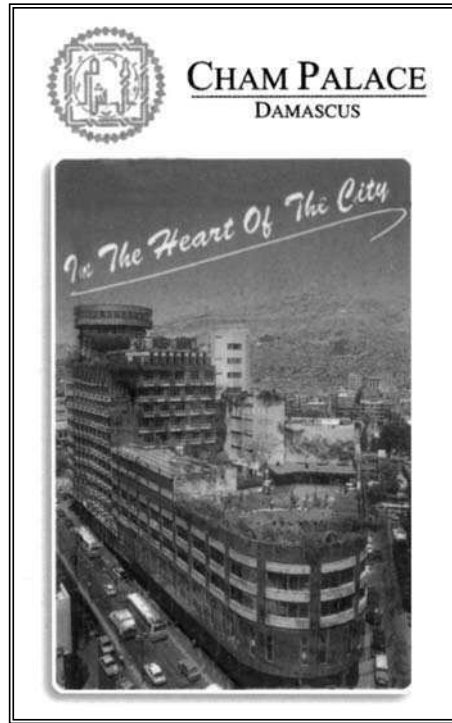
Figure 1.4 Postcard showing Cham Palace Hotel in Damascus, Syria. This local chain has spread all over the country.

Source: Postcard bought at hotel lobby, February 2002.

Cham Palace hotels in Syria, a greater percentage of the revenue remains in Syria. Almost everything is manufactured locally, and the Aidi Foundation has to pay no royalties to international chain operators as management and operations are locally based. In the case of Zara's Movenpick, not only did Zara have to pay for the initial investment to build the hotel, but also it had to pay Movenpick for its name, management contract, and operations in addition to importing the furniture and other hotel details concerning the hotel rooms, restaurants, and lobbies according to Movenpick standards and design profile.

Today, tourism-related research is in need of a theoretical framework that emphasizes the links between the political economy of tourism and its social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Basic imbalances exist

between developed, developing, and lesser-developed nations not only in terms of spatial distribution of tourist activity, but also in terms of the distribution of economic benefits. While many studies address conflict between tourists and host cultures, it is significant to acknowledge the fact that power relations are intensely present in the tourism industry and conflict is conceptualized as present not only at a global level but also at a local level where tourists, host communities, and most strikingly, tourism brokers are agents of power. In addition, tourism research should acknowledge recent fundamental restructuring of the mode of production under conditions of post-Fordism. There is a qualitative shift from mass production and consumption to more flexible systems of production and organization through changes in the way that goods and services are consumed, with rapidly changing consumer tastes and the emergence of niche and segmented markets (Mowforth & Munt, 1998: 26). Termed 'flexible accumulation' by Harvey (1990), this fundamental restructuring in the mode of production is shifting from a product-base to a service-base economy with significant consequences for tourism.

The present phase of globalization involves a marked increase in the pace of economic and everyday life and a phenomenal acceleration in the movement of capital and information. Time–space compression seeks to encapsulate this intensification to overcome the barriers of distance and stretch economic relationships to all parts of the globe. The consequences of this post-Fordist global economy are now seen in the tourism industry through new products, new tourism types, new types of tourists, and new niche markets and competitive strategies. An increasing number of tourist destinations are drawn into the global tourism industry creating more opportunities but also more competition and potential exploitation. Yet, such consequences are becoming more evident in increasing socio-economic and political conflict over space and how it is appropriated and developed. One can easily position many current enclave resorts and tourism developments in the context of this increasingly competitive global economy and financial imperialism.

The Role of International Tourism in Shaping Space: From Luxor to Mkies: Spatial Displacement and Processes of Inclusion and Exclusion

Even through heritage tourism has various cultural and economic benefits, especially for a struggling economy such as in Egypt, Jordan, or Syria, it still induces remarkable adverse impacts on the historic environments and the lives of people associated with the dismantling vital

and significant links between the cultural heritage and its respective host-communities (Daher, 2000a: 22). It is true that tourism can create employment opportunities, generate foreign exchange revenues, and spread peace and cultural understanding but still, 'the processes by which tourists experience culture, and the way culture is utilized by the tourism industry and host communities, are increasingly characterized by conflict' (Robinson, 1999: 1–2).

   In several parts of the world, primarily in Third World countries, tourism is known to have caused gentrification, breaking down of social and economic structures, social disintegration of family values, varying degrees of environmental degradation, and deterioration of historic and cultural settings due to exploitation practices and commodification of historic environments. The myth of tourism having the ability to generate conflict-free cultural harmony and understanding is largely 'a residual attitude derived from the romantic (and elitist) traditions of travel in the 18th and 19th centuries,' which were dominated by Euro-centric moral-istic tradition and ideology (Robinson, 1999: 2–3). AlSayyad (2001a: vii) had elaborated how

> nations, regions and cities have utilized and exploited vernacular built heritage to attract international investors at a time of evertight-ening global economic competition, and how the tourist industry has introduced new paradigms of the vernacular and/or traditional, based on the production of entire communities and social spaces that cater almost exclusively to the 'other.'

The present phase of globalization involves a marked increase in the pace of economic and everyday life and a phenomenal acceleration in the movement of capital and information. Time–space compression seeks to encapsulate this intensification to overcome the barriers of distance and stretch economic relationships to all parts of the globe. The consequences of this post-Fordist global economy are now seen in the tourism industry through new products, new tourism types, new types of tourists, and new niche markets and competitive strategies that appropriate the 'cultural capital' of places, sites, and host communities for consumption and intro-duces such 'cultural capital' into cycles of excessive capital accumulation:

> To counter declining sales in mature and traditional Fordist-organized product markets, to take advantage of new flexible production tech-nologies, and also to chase the considerable spending power of the affluent middle classes, capital has begun to emphasize product differentiation, the aesthetic qualities of material commodities, and

proliferate services which embody the requirements of symbolic capital. (Britton, 1991: 469)

An increasing number of tourist destinations are drawn into the global tourism industry creating more opportunities but also more competition and potential exploitation (Mowforth & Munt, 1998: 30). Yet, such consequences are becoming more evident in increasing socio-economic and political conflict over space and how it is appropriated and developed. Many historic places in the region of the Middle East with their rich traditions, heritage, and cultural traits of their associated living communities are being incorporated into major tourist attractions as will be explained through this section of the chapter. One can easily position many current heritage industry projects or even enclave resorts and tourism developments within ancient and historic settings in the context of this increasingly competitive global economy and financial imperialism.

Heritage and cultural tourism is drawn to historic villages for their lure of authentic rural experiences, tourists seek contact with living communities next to ancient sites all over the Middle East where local communities have lived in between such ancient ruins or next to them for ages such as the cases of Luxor in Egypt, Petra or Mkies in Jordan, or Bosra in Syria. The combination of an ancient site that dates back thousand of years intertwined with a traditional living community is extremely attractive from the heritage industry's point of view. Historic urban areas in the Middle East have also attracted tourists seeking a cultural experience; they seek historic urban neighborhoods for a taste of urban historic life with its exoticness, diversity, and vitality such as historic cores of Cairo, Damascus, Jerusalem, or Istanbul. Gradually, international tourism development and the competition for inward investment in such locations have considerable consequences on the relationship between such tourism spaces and their respective communities leading to socio-economic and political conflict over space and how it is appropriated and developed. One crucial question always rises to the surface: Who gets the right to induce development in such places and how?

Several of these places have been used as a stage for local culture and tradition coupled with entertainment and excessive consumption to sugar-coat oppression and to produce 'historic villages,' 'festive markets,' or 'heritage centers' that are dominated by investors who attempt to package culture and heritage as commodities ready for consumption by an uncritical audience where the line between cultural experiences and pure entertainment becomes very thin and boundaries between the two positions become so blurred. Britton (1991: 453) asserts that 'as far as

tourism is concerned, leisure activities have become increasingly commodified as a "culture of consumption" has evolved.' Britton borrows his critique from the Frankfurt School's critical position of late capitalism and the commodification and manipulation of culture and public life by the media and icons of consumption. One manifestation of this trend has been the formation of what the Frankfurt School of critical theorists (especially Adorno, Horkheimer as well as Marcuse) called 'the culture industry.' A set of institutions and practices are designed to facilitate the adjustment of individuals to participate with such cultural experiences without challenging the social realities of inequalities and exploitation that such experiences are based upon. This requires that individuals be tuned to commercial entertainment with activities that require attentive yet passive and uncritical participation. This is what is termed by the Frankfrurt School as the 'one dimensional society' that offers no resistance to late capitalists and global commodification of life, places, and experiences (Kellner, 1997).

With the popularity of new modes of post-modern consumerism and consumption that centers around culture (rapidly changing consumer tastes and the emergence of niche and segmented markets), more research is needed to investigate increasingly blur intersections between culture and entertainment where culture, in its classical sense, is being packaged, consumed, and forced into cycles of capital accumulation. Certain intellectuals claim that such transformations lead to a depravation of culture and to an intellectualization of entertainment and amusement thus obscuring social conflict and camouflaging the objectives of a dominating global economy through the commodification of culture, places, and people. Therefore, it is very important to understand processes of tourism not only from a reductionism lens of First World economy, but also from the perspective of the different regions and their respective local dynamics (Daher, 2000b).

The first group of case studies discussed below comes from rural areas with living communities associated with classical tourist sites such as Luxor, Petra, or Mkies. Mkies, which represents a severe case of rural gentrification, is a Jordanian village built during the Ottoman period (see Figure 1.5). Just two decades ago, Mkies, famous for its unique olive produce and strategic location, was a thriving village built next to the classical (Greco-Roman) town of Gadara in the middle of the 19th century. The village underwent a series of battles and conflicts over the rights of its development. In the late 1970s and through the late 1980s, the local community was evacuated and was put in standardized housing units unfit for village life and for an agricultural community. The acquisition

Figure 1.5 The village of Mkies in northern Jordan after evacuation of its residents and their relocation to a nearby housing project. The image shows one of the courtyard houses with the courtyard space.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 1988.

of the land by the government (justified by the rationale of eminent domain) was initially carried out in order to conduct archaeological excavations of ancient Gadara leaving the vacant village to fall into neglect and despair and dismantling vital links and relationship between the settlement and agricultural land and the villagers, who now depend on low-paying jobs in near by urban centers.

The evacuation dismantled this vital relationship between the village and its local community. Even though some of the courtyard houses in the village were conserved and adapted by a wealthy investor into tourist facilities (e.g. archaeological museum, rest-house, and Italian restaurant), the local community was marginalized and never was engaged in the tourism development. By the end of 1990s, and due to the lure of international investment, the government was contemplating selling the whole village to a large tourism company, which was planning to turn the historic village into a five-star hotel (Daher, 2000b). What is interesting today is the collaboration between the local community, archaeologists, architects, and anthropologists against the wealthy investors and processes of capital accumulation. Continuous contestation by the local community and by local activists succeeded recently in 2005 in convincing MOTA into launching a study that would come up with a solution that would ensure the protection of the historic village and genuine engagement of the local community in tourism development. Details of this project are yet to be seen.

The world-famous site of Luxor has been known, for more than a century and a half now, for its archaeological treasures, which were recognized in 1979 by UNESCO and the international community and inscribed as part of world heritage. A small village at the end of the 19th century, madinat-al-Uqsur has grown and become a strategic urban space. The village and the notion of its proximity to the ancient ruins of Luxor (e.g. temple of Karnak) became a major attraction for international experts in heritage management and tourism planning issues (Sandrine, 2005). Over the last 30 years, Luxor has been the focus of about 10 different plans and projects, engaging the Egyptian government, the local authorities and the main international development agencies, from UNESCO in 1980 to UNDP, more recently.

Sandrine (2005) focuses on two periods in the recent history of Luxor. The first period centers on the genesis of Luxor as a modern space.

> In 1893, Maspero, head of the Antiquity department decided to excavate the temple of Luxor where the 'Arab' village was located. In two decades, Luxor the 'miserable village', as it use to be qualified

by travelers, became a modern and cosmopolitan town, thanks to its treasures and international tourism, intimately connected to the European colonial project in Egypt. (Sandrine, 2005)

The second period centers on international agencies attempts to redevelop, plan, and come up with ideal solutions for the city. From 1996 to 2002, the UNDP and the Egyptian government implemented the 'Comprehensive plan of Luxor City Development Project.' According to the plan, Luxor should become an open-air museum and two new settlements should be constructed in the desert, in order to relocate the population and provide international tourists with adequate infrastructures.[10]

Sandrine (2005) is interested in addressing the issue of cultural tourism development as a tool to shape and produce segregated spaces in Egypt in relations to international norms, national constrains, and local patterns. She believes that the 'raison d'etre of Luxor lies somehow in the hand of the Other (Egyptologist, expert, tourist), or on the perception he-she has on the region and its resources.' The two examples presented so far, Mkies from Jordan and Luxor from Egypt, testify to the role international tourism plays in planning, reshaping, and organizing space with consequences on local communities' relationships with such places: 'hot spot' tourist attractions such as the ancient temples of Luxor or the Greco-Roman antiquities of Mkies. On many occasions, processes of inclusion and exclusion work to grant voice to certain realities of these sites while marginalizing others. One can also refer to examples spread all over the Middle East besides the world-famous sites such as Luxor or Mkies. One particular example comes from a rural village Al Taybet dating to the beginning of the 20th century located next to the World Heritage Site of Petra in Jordan, which had been transformed into a five-star tourist resort renamed Taybet Zaman.

Taybet Zaman Tourist Village (see Figure 1.6), originally a rural settlement, had been rented from its inhabitants by Jordan Tourism Investments on the basis of a long-term contract (about 30 years). 'The village was then transformed into a luxurious tourist attraction, and some of the former villagers where offered low-income jobs in the new development as cleaning and custodial work' (Daher, 1999: 35). The village is being packaged and sold to the tourists in a fashion where the tourist deals with the values and imagery of a 'museumized' reality rather than the dynamics and realities of the present. Similar partial or total relocation occurred in other projects in the region such as Khibet al Nawahleh Tourist Village also near Petra. In fact, Petra itself once enjoyed a thriving Bedouin community, which is now housed in the nearby ghetto

Figure 1.6 The village of Taybet in southern Jordan near Petra. The village had been adapted into a tourism village and is now called Taybet Zaman.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, July 1994.

UmSaihoun. Ex-residents of Petra are allowed to come during the day to rent horses for tourists and sell souvenirs and replicas of ancient pottery to the visitors of the famous rose city carved in the mountains.

Daher (1999: 34) argues that the current approach to heritage tourism in Jordan, Egypt, and elsewhere in the Middle East continues to empower certain interests, and privilege certain pasts, above others. In particular, the local community has been marginalized and disempowered. The local community, in certain cases, is denied the right to adopt and implement its own approach to development because of excessive governmentalization of social life (manifested in planning ordinances such as restrictive zoning or imminent domain) leading to extreme socio-economic control. The irony is that the same planning and development ordinances that have prohibited one local community's development initiatives can swiftly be changed when the 'right' investor or global capital proposes their own development scheme. Most such investors and transnational tourism companies claim their projects will aid the community at large through heritage or eco-tourism developments by providing job opportunities for local residents. But such claims could be, in many cases, nothing but a mere camouflage for excessive flexible capital accumulation and monopoly control over this golden investment opportunity. By hiring the local community at 'sweatshop' rates, tourist investment companies are further able to eliminate all potential competition from small businesses or local projects (Daher, 1999).

The conflict over the production of tourism space (such as at Mkies, Luxor, or, Taybat Zaman for example) is no longer an argument about vernacular architecture or conservation or even the privileged classical or ancient history at the expense of the recent past. The argument and conflict are also beyond the issues of authenticity of the conservation projects and the tourist experiences (even though these are also important issues for contemplation and research). The argument is gradually developing into a socio-economic and political conflict over space, and how and for whom it is appropriated for development resulting in severe cases of gentrification and territorial dispositioning. It is extremely interesting to see forces of late capitalism of a post-Fordist era manifested over such small sites on a global scale, producing spaces and geographies of inequalities.

It is very common now, within similar cases, for the government to compensate local communities (through monetary compensations or housing units); investors also purchase or conduct long-term (up to 30 years in some cases) rentals of whole settings or vernacular villages. However, this approach to tourism development, not only denies the local

community the opportunity to initiate its own development projects and schemes, but also creates an extremely dangerous shift in the cultural capital and property ownerships that will have catastrophic consequences on such communities and on any country at large in the future.

According to Robinson (2001: 45), the concept of compensation for loss of cultural capital, or loss of control of that capital is 'firmly anchored in the same, "traditional," First World view which rationalized the commodification of culture, and has legitimized its trading.' An apparent consequence of such trade-off already in process, is the production of geographies of inequalities and processes of excessive exploitation in addition to the disappearing and obscuring of past economic functions and socio-economic and community patterns of activities. As explained by Daher (1999), many locations are consequently shifting from vibrant functioning places to 'museumized' 'show cases' exhibited for a passing audience and owned by a wealthy segment of society (investors or trans-national corporations). The following quotation by Robinson (2001: 50–1) proficiently and skillfully frames the issue of ownership in the wider context of territorial belonging, sense of place, and governance:

> In both developing and developed economies the power of the tourism industry has manifested itself in often-dramatic changes of ownership. Yet the dynamics of ownership in world tourism has attracted relatively little attention in the literature for several reasons. Because of the fluidity of international capital, the low barriers to entry in the tourism business, and the momentum of tourism development, patterns of ownership are difficult to monitor. This is often compounded by the distance and opaqueness of decision-making among corporate players, and between developers and governments. In addition, because tourism is largely measured by its economic success rather than its cultural integrity, the issue of ownership has not commonly been recognized as a problem. However, if one frames ownership in the wider context of territorial belonging, sense of place, and participation in the decisions regarding how places look and function, there are many problems. Cultural territories are contested, and have been and remain, appropriated from host communities. Arguably in many cases, appropriation is difficult to distinguish from normative processes that accompany it.

The second group of case studies in this section comes from urban historic environments from different places in the Middle East. The historic urban environment together with its exoticism, vitality, and variety is also being incorporated as part of the tourist gaze. The popularity of

urban living, and the ever growing café society are redirecting the interests and attention to historic places in Damascus, Aleppo, or Amman that had been for long, forgotten and had even fallen into neglect. Old cafés, warehouses, historic houses, and the likes are being adapted and rehabilitated to cater for a growing tourist demand both local and foreign. Urry (1990: 192) notes that in order to satisfy the tourist gaze, 'environments, places, and people are being regularly made and re-made as tourist objects. The reconstruction process is more than cosmetic, it involves substantive economic and social change.'

One particular historic neighborhood undergoing extensive structural transformation and demographic change is Hamrawi next to the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. The neighborhood is famous for its brilliant courtyard houses with magnificent *Iwans* that overlook the central courtyard space, which is usually endowed with a water feature. These houses are simple on the outside but once one enters into the main courtyard, the decorations, water, vegetation and exquisite spatial arrangement make it a pleasurable and relaxing place to rest, contemplate and regenerate. Narrow alleys with specialty markets bring together the neighborhood, which is also close to major tourist monuments such as the Umayyad Mosque but also other places such as historic *Medrassas* (historic schools), and *Khans* (e.g. The *Khan* of Asa'ad Paşa).

More recently, during the last 10 years or so, several of the neighborhood courtyard houses have been converted into restaurants and cafés that are increasingly becoming very popular amongst a local Damascene domestic audience, expatriates, and foreign tourists alike. What is comforting is that, first, the source of most of the investments is local (e.g. families who owned these houses are transforming them themselves). Second, these places are not being turned into elitist gated tourist enclaves, on the contrary, they are relatively affordable by the larger community, and so far have been very inclusive, which is also a positive trait of the Damascene society in general. But, defiantly, these investments are causing discomfort for the residents who are still residing in the historic neighborhood due to the fact that these places stay open until very late hours each night and sometimes the noise pollution is unbearable. Besides, such structural transformations have definitely increased property values in the area, luring many residents and families to sell up and move out, which will eventually have a major effect on the demography and nature of the whole historic city core.

Beit Jabri (Jabri House) is one of these places within the historic Hamrawi neighborhood that is becoming very popular amongst the café society of Damascus (see Figure 1.7). In Beit Jabri, a local Damascene

Figure 1.7 Biet Jabri in the historic neighborhood of Hamrawi in
Damascus, Syria. The house has been adapted into a
restaurant. The clientele is a favorable mix of different social
groups and tourists.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 2003.

individual had changed his grandfather's house into a coffee house and cultural center after it had been used as storage. The house was originally built in the 17th century for the Jabri family. In 1975, the house was deserted as the family could not afford the upkeep and served as a storage space, similar to many historic courtyard houses in Old Damascus. In 1988 the idea came to one of the grandsons of the Jabri family to change it into a restaurant. Now it is visited by politicians, artists, poets, and tourists alike, and there are also plans to use it as an art gallery and for selling used books.[11]

In certain neighborhoods of historic Amman next to the downtown area such as the area of the First Circle/Rainbow Street, spatial and socio-economic transformation is taking place as the area is becoming popular amongst upper-middle-class residents of Western, affluent Amman. The neighborhood is famous for its rich heritage, history, and culture. The neighborhood's architecture spanning from early Ammani houses of the 1920s to the elegant, yet not pretentious architecture of modernity in Amman, to contemporary creative architecture and adaptation to place. The neighborhood is connected to the downtown with a series of steps, a typical Ammani characteristic. What is also interesting about the place is its social diversity where different social and economic strata of society live side by side: a tourist can enjoy a falafel sandwich for less than half a dollar next to a restaurant serving first-class expensive meals. Current socio-economic and structural transformations are completely changing the nature of the area. The several historic houses are being converted into cafés and restaurants, souvenir and craft shops are also a new popular arrival to the neighborhood, property value is increasing rapidly, and multi-national cooperations in disguise are buying property from residents who sometimes are lured by the high prices or are agreeing to sell because their property (the inheritance) is already divided between many family members and descendants to the extent it would be easier to sell out to an investor who will invest and transform the property to tourist or upper-middle-class function.

The architectural heritage in a certain geographic location has become a means for social differentiation and the production of a new social identity for the upper middle class. This 'cultural capital' as termed by Zukin and cited by Britton (1991: 469) is linked to a specific spatial fixity (e.g. inner-city residential areas, downtown, historic waterfronts). The geographic constitution of such gentrified or conserved areas is crucial to the production of such new identities, which usually center on 'urban living' and consumption of high-class cultural products (e.g. alternative music and arts and crafts). Historic residential neighborhoods in Amman

(such as the one around Rainbow Street) have become particularly favorable locations for this type of conservation activity. A perfect example from that neighborhood is Books @ Café, a recently completed adaptation of a historic house into a Westernized internet café. The place, popular amongst tourists and affluent Ammanis, sells books (mainly on architecture, urban living, cinema, and art), arts and crafts, and the restaurant serves a Westernized (mainly American) menu while overlooking historic downtown Amman. Britton (1991: 454) added that

> commodities in this form become a mean to an end: the purchase of a life-style: a statement of taste and demonstration of the possession of 'cultural and symbolic capital'; an invigoration of the body; an uplifting of the spirit; a broadening of the mind; a signifier of status, a confirmation of challenge of attitudes.

> Despite its high-minded intensions, the project constitutes an intrusion into a calm residential neighborhood, producing alienation and discomfort among the local community. And it has created a schizophrenic difference between the environments inside and outside the Café, intensifying the separation between the neighborhood and its architectural heritage. (Daher, 1999: 35)

In Aqaba, and after the peace process with Israel and the establishment of several Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) in the country coupled with declaring Aqaba as a 'free economic zone,' the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) was created. ASEZA was granted the responsibility of neo-liberal socio-economic transformations in the city and held a position of urban projects, tourism, and infrastructure developer; thus gradually replacing former regulating public bodies such as the Municipality of Aqaba, Aqaba Regional Authority, and Aqaba Governate, which were either dissolved or regressed to a voyeur's position.

In Aqaba, Jordan, the whole city is going through intense socio-economic and territorial transformations as it is being declared a 'Special Economic Zone.' Talking to taxi drivers and shop owners, many have reiterated that 'the city is no longer theirs.' It is very obvious that the whole city is being taken over by multi-national, big money investments in the form of five-star hotels and large-scale development projects. The 'hot' and most desired places on the shore such as popular old beach coffee houses, public beaches, fish restaurants on the beach, or even significant low-rise hotels from the mid-20th century are all being taken over by such 'first-class tourism investments.' Aqaba's distinctive, yet not so recognized heritage of the 1930s and 1940s represented in the Old Town with its residential houses, coffee shops, and open-air cinema, will be

completely disguised and submerged by this sweeping 'grand planning' and 'new vision' for the city. Everybody is aware of 'the change' including the ordinary citizen, yet, people such as the taxi driver and the shop owner do not posses the right tools to contest or even mitigate such visions and investments.

ASEZA, equipped with the tropes and slogans of modernity, efficiency, liberalism, and lack of government bureaucracy, is superimposing 'first-class tourism developments' as termed by one of ASEZA's officials. Such developments take the form of multi-national five-star hotels and various 'big money' investments linked with the tourism/entertainment sector in existing 'hot spots' and public places within the city displacing and replacing traditional coffee houses and restaurants by the beach, low-rise historic hotels from the middle of the 20th century, historic neighbor-hoods, and even existing slums in very strategic locations of the city overlooking the Bay of Aqaba. Such developments are causing severe cases of urban cleansing, spatial and social displacement, and exclusion of a certain part of Aqaba's history, heritage, and urban poor and resi-dents. The examples presented before on urban tourism developments from Damascus, Amman, and Aqaba trigger the importance of inte-grating critical theory and political economy into the study of tourism and analysis of tourism developments. Britton (1991: 451) develops two themes to facilitate an understanding of this integration: 'the capitalistic nature of most travel and tourism production and consumption; and the contribution of tourism to the analysis of territorial competition and economic restructuring.'

> Geographers have tended to treat elements of tourism and travel in isolation from other spheres of social and economic life. By treating tourism almost solely as a discrete economic subsystem, many reveal-ing links have been missed between tourism and other politically and theoretically important geographic issues, which demonstrate the wider role and position of tourism in capitalist accumulation. This simple point can be demonstrated with two examples of how tourism can be regarded as a central element of territorial competition and geographically uneven accumulation. (Britton, 1991: 466)

Popularity of Domestic Tourism in the Region after 9/11: Festivals and Shopping Malls and the Myth of the Cultural Tourist

The Middle East has been divided, as far as incoming tourism is con-cerned, into two major categories: the first category consist of countries

with a rich tourism history due to diverse cultural heritage, history, and archaeology such as the cases of Egypt, Tunis, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Turkey for example; the second category is countries with insignificant incoming tourism as in the case of the Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Yet, citizens of the countries of the second category produced an abundance of outward tourism to Europe and the United States especially after the 1970s and until recently due to the rich oil revenues of these countries, which had enabled their citizens to afford to take extravagant trips to Europe's different capitals (mainly London and Paris). Especially during the late 1970s and 1980s, a considerable amount of oil revenues were spent on the French Riviera or in the hotels and casinos of the fog capital of the world, London.

The events of September 11 had changed the direction of tourism influx in the region; at least, it had decreased the number of Arab Gulf states' citizens venturing into Europe and to the United States due to strict visa regulations and a general feeling that Saudi or Gulf tourists would no longer be welcomed in the Western world. As a reaction and since the beginning of the 1990s, one can easily witness the flourishing of local domestic tourism attractions in the Gulf in the form of 'festivals,' 'spas,' and recreational centers. Most of these tourism developments and investment claim a cultural experience through the different tourism festivals, which flourished all over the Arabian Peninsula, but in reality, most of the events centered on shopping and consumption coupled with entertainment. A recent article in the famous Lebanese newspaper *AlHayat* had shown that many Saudis are staying in the country after September 11 and are spending their summers in such new tourist attractions: theme festivals in cities such as Jeddah, Abha, and other Saudi cities. Each of these festivals claims a theme linked to its region, for example the one in Medina is linked to history and heritage, the Jeddah festival is linked to sea-related activities and so on.[12] Many of these domestic tourism ventures claim to be providing 'cultural experiences' but in reality they primarily center on consumption and entertainment.

Qatar had established recently its Ajaeb Saif Qatar (Summer Wonders of Qatar) Summer 2004 festival and is expecting to receive 50 million travelers by the year 2015, and is therefore planning to built recreational centers and theme parks to lure more local entertainment tourists.[13] Dubai, in the UAE, had of course diversified its economic investments way before September 11, and is no longer dependent on oil revenues. Dubai is considered today a vibrant business center famous for import and export, IT, logistics, and other service industries not only within the Middle East but also in Asia and in the Indian sub-continent. Dubai had

developed its tourism industry depending on becoming the Middle Eastern capital of consumption and entertainment. Theme parks of every type are being built starting from thematic shopping malls such as Ibn Battutah[14] Mall to an indoor ski resort in the middle of the desert. Global Gulf and Saudi money is also finding its way to other capitals of the Middle East, Amman for example is unfortunately witnessing a series of shopping malls and different entertainment centers blessed by the government in the efforts to encourage inward investment. Tourism to places such as Dubai is even advertised as pure shopping excursions. Many of these shopping malls and recreational/cultural centers are simply extraordinary tourist attractions in their own right and represent an exceptional degree where the line between culture and entertainment is very blurred.

Furthermore, inter-Arab tourism to the northern Arab countries such as Lebanon and Syria centers also on excessive consumerism and un-involved tourists who hardly attempt to explore the different cultural and historic attractions even though such counties are blessed with a rich and diverse rural and urban cultural heritage dating from ancient times up to the present. In general, Arab tourists visiting Lebanon or Syria, for example, are mainly not involved and tend to simply explore major attractions from the luxury of the tourist bus leaving the country with only an icono-graphic memory and experience. The author of this chapter signed up with a travel agent and took a typical tourist trip from Jordan to Lebanon to explore the experiences of hundreds or even thousands of tourists.

In general, tourists spent most of their times in the coach and their exposure to the sites visited was minimal, remaining at the fringes and periphery of each site. Mostly, the concentration was on sites that represented cultural icons of Lebanon such as the Rawshe Rock on the sea shore, the Palaces of Beit al Din in the Lebanese mountains, the Cedar Trees in the north, for which Lebanon is famous, and other nature sites such as the cave of Jeitta with its stalagmites and stalactites. Of course, shopping consumed a huge percentage of the itinerary. It was interesting to notice that the urban heritage of the different Lebanese cities was not offered or included in the program. Our experience of Beirut was confined to 30 minutes in the famous post-war reconstruction project of downtown Beirut: Solidere. The cities of Saida and Sour were not on the program, and the visit to Tripoli, which is famous for its urban heritage from the Mamluk period, was confined to visiting the harbor and eating at a famous Arab sweets place.

Urry (1990: 47) reiterates that the contemporary tourist gaze is increasingly signposted and that there are markers that identify the things and

places worthy of our gaze, which would be restricted to relatively small number of tourist nodes. 'The result is that most tourists are concentrated within a very limited area.' Inter-Arab tourism to Lebanon, Syria, or Egypt is iconographic and signposted in nature and is restricted by the tourist bubble of the bus. Rarely, are tourists interested in engaging in local cultural experiences or an exploration of place beyond the famous icons. The tourist is like a child driven from one place to another in a comfort-able, but at the same time, confining bubble (the bus) where the experi-ence of 'being a tourist' is more relevant to most tourists than the experience of 'being in place.' Inter-Arab tourism organized by hundreds of travel agencies in the Arab world is gradually manipulated by exces-sive consumerism, and is becoming more iconographic and signposted while tourist experiences are increasingly short, intense, and are no longer emerging in culture but are gradually more figural and visual in nature. Most tourists are uninvolved and remain closer to the confinement of the tourist 'bubble' (the bus) without venturing into cities or rural landscapes.

Resistance from below and alternative voices

In the midst of such large-scale tourism developments and excessive commercialization of tourist experiences emerges a genuine and very authentic partnership between tourism and heritage in the region Bilad al Sham represented in family-owned and run small hotels in Damascus, Aleppo, Amman, and Beirut offering a different alternative to the grand luxurious hotels. Whether it is Al Rabi'e Hotel (Figure 1.8) located in an old, historic Damascene courtyard house, or Le Baron Hotel from early 20th century Aleppo, not only do revenues from tourism stay in the coun-try and leakages to the outside are kept to a minimum, but also such places provide a different experience for the tourist or traveler willing to explore the city with its wonders and social realities of everyday life as appose to a 'swift' and 'iconographic' experience of the place that is restricted to 'certain' chosen buildings and places put on a pre-planned itinerary. The families that run these old hotels and enterprises, which are becoming very popular amongst tourists, are definitely very active actors in the definition and in the shaping of heritage, and provide totally different levels of connections to these cities and their historic and public places.

Le Baron Hotel in Aleppo (Figure 1.9) was founded by an Armenian family in 1909, it advertised itself as a modern hotel and is listed as a two-star hotel and is on the itinerary of several tour operators. It is of course famous for the visitor's book with travelers and visitors' impressions

Figure 1.8 Al Rabi'e Hotel in the historic neighborhood of Saruja in Damascus. This hotel is housed in an old courtyard Damascene house and has been run by a local Damascene family since the late 1940s and is a favorable place by tourists and a local heritage-minded clientele.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 2001.

about the place, Aleppo, and Syria in general. Several famous people stayed there such as King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Agatha Christie, and Lawrence of Arabia, and the hotel is full of relics from early 20th century that remind the visitor of its glorious past.[15] Al Rabi'e Hotel in the historic neighborhood of Saruja in Damascus is located in an old courtyard Damascene house. It has been run by a Damascene family since the late 1940s. It is also listed as a two-star hotel but is famous amongst long-term travelers and tourists in general who seek an involved stay in Damascus that is closer to the public and to the city. The visitors' book of Al Rabi'e Hotel is also famous as it is full of different impressions from visitors in the various languages of the world.[16]

Places like Le Baron or Al Rabi'e work to uncover informal and un-official histories, which are distant from official discourses of Syria. The

Figure 1.9 Le Baron Hotel in Aleppo, Syria. The hotel dates to the early
           20th century and is run by an Armenian family from Aleppo.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 2001.

families that run these old hotels and enterprises, which are becoming
very popular amongst tourists, are definitely very active actors in the defi-
nition and in the shaping of heritage, and provide totally different levels
of connections to these cities and their historic and public places.

Another group of actors who are providing a different alternative when
it comes to experiencing the historic realities of cities and of everyday life
are the different patroned heritage projects by elite notable families of
Bilad al Sham in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. They provide for
the more involved tourist another perspective different from the official
narrative of history and the past provided by the state by emphasizing
the local regional realities of the region and by offering a chance to rewrite
and reread history. Sidon (Saida) in Lebanon represents a perfect example
where local families are involved in the local cultural scene. While the
Debbaneh family are restoring and adapting their old residence into
the new Debbaneh Palace and Saida History Museum (Figure 1.10),
other notable families in Saida such as Audi, had also adapted their old
residence into the famous Soap Museum and had been involved heavily

Figure 1.10 Debbaneh Palace in Saida, Lebanon. This historic palace is being adapted, with funds from the Debbaneh Foundation, into a historic house museum that narrates the social and local history of the city and the house itself.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 2002.

through the Audi Foundation in urban regeneration activities in the
city. The Debbaneh Palace was built in 1721 by the Hammoud family,
and was acquired in 1800 by the Debbaneh family. Then it underwent
several periods of restoration and especially after the war in 1999 when
the descendants of Raphael Youssef Debbaneh set up the Debbaneh
Foundation, which established the Debbaneh Palace and Saida History
Museum. The objectives of the museum are to represent and shed light
on the city's urban, socio-economic, and political history. With the aim of
constantly renewing the visitor's interest in the city, the project will not
only include artifacts from the past, but it will also focus heavily on the
societies that produced them. This will involve explanations and extracts
from people's daily lives, family social structures, and political circum-
stances, not to mention construction, architecture, and town planning.[17]

   One particular trend that is emerging in tourism in places such as
Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon is special agents and travel operators that are
slowly recognizing the importance of promoting particular itineraries to
discriminating and independent-minded travelers and clientele who are
more involved and are interested in particular experiences and sites. Such
operations are being run through small niche suppliers as oppose to mass
production/consumption operators. Examples are diverse concentrating
on both urban and rural itineraries including special agents and tour oper-
ators that are starting to run special tours that concentrate on urban social
realities of cities in the region. Famous stops on these 'urban itineraries'
include coffee houses like Al Fishawi Coffee House near *Sūq* Khan al
Khalili in Cairo, Egypt (Figure 1.11); this place, which is now a tourist
Mecca, is famous for its association with notorious Egyptian writers and
critical thinkers such as the late Najeeb Mahfouz. Other urban tours some-
times concentrate on specific themes within cities such as exploring the
different *Sūq* or *Khans* within Damascus or special tours in the old city
visiting distinguished Damascene houses. Figure 1.12 shows a unique
Damascene house popular on these special urban tours; it was adapted
to serve now as the headquarters of the Danish Research Mission in
Damascus. Eco-tourism to Dana and Wadi Faynan nature reserves in
Jordan and other nature reserves in the country operated by the Royal
Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in Jordan, special guided
tours of Old Damascus where the itinerary follows a certain theme
such as houses or *Khans,* or other significant heritage feature or experi-
ence, or special tours of urban historic sites of Salt in Jordan or along the
Hijaz Railroad Line between Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia are some
examples of such alternative tourism that is being offered to such discrim-
inating and involved travelers.

Figure 1.11 Al Fishawi Coffee House near *Sūq* Khan al Khalili in Cairo, Egypt. This coffee shop, which is now a tourist Mecca, is famous for its association with notorious Egyptian writers and critical thinkers like the late Najeeb Mahfouz.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 2005.

Figure 1.12 A special tour in the old city of Damascus visiting a distin-
            guished Damascene house which functions now as the head-
            quarters of the Danish Research Mission in Damascus.

Source: Photograph taken by Rami Farouk Daher, 2003.

One particular example of these travel operations is Idrisi Travel oper-ated by a wife and husband team (McQuitty and Eykemduyn) who organ-ize special tours to Jordan, Syria, Libya and other places in the Middle East. Idrisi Travel was named after the famous Arab geographer born in Morocco in AD 1100. Attached to the Royal Court of King Roger II of Sicily, he wrote one of the greatest works in mediaeval geography: *The Pleasure Excursion of One who is Eager to Traverse the Regions of the World*. Idrisi Travel 'attempts to explore the world with the same eagerness, discover-ing new routes and destinations off-the-beaten track, traveling in small groups and led by specialist guides' as advertised in their brochure.[18] The small company's selling-points lie in the quality of the guides. McQuitty, for example, is an archaeologist who had lived in Jordan and the region for more than 15 years where she had worked as the Director of the Council for British Research in the *Levant*. Her expert knowledge in the archaeology and also heritage of the region, and cultural and environ-mental backgrounds enables her to transform her tours into a unique cultural and educational experience. She had often led walking tours between Petra and the nature reserve of Wadi Faynan in Jordan, or along Bedouin off-the-beaten tracks in Libya. Furthermore, such tours offer a wide variety of ways to explore nature and the environment such as walk-ing, cycling, camping, and bird watching. They also attempt to collaborate with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and organizations and tourism cooperatives (e.g. Wadi Faynan Tourism Cooperative) to make sure the revenues of tourism reach the local communities wherever and as much as possible. The owners of Idrisi Travel do not like to label themselves as study-tours but rather they like to think of themselves as offering to the intelligent-minded tourist a 'well-informed holiday.'

Circulated Images, Competitiveness, Mobility, and Fantasy Cities: The Solidere Phenomenon and Neo-liberal Urban Restructuring

The Gulf Cooperation Council had declared the availability of $80 billion in liquidity awaiting investment (Sadik, 2005). The UAE alone enjoys $26.3 billion in trade surplus, and Dubai declared a 16% GDP growth. This circulating global capital is searching for venues and places to invest in real-estate development all over the Middle East in places such as Dubai, Doha, Manama, Kuwait, but also in Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Tunis, and Amman as well with future considerable conse-quences on the nature of the urban environment in these cities and on the future of tourism at large in the Middle East where each of these cities is

not only competing for international business and tourism, but is also competing for more consumer- oriented tourism services in the form of themed shopping malls, recreational centers, and theme parks.

Business tourism is flourishing in Dubai with 1000 businesses starting each month. In 2003, Dubai hosted 4.8 million visitors, and enjoyed the position of number one worldwide when it comes to hotel occupancy rates, 85% year round, furthermore, Dubai is planning to add 100 hotels within the next five to seven years and is expecting 10 million visitors by 2007 and 15 million by 2015 (Sadik, 2005). Junemo (2004: 182) elaborated that in the year 2000, Dubai had 2.4 million guests and that the prognosis is that by 2010, some 15 million tourists will arrive to Dubai. Gradually, cities in the Middle East are depending on a highly increased rate of mobility within the region where cities are, for the first time, putting their different urban amenities on the market as a tourist commodity to be explored, invested in, and used to entertain tourists, business people, visitors, and most important of all: affluent clientele from all over the region. Fainstein and Judd (1999: 261) have added how

> there does seem to be a degree of consensus that the present epoch involves a different, more flexible organization of production, higher mobility of both capital and people, heightened competition among places, and greater social and cultural fragmentation. Within the city the unity previously imposed by a manufacturing-driven economy has disappeared, and urban culture itself has become a commodity.

Hall (1996: 155) examines how cities are being packaged and introduced as products for marketing in an age of 'New Urban Tourism,' he investigates how 'although urban centers have long served to attract tourists, it is only in recent years that cities have consciously sought to develop, image and promote themselves in order to increase the influx of tourists.' As far as the Middle East in concerned, we will gradually observe how, whether it be Beirut or Amman, Dubai or Manama, Cairo or Tunis, it is very obvious that cities in the region are competing for inward business and tourism investments with considerable consequences not only on how these cities are being transformed, or how heritage and tourism development is being conceived, but also on how tourism and tourist products, and experiences are taking a central role in this overall transformation.

It is interesting to understand the effect of the circulation of global capital and huge reserves of money in search of high-yielding and secure investments, excessive privatization, and circulating urban flagship projects in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, all over the Arab Gulf states, and through out the Arab region on the nature of urban reality, property values

and speculation, and the nature of tourism investments. New emerging urban islands of excessive consumption for the chosen elite together with the internationalization of commercial real-estate companies and construction consultancies capable of providing high-quality services signify this neo-liberal urban restructuring in places such as downtown Beirut, Abdali in Amman (Daher, 2005; Summer, 2005), Dreamland in Cairo (Adham, 2004), the financial district in Manama and even in the heart of the Holy City of Mecca through the Jabal Omar Project.[19] Cities are obliged to create the right milieu, competitive business climate, and first-class tourism attractions in order to lure people to come live, invest, and entertain. Developments in Dubai and the current urban reconstruction for the Beirut downtown (know as the Solidere Project) are becoming the models to follow in such developments. Adham (2004: 157) had noted that circulating images of such neo-liberal urban restructuring mimic developments in the West and represent as such an 'Oriental vision of the Occident.'

Hall (1996: 155–7) elaborated how city centers are shifting to leisure and tourism in many parts of the world. He added that the 'primary justification for the redevelopment of inner city areas for tourism is the perceived economic benefits of tourism.' The entire urban core is presently looked upon as a recreational environment and as a tourism resource, and one of the purposes is to 'attract and retain the interest of professionals and white-collar workers, particularly in "clean" service industries such as tourism and communications.' Tyler (2000: 292–3) talks about the creation of the 'Fantasy City,' where the city turns into a 'playful spectacle' and elaborates on city marketing where he sees city marketing as a reaction to economic change – a method of promoting inward investment by marketing, undertaking physical change and image recreation. Sheller and Urry (2004: 3) state that

> many places are being put into play due to the increasingly global character of these contemporary mobilities. The 1990s have seen remarkable 'time-space compression,' as people across the globe have been brought 'closer' through various technologies. There is an apparent 'death of distance' in what is sometimes described as a fluid and speeded-up 'liquid modernity.'

Furthermore, Sheller and Urry (2004: 4) elaborate on the concepts and lifestyles associated with these 'places to play.' They believe that tourism is not only transforming the materiality of many 'real' places, but is also having a deep impact on the creation of virtual realities and fantasized places: 'These are enormously powerful and ubiquitous global brands or logos that increasingly feature tourist sites/sights as key components of

the global culture that their brand speaks to and enhances.' These brand companies include many in 'travel and in leisure: Disney, Hilton, Nike, Gap, Easyjet, Body Shop, Virgin, Club Med, Starbucks, Coca Cola, and so on. These brands produce "concepts" or "life-styles": liberated from the real-world burdens of stores and products manufacturing,' and these lifestyle concepts revolve around generic types of places to play: the hotel pool, the waterside café/restaurant, the cosmopolitan city, the hotel buffet, the theme park, the club, the airport lounge, and the shopping mall.

An important question emerges to the surface: Within these places of play of intense mobility, who gets the opportunity to be mobile? And what is the relationship between the local and global within this mobility? It is only global money and a chosen few who are granted this privilege. The rest of the world cannot join 'the play,' entry to these global places of play is restricted to the majority of people and is only permitted through their involvement in the provision of services and infrastructure (e.g. Indian and Pakistani workers in Dubai hotels and resorts) and their involvement in performance for tourists (e.g. exotic dancers and music performers in the Caribbean). The following quotation by Titley (2000: 84) elaborates on the conditions of entry into such global 'places of play':

> Service demands that locals be allowed entry into this carefully managed construction. In a place displaced from surrounding communities, entry is limited to service and performance. Yet this entails contact – as Michael Cronin has pointed out, any tourist/tourist worker encounter is highly personalized, and the 'personality of the transient in paradise surely have a right to expect friendliness from those blessed enough to inhibit, locals are part of the product, and as such have very definite and circumscribed roles thrust upon them. Discrepancies are opened up by a refusal to perform, or at least to maintain a level of presumably manic happiness.'

Junemo's (2004: 181) work on Dubai is informative as it describes the socio-economic, spatial, and demographic transformation taking place in this extraordinary place of constant 'play.' The city had recently begun the construction of the world's two largest man-made islands to boost and enhance the city's image and reputation: 'They are both shaped like palm trees and are called the Palm *Jumeirah* and the Palm *Jebel Ali* respectively. Even though they are separate islands, the whole project is referred to as "the Palm".' Junemo (2004: 185–6) considers projects such as the 'Palm' or Ibn Battutah Shopping Mall or the Dubai Ski Resort and Recreational Center (Figures 1.13a and b) to represent an aesthetic of kitsch and thematic events: 'And to create a place like the Palm is almost

Figure 1.13a and b Interior of the recently developed indoor ski resort and recreational center in Dubai, UAE.

Source: Photographs by Rami Farouk Daher, 2006

an example of divine play – the possibilities of creating land at will in any shape' (Junemo, 2004: 186). 'This imaginative play continues as each buyer of a signature villa or beach house has the choice of different architectural themes, such as Contemporary, Arabic, Mediterranean, Caribbean, or Scandinavian (there are 22 styles in all).' Junemo (2004: 187) asserts that this fragmentation of the aesthetic expression and the playful relation to symbols that lie behind it is widely recognized within post-modern theory where people are concerned with surface images rather than deep meanings.

Yet these 'playscapes' whether in Dubai, Amman, or Beirut are simply gated communities with practices of inclusion and exclusion. These spaces are usually guarded and are closed off for many to ensure a certain type and nature of individuals allowed to participate in these places of leisure and consumption. The following quotation by Junemo (2004: 190), illustrates how these places maintain and enforce a symbolic distinction between those with access to the networks and those without. This distinction, which centers on the ability to consume such places and participate in these 'places of play,' is crucial for the formation of a distinct social identity for the upper middle class where monetary capital is turned into some accepted form of social capital in order to gain access to such exclusive social networks:

> Surveillance and control are also maintained through symbolic distinction (Bourdieu 1984) between those with access to the networks and those without. Those inhabiting the center of a network distinguish themselves from the excluded 'lower classes' through a certain consumer lifestyle. In Dubai this phenomenon even has a name, 'Jumeirah Jane', describing the affluent Western women with a consumer lifestyle represented by mobile phone, sunglasses, a four-wheel-drive car, and color coordinated outfits. This can be contrasted with the working cloths of an Indian or Pakistani working in construction or perhaps as a caretaker. 'Jumeirah Jane' is a person who belongs in the Palm, while the maintenance workers are uniformed in order to signal that they are allowed inside, but are not part of the social activities. In other words, apart from simply possessing monetary capital, this must be turned into some accepted form of social capital in order to gain access to the social network.

Introducing the Chapters

The chapters in this book all share the fact that they center on exploring tourism in the Middle East, yet, they are very diverse in their individual

area of concentration, background of authors, and approach to knowledge. This edited volume could be considered as one of very few comprehensive explorations of tourism in the Middle East addressing general issues such as historiography of tourism in the Middle East; tourism, representation, and the transformation of place, history, and culture; tourism and the quest for community development; and tourism and politics of place and heritage through local and global juxtapositions.

In Noha Nasser's chapter, 'A Historiography of Tourism in Cairo: A Spatial Perspective,' she provides a critical historical perspective of tourism in the city of Cairo starting from a time when tourism and travel presented a vital socio-economic activity engaging different people from various parts of the world during the 12th century (when trade, culture, and education were the main reasons for travel demonstrating an early form of urban/cultural tourism). The chapter skillfully moves to the emergence of travel in the 19th century where tourism was linked to a high level of curiosity but was also associated with different forms of dominance, social hierarchies, and the construction of stereotypical realities of the 'Orient.' Tourism was catering to a European-colonialist leisure and taste. Finally, to a recent time where tourism is linked to a consumer-driven society leading to a commodification of tourism in Cairo and to segregated spaces.

By concentrating on Cairo's urban environment, the reader will be exposed to archaic forms (12th century in Cairo for example) of urban tourism, driven by an appreciation of a rich urban culture. This will definitely clarify several misconceptions about the Middle East and shed light on an aspect of Middle Eastern tourism that has not received enough recognition: urban tourism. Furthermore, one of the strengths of Nasser's chapter is that it breaks the boundaries between disciplines. Nasser was able skillfully to bridge the gap between urban historiography, tourism, and urban regeneration studies. The chapter could also be critically linked to two important issues: First, the nature of the relationship between the Islamic world and Europe through time (e.g. medieval Islamic Cairo, Imperial Khediv Ismail era, contemporary (the opening-up era) through focusing on one aspect of 'world making': tourism. Second, the notion of identity vis-à-vis embracing the modernity project linked to the spatial dimension of tourism: where this critical debate is brought under the light in different periods of Cairo's history as well (e.g. Cairo of the 19th century and the grand urban undertakings *à la manierre Haussmann*, or contemporary designation of Cairo as a World Heritage Site and consequent socio-cultural and spatial transformations).

Xavier Guillot's chapter, 'From One Globalization to Another: In Search of the Seeds of Modern Tourism in the Levant, a Western Perspective,' looks at the beginning of international tourism with a critical eye. The chapter brilliantly shows that the concept of travel and the different forms of travel to the region are not a new reality but are rooted in the 19th century (and maybe before). Guillot shows how as early as the 19th century Bilad al Sham was already a prime cultural tourist destination and states eloquently in the introduction of his chapter: 'Looking at this early phase of modern tourism leads us to put international mass tourism into perspective as a long-term cycle evolving industry, and to evaluate its current development patters more objectively.'

Also, by concentrating on the tourism operators or agents (as Guillot terms them) such as transportation, accommodation, the tourist guide-book, and the organized tour, it becomes very obvious that his research is not the outcome of only a literature review, but on the contrary, it is also grounded in an in-depth fieldwork within the area on know-ledge based on extensive travel in the region, and on thorough discourse analysis. Guillot also sheds light on very important concepts such as the impact of the 'schedulable trip' on the rise of mass tourism and the link between the development of mass tourism and improvements in trans-portation. The chapter also skillfully traces the evolution of the 'organized tour' and the role of Thomas Cook in that regard.

Regarding Scott MacLeod's chapter: 'Digital Spatial Representations: New Communication Processes and "Middle Eastern" UNESCO World Heritage Sites Online,' extensive research had been conducted on the Middle East World Heritage Sites online. The chapter crosses boundaries between IT, media, and Internet on the one hand, and cultural represen-tations and cultural productions on the other. The author incorporates and explicates the various novel communication processes (e.g. integra-tion, interactivity, hypermedia, immersion, narrativity) reflecting an in-depth understanding of the concepts. The chapter attempts to be as objective as possible and to reflect a culturally bias-free critique of the various online representations of the World Heritage Sites.

The author critiques the Orientalist construct of the 'timeless desert' as unchanging in the context of modernity; furthermore, the author is critical of the criteria and selection procedures used to nominate World Heritage Sites from the region and uses Turkey as an example. Sites selected to the World Heritage List in Turkey demonstrate that the selec-tion criteria and process privilege those sites with Western links such as the ones linked to Greek, Roman, and Christian histories. Ottoman Islamic pasts (and regardless of their ultimate significance to the local

populations and to the identity of Turkey today) are marginalized and are only represented in context of their articulation with Roman and Christian histories. The chapter also shows how 'heritage sites are often used by state regimes to shape identities based on an imagined past rooted in such sites.'

In Saba Al Mahadin's and Peter Burns' chapter: 'Visitors, Visions and Veils: The Portrayal of the Arab World in Tourism Advertising,' the authors consider the promotion of tourism of the Arab world (visions) through images such as veils, camels, and primitive life. Those images, which symbolize backwardness, oppression, and inferiority, are adopted promoters of tourism in order to affect tourists' traveling decisions about these countries. In other words, the authors are looking at how the enterprise of tourism to the Middle East can shape the knowledge and the discourses about this part of the world. Then, they take a key symbol through the media discourse (the veil), and attempt to uncover such practices in the tourism promotion sector where certain discourses have been used to produce knowledge about the Arab world. These discourses, of which *Orientalism* is but one, and the knowledge produced lead to a practice of power. The chapter could be considered an attempt to resist such practices by the uncovering of such power/knowledge mechanisms.

The chapter critically addresses one contested relationship within the tourism industry and that is the unbalanced and unregulated relationship between the local people and those who promote the industry through visual representation. The authors feel that this notion of representing the Arab world through tourism's visual representations is not value free. And by shedding light on this issue, they contribute to the understanding of tourism's complex relationships, not only between the host community and tourists, but between a complicated web of power relations and stakeholders.

Aylin Orbaşli's chapter: 'The 'Islamic' City and Tourism: Managing Conservation and Tourism in Traditional Neighbourhoods,' brings to the foreground the notion of tourism and urban development when addressing the 'Islamic' city. There has been a lot of work on the 'Islamic' city, most of it has addressed the 'Islamic' city from other perspectives (e.g. architecture), but also socio-economic and cultural perspectives. This is one of very few times that tourism is becoming the focus of research while addressing the Islamic city. Orbaşli is skillful in shedding the light on a very important link between urban tourism and urban conservation. Besides, she brings out concepts and issues from both discourses, thus broadening the concept of stakeholders while incorporating management, socio-economic, and cultural considerations. Also, her discussion

reflects great depth regarding several issues such as visitor experience, benefits of tourism to medium and small historic towns, critiquing the separation of normal and tourist activities, issues of authenticity, and other issues.

Birgit Mershen's chapter: 'Development of Community-Based Tourism in Oman: Challenges and Opportunities,' is about community-based tourism development in the midst of governmental tourism policies that encourage 'affluent (quality) tourists' and upper-scale tourism. Such national policies in Oman are not isolated cases; it is a phenomenon that exists in other Middle Eastern countries such as Jordan, Egypt, and others. While large-scale tourism investments ('big money') that are encouraged by 'national policies' end up in 'enclave tourism' with high leakages (in terms of the revenues) to the outside; small- and medium-size 'local' tourism accommodations and other forms of tourism developments have a tendency to generate more revenues that stay within a certain country with minimal leakages to the outside. This is a very sensitive and important topic for contemplation in the Middle Eastern context and maybe else where in the world as well. Mershen has beautifully presented for the reader both the formal (tourism enclaves) and informal (community-based) forms of tourism. This chapter should be read not only by academicians and responsible tourists, but also by governmental officials and policy makers as well.

The case study (Wahabi Sands Rashid's Camp) is skillfully presented with all its details in a very contextualized tableau without a pretentious indulgence in theory but in a manner that reflects genuine and extensive ethnographic fieldwork and knowledge of the local truths and narratives. Mershen's case study is a perfect example of a good-quality microanalysis and investigation that beautifully depicts for the reader power mechanisms at international, national, and local levels. The chapter touches also an important phenomenon that is strongly present in many Middle Eastern countries: the discrepancies between the declared policies and strategies and actual governmental implemented actions within the tourism industry. In other words, there is a gap between the rhetoric and reality. In Oman, for example, while governments promises 'vowed not to sell out Oman's fine beaches,' yet the current government's 'enthusiasm for sea-shore resorts and enclave tourism probably has to be interpreted as an attempt to readjust aspirations to the economic realities.' Mershen declares that today in Oman, tourism plans are to be achieved through the large-scale investments through foreign investors without consideration that these 'quick' economic gains are at the expense of local benefits and the environment.

The chapter also attempts to understanding different levels and meanings of public participation within tourism development. Throughout the chapter and also the case study, Mershen has demonstrated how public participation can reach significant levels where the local community (such as the case in Rashid's Camp) could play a very significant role in the 'development' process and risks its own financial resources to achieve development (the family or local community are the initiators of a certain project and not the receivers of a deterministic mode of development).

Peter Burns' chapter: 'From Hajj to Hedonism? Paradoxes of Developing Tourism in Saudi Arabia,' presents a very well-informed and critical analysis on the development of tourism in Saudi Arabia in particular, and a critical analysis of the official (state) discourse in general. Burns presents critical analysis through the dismantling and the analysis of the official Saudi photomontage of the state. If anything, it only reconfirms how the official Saudi discourse uses such iconographies for the creation of its own legitimacy and rationalization. Also, it shows how 'Islam' is used to reaffirm this legitimacy of the Saudis.

Burns links tourism developments in Saudi Arabia and processes of Saudization to 'encouraging new private sector ventures.' Burns reiterates that 'given that in 1996 only 7% of the private sector workforce was Saudi, it is quite clear that the private sector has to meet this challenge, mainly through Saudization and expansion: hence the drive for, among other things, tourism.' The government is trying to transform its notorious responsibility of creating 'relatively undemanding white-collar jobs in the bureaucracy' to the private sector.

David Homa's chapter: 'Tourist Development in Sinai, Egypt: Bedouin, Visitors, and Government Interaction,' is about tourism development in between 'national strategies' of the Egyptian government, which prioritizes the 'affluent tourist,' 'multi-national investors' who want to invest in 'tourist enclaves,' and the 'local community' in the case of the Bedouins of the Sinai who have been taking part in tourism development since the 1960s in the Sinai and are very much interested in maintaining an active role in the tourism development in the area, the tourists flocking to this 'hot spot' in the thousands, and the travelers and backpackers who are interested in a more 'scaled down' type of accommodation and overall experience. The mechanisms of power, negotiations, and conflicts that take place between stakeholders present an outstanding case though which one can understand a pattern or a 'phenomenon' that is emerging in the Middle East at the moment in other places such as in Aqaba, Sharm al Skeikh, and in other places as well. Homa's discussion of authenticity is interesting where he is grounding it in a contextual ethics that is not

only culturally based but also depends on the nature and type of the tourist/traveler, level of involvement of the local community, and 'personal frame of reference.'

Rami Farouk Daher's chapter: 'Tourism, Heritage, and Urban Trans-formations in Jordan and Lebanon: Emerging Actors and Global-Local Juxtapositions,' ventures into the epistemology of urban conservation/regeneration of historic cores in different cities of Jordan and Lebanon within the cultural region of Bilad al Sham. Through its various discourse analysis, the chapter will investigate the nature, scope, and effect of diverse groups of publics, actors, networks, and agencies (international and local) engaged in the definition, production, consumption, and regen-eration of 'urban heritage' and its links to place politics, identity con-struction, and tourism development. The chapter will attempt to reveal the various connections, networks, and discourses operating between these publics, actors, and agencies.

It is very obvious that tourism and its related development has played a significant role in the transformation and reshaping of cities recently. This chapter sheds light on current socio-economic and cultural/spatial transformations affecting urban centers and historic city cores within the region and identifies several significant emerging phenomena: (1) Several emerging urban regeneration/tourism projects within the region that stem from neo-liberal urban restructuring and circulation of surplus global capital as in the case of prime cities of Beirut's Solidere Project in the downtown area and Amman's Abdali Mega Urban Project, which is represented as the 'new downtown for the City.' (2) The emerging role of aid agencies and international donors in the regeneration/tourism projects targeting historic urban centers of secondary cities within the region and circulating a standardized form of heritage and of place in places such as Salt, Kerak, Jerash and Madaba in Jordan, and Tripoli, Jbeil, and Sour in Lebanon. (3) Emerging new/old actors and agents in the form of 'notable families' who reintroduce themselves in the region as patrons of culture, heritage, and history. They work to fund and patronize urban regeneration projects, adaptations into cultural tourism facilities and into heritage museums and interpretation centers. Thought the impact might be minimal at the moment in comparison to other agents of change, such families and philanthropists are reintroducing another alternative to the 'state's formal vision of history and of the past, furthermore, they facili-tate different itineraries for tourists and visitors that rest on an informal narration of the past and an emphasis on the "ordinary," on the social history and matters of everyday life.'

The significance of the chapter rests on the fact that it ventures into very contemporary and recent transformations and changes within the region of the Middle East that had stayed predominantly outside the interest of researchers and scholars such as the inseparable relation between tourism and urban change. Observers of the current transformations of the urban scene in the region are likely to conclude that cities are gradually becoming business and tourism spectacles.

In Salam Al Mahadin's chapter: 'Tourism and Power Relations in Jordan: Contested Discourses and Semiotic Shifts,' she qualifies as a local Jordanian intellectual who attempts to unravel and reveal power through discursive shifts where it is most invisible and subtle. She does that through an in-depth analytics of power in a locale that is Jordan where also she is accounting for this particular location in a remarkable and in-depth manner. Not only that, she is dealing with Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' and the emergence of political economy as central to the 'art of government,' but also his 'archaeology' as well. By unraveling the various shifts in discursive practices and how they affect tourism, Al Mahadin has critically presented an in-depth discursive analysis of the Jordanian formal discourse. She shows how tourism and its related 'sites,' such as museums, billboards, websites, pamphlets, and others, are being used and as institutions to legitimize and to reshape state formal discourses along the three layers she uses for her chapter: the nation-state that is 'Jordan', the monarchy, and the community or sense of Jordanianess. Based on not only Foucault, but also critical thinkers of the Frankfurt School such as Adorno and Kellner, such institutions formed parts of the strategies of 'governing' with the objective of producing a disciplined citizenry or creating a forced link between culture and entertainment, thus camouflaging oppression and power relations.

Linked to the previous point, she is beautifully situating tourism as one of the discursive practices of governmentality (with its forms of social planning and policy making) linked to issues of legitimacy and identity construction vis-à-vis the three layers mentioned earlier (the nation-state, the monarchy, and the community or sense of Jordanianess). She mentions how tourism 'forms a node in a web of power relations that delimit and define the possibilities of action and the "forms of knowledge and identities and agencies by which governing operate".'

Notes

1. Bilad al Sham is a very old and archaic local geographic term denoting the land of the East Mediterranean region, the term had been in use since more than a thousand years. The concept of Bilad al Sham introduced in this chapter

is very different from the politically grounded concept of Greater Syria, which is linked to the ideology of Pan Arabism promoted by individuals such as Antoun Saadeh or Nuri al Sai'd in the middle of the 20th century. This book promotes a historical/cultural and popular/local concept of Bilad al Sham from the bottom up, grounded in the ethnographic, cultural, and regional realities of the area. As a concept/reality present in both popular and scholarly discourses, Bilad al Sham exists beyond the limitations of national boundaries or discourses. Also, regardless of how contested this concept is by official historiographies, Bilad al Sham is still a 'living' and 'functioning' conception.

2. Al Mashreq al Arabi is another local concept that emerged recently during attempts of establishing Arab unity within the Arab world with its different cultural formal regions: (1) Al Mashreq al Arabi (Arab East), which encompasses the current nation states of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine; (2) Wadi al Neel (The Nile Valley), which encompasses the nation states of Egypt and Sudan; (3) Al Maghreb al Arabi (Arab West), which encompasses the nation states of Libya, Algiers, Tunis, and Morrocco; and (4) the Gulf and the Arabian Pennisula, which encompasses the nation-states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yeman.

3. The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministries of Foreign Affairs held in Barcelona on November 27–8, 1995, marked the starting point of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelonna Process). A wide framework of political, economic, and social relations between 15 Member States of the Europaean Union and 12 Partners of the Southern Mediterranean countries was initiated (Euromed Partnership, 2002).

4. Some Euromed Cultural Heriage Projects include: CORPUS: Traditional Mediterranean Architecture; IPAMED: Computerized Cartography of the Historical Heritage; MWNF: Museum with no Frontiers (Exhibition Trail on Islamic Art and Civilization in the Mediterranean); ALAMBO: Professional Qualification for Architectural Heritage Arts; UNIMED HERIT: Post-graduate Course in Cultural Heritage and Heritage Management; EXPO 2000 EURO-MED HERITAGE: Exhibition of Euromed Cultural Heritage in connection with the Expo 2000 in Hanover; MEDRESSA: Multi Media and Cultural Heritage; EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HERITAGE DAYS: The European Heritage Days and their extension to the Mediterranean region, in addition to several other projects as well (Euromed Heritage, 2002).

5. New ITs used include GIS (Geographic Information Systems), Multimedia DBMS (Database Management Systems), and others.

6. *AlHayat* newspaper, Thursday, December 17, 1998, Issue No. 13071.

7. Meeting with George Audi and other soap factory staff, Audi Foundation, Saida, Lebanon (February 18, 2002).

8. Syria Live Net: http://www.syrialive.net/tourism.tourism.htm (accessed on April 13, 2005).

9. These observations were taken by the author during a recent visit to Sharm al Sheikh in June 2005.

10. Lecture by Gabriel Abraham on November 23, 2000 entitled: Preserving the City of the Gods: Luxor, Egypt, at Diwan al Mimar (The Center for the Study of the Built Environment's (CSBE) Architectural Forum) in Amman, Jordan. Diwan al Mimar is a discussion forum on the built environment organized by CSBE in association with Darat al Funun–The Khalid Shouman Foundation.

11. Information is based on several field visits to Beit Jabri in Damascus in the years 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 and to an interview with Raed Jabri (owner) in February 2002.
12. *AlHayat* newspaper, 'Saudi Arabia is witnessing a surge in tourism festivals: Saudi tourists staying in country make developing excited.' Issue No. 14322, p. 17.
13. *Al Dustour* newspaper, September 9, 2004. Amman, Jordan.
14. Ibh Battutah is a famous Muslim traveler from Morroco who in the 12th century traveled all over the Islamic world from the shores of the Atlantic to China. This shopping mall mimics the built environment of some locations from different parts of the world to entice shoppers. Similar to Disney's Epcot Center, the shopping mall claims to provide a cultural experience for the shopper.
15. The author visited and stayed in Le Baron Hotel in February 2002. During his stay, several informal discussions with the owners and employees took place.
16. The author visited Al Rabi'e Hotel several times from 2001 and up to 2004. These visits provided the chance for informal discussions with the owners, employees, and some of the tourists who happened to be staying there.
17. Meeting with Ms Monique Aggiouri. Debbbaneh Palace, Mutran Street, Saida, Lebanon (February 18, 2002).
18. Idrisi Travel, 2005. Touristic brochure, Netherlands. www.idrisitravel.co.uk. Accessed on December 18, 2005.
19. www.jabalomar.com. Accessed on April 23, 2005.

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