

## Monitoring, Periodical Review & Revision

Once the management plan is ready, the most difficult task is to move into implementation. Therefore, one important step would be to transform the Management Plan into an implementation plan with specific dates, tasks, and details that is doable within a 5-year period. Within this implementation plan, provisions for monitoring and periodical review are incorporated.

At present, monitoring takes place on a daily basis through inspections of various archaeological remains and also facilities on Site by the existing conservation and management staff. For example, the archeological sites are currently inspected on a daily basis by the assistant director of the Baptism Site Commission in coordination and cooperation with the director of the *Balqa Directorate* of the *Department of Antiquities of Jordan*. An annual program of maintenance is currently implemented. Documentation is carried out by means of taking pictures before, during and after each important intervention with a report and can be found at The Baptism Site Commission and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Furthermore, various tourist facilities within the Site undergo periodical inspection, monitoring and maintenance. Monitoring also includes factors critical to authenticity such as use, spirit, feeling and atmosphere. Finally, also the various tour guides operating within the Site are subject to technical training and capacity building to ensure that pilgrims experience the Holiness of the site, go back in time and get in physical contact with what we have in the Bible. (Local guides also get training for first aid.)

The following mechanisms would be suggested to conduct monitoring and periodical review on the Site:

- **Mechanisms for Monitoring and Periodical Review** related to Site Conservation and the Physical Condition of the Archaeological Layer in addition to the state of the natural layer within the Site. Monitoring addresses each of the elements identified in the assessment part of the Management Plan. For example, monitoring of the state of conservation of the archaeological layer within the Site should address issues related to:

- Salt deposits
- Pulverization.
- Exfoliation.
- Detachment.

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3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014

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- Atmospheric Pollution; and other issues that were assessed during the assessment phase of the Management Plan.

The data inferred from the monitoring of the state of conservation for the Site can be inputted into periodical reports and tables that identify key indicators during the monitoring process. The following are the main indicators:

Theme	CONSERVATION		
	Indicator	Method of measurement	Review
Protection	Size of the WHS	Size of the WHS in hectares and any changes to the WHS boundary	5 year review
	Existence of a buffer zone	Existence of a buffer zone	Yes
	WHS Policy in Local Plan	Existence of a WHS Policy protecting the site against inappropriate development in the Local Plan or Local Development Framework	Yes
	Planning guidance for development in the WHS	Existence of planning guidance for development in the WHS	Yes
Condition of site	List and number of features in poor condition	<b>Condition survey</b> of key features based on the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS, including fixed point photography and a report with urgent and longer-term recommendations.	5 year review
Development pressure	Number of planning applications in the WHS	Annual figure provided by the local planning authority.	Annually
Change	List of major physical changes within the WHS & record of any loss	Annual report	Annually
Theme	USES & INTERPRETATION		
	Indicator	Method of measurement	Review
Tourism	Number of visitors to the WHS	Ticket count for paying sites or annual visitor survey.	5 years review
	Profile of visitors	Visitor survey every 3 years at least, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of education visitors</li> <li>• % of foreign visitors and nationality</li> <li>• % of groups</li> <li>• % of repeat visitors</li> </ul>	5 years review
Theme	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY		
	Indicator	Method of measurement	Review
Sustainable transport	% of visitors arriving or travelling within the WHS by other means than car	Visitor survey	5 years review
Climate change	Number of floods, storms, extreme cold and hot days, loss of coastal land by erosion, etc.	An assessment of vulnerability to climate change	5 years review
Biodiversity	Biodiversity	Survey of unimproved different species	5 years review



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Theme	MANAGEMENT		
	Indicator	Method of measurement	Review
WHS management	WHS Management Plan	WHS Management Plan	Yes
	WHS Steering Group	WHS Steering Group	Yes
Risk	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Yes

Such mechanisms could be based on:

1. Periodical assessment (visual, other) for the state of conservation of the archaeological layer on site.
2. Periodical testing of samples from the Site to evaluate their physical condition and state of conservation.
3. Periodical inventories for conservation measures on Site.
4. State of the Environment Reporting: conduct thematic surveys concentrating on the number, expansion, extinction, and characterization of different species (fauna and flora) with emphasis on the unique plant and animal habitats of the Site.
5. Periodical documentation of the Site addressing changes to the archaeological layer in terms of conservation and excavations, and also changes to the interpretation paths and methods. This will include the updating of existing measured drawings for the Site.
6. Periodical surveys and documentation of the natural habitat of the Site.

It is important to mention, that the periodicity of the monitoring will be decided by conservation experts on Site. The personnel conducting the monitoring would be associated with the Site Conservation, Interpretation, and Management Unit (a new proposed conservation unit within the organizational structure of the Baptism Site Commission).

- **Mechanisms for Monitoring and Periodical Reporting** related to the Quality of the Visitor Experience on the Site to address issues of congestion, routing, feeling, and other: such mechanisms could be based on:

1. The Participant Observation Method: This approach will monitor and investigate in a non-biased methodology the nature and quality of the tourist experience on Site. This is

done by a staff member (or other person) pretending to be a tourist and that follows the visitors around and documenting details of their experience such as routing, problems with congestions, bottle necks, lack of shaded areas, other. This person, and through this participant observation approach will identify the challenges and problems that are faced by the tourists on site.

2. Periodical Visitor Satisfaction Surveys: eliciting tourists and visitors opinion on the level of services and quality of the experience within the Site.

Data management for such period reporting and monitoring is very important. Such periodical tables, review reports, and surveys should be electronically filed in order to be able to make comparisons and evaluations in the future.

## **Project Developments**

As indicated on the map entitled “Details of the buffer zone around the baptism site” on page 135 of the nomination file, it was seen appropriate to think and plan for a village to serve pilgrims visiting the baptism site.

The main idea is to provide simple rooms with good services to allow pilgrims to spend more time at the site and the important surrounding sites historically, archaeologically and religiously linked with our site, taking into account UNESCO standards.

Any suggestions for investors to build such a village in the future will not be allowed unless the Board of Trustees agrees and the theme of the site be respected “The wilderness of John the Baptist”. UNESCO shall be informed about any proposal to start such a project, and its approval shall be respected. The state party will not conduct any future developments in the world heritage property without an approval from the World Heritage center bearing in mind those changes will not affect the OUV of the site and will be compatible with the operational guidelines of the UNESCO 1972 convention.

That is the reason too that the area allocated for the suggested village was chosen to be outside and far away from the archaeological core zone.

Baptism Site  
Commission



**THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN**

**(THE BAPTISM SITE COMMISSION)**

**MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**OF THE BAPTISM SITE, BETHANY BEYOND THE JORDAN  
“AL-MAGHTAS”**

**SUBMITTED FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST  
JANUARY 2014**

# **Management Plan**

## **For the Baptism Site “Bethany beyond the Jordan” (*Al-Maghtas*)**

Prepared by

**Rami Farouk Daher**

Of

**TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants**

For the

**Baptism Site Commission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

**January, 2014**

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## Introduction to Cultural Site Management Planning

The Management Plan will offer a collective vision and provide a decision making tool that would guide future excavations, conservation and intervention on the site. It is value-driven and through a participatory and interdisciplinary process will balance conservation needs and tourism development demands. Being a collective vision to the management of cultural and natural sites, the management plan provides an anchor to accommodate how different stakeholders relate to the site and to its management.

An effective Management Plan should be capable not only of guiding policy makers and planners involved with the site but should also engage with the fullest variety of stakeholders in order to secure a long term and sustainable future for the Baptism Site. Thus in drawing up the Management Plan for the site the following 2 broad principles should be adhered to:

1. The Plan allows each stakeholder group to **engage** constructively with the site while recognizing the overall need to protect, enhance and inform. The Plan will require the backing of all stakeholders.
2. The Plan takes an **integrative approach** to the management of the site recognizing that its value lies in the relationships between the built environment, the natural environment, and most important of all, its value lies in making its significance accessible to the general public and visitors.

Different researchers have orchestrated and came up with planning mechanisms for conservation, interpretation, and management for cultural sites. Several scholars (Demas 2002; Greene 1999; Sullivan 1997; de la Torre 1995) developed useful and insightful frameworks that depended on identification of site and its associated stakeholders; assessment of values, significance, and management contexts; and coming up with responses in the form of policies and strategies. Yet, long-term application of such methods had led some critical observers to question the appropriateness of ideology transfer in cultural site management; specially with recent studies (Smith 1994; Daher 2007, Harvey 2001; Herzfeld 2003; Byrne 1991; Munjeri 2004) that prioritizes the incorporation of local knowledge and practices of *patrimonilization* in cultural site management and tourism development approaches worldwide.

Objectives of Management Planning for cultural heritage sites are multiple, they include:



- Create a **shared vision** among staff responsible for the site and external parties who have an interest in the site.
- **Involve key players** (and thereby strengthen relationships, negotiate conflicts, and form alliances that will benefit the site.
- Engage in transparent decision making; that is to make the decision making process open and clear to all.
- Reassess, evaluate, and **synthesize information about a site**

Management Planning is premised on the following three assumptions or conceptions:

- Many of the problems facing archaeological sites today, are rarely capable of being solved definitively, but can be managed; that is, there adverse impacts can be mitigated or controlled.
- The best or most appropriate decisions for a site are those that will preserve the values of the place and are sustainable.
- Good decisions are the result of careful planning.

Several researchers in the area of heritage management had written extensively on heritage management, they confirm that preparation of management plans for cultural sites could proceed through a 3 tier process:

**Identification:** understanding of the site, its documentation, and stakeholder analysis. During this stage (Identification), the team would continue on managing the data collected on the site and synthesize into a comprehensive documentation and description of the Site. Furthermore, this stage would also address researching the various stakeholder groups associated with the site. Finally, this stage ends with identifying the main aims behind preparing the management plan for the Baptism site.

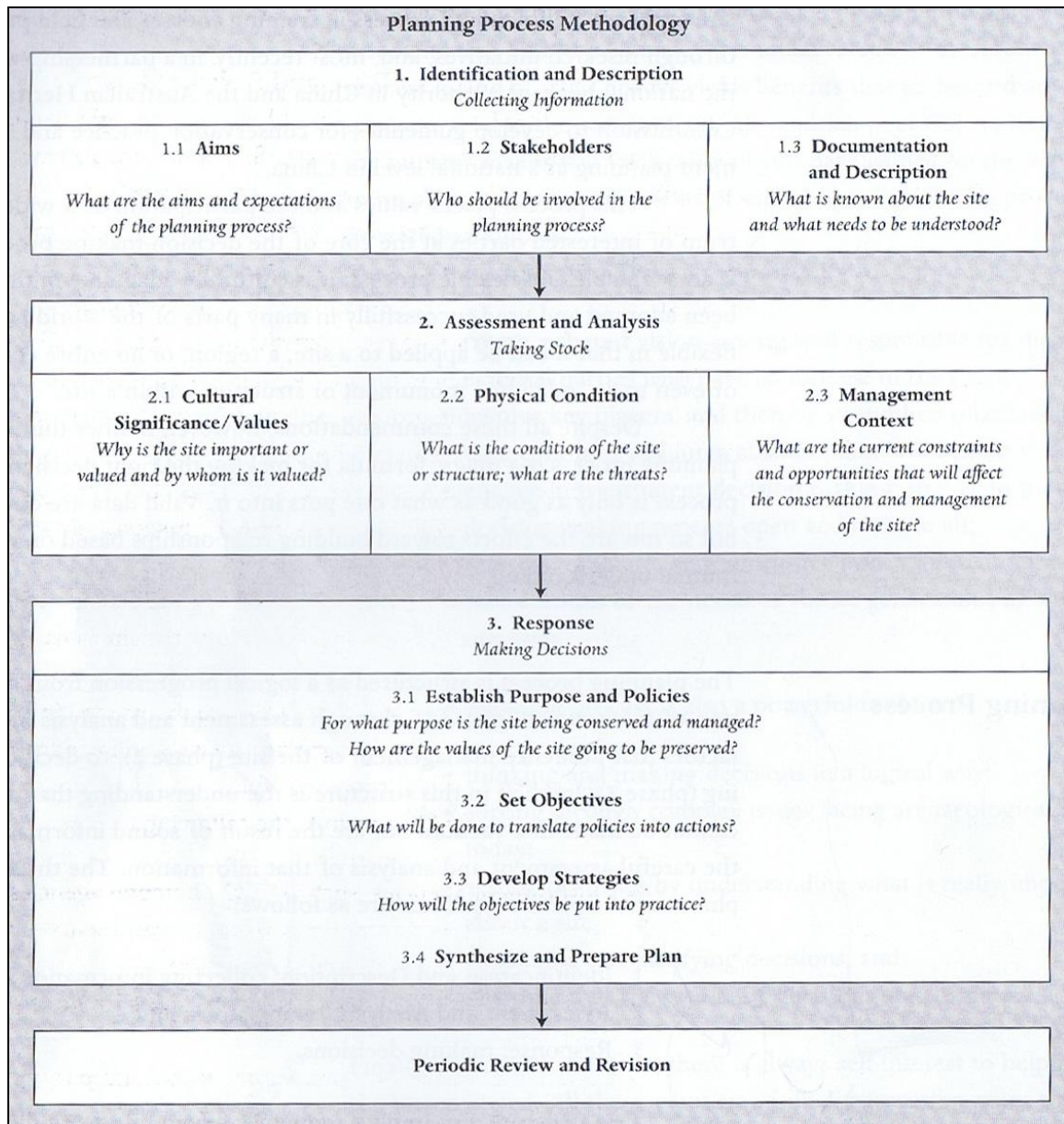
**Assessment:** of management context, physical condition, and cultural significance values. This important stage (Assessment) is mostly about the following:

- Assessment of the management context identifying the ongoing constraints and opportunities that will affect the conservation and management of the site.

- Assessment of the physical condition of the site in addition to assessment of potential environmental and physical threats and challenges. This also includes an assessment of previous conservation works conducted on the site.
- Assessment of Cultural Site Significance (and values) addressing why the site is important and for whom.

**Response:** establish policies and develop strategies for the management of the site. During this stage, we will establish policies addressing how the values of the Site would be preserved for future generations and conveyed to the public. Objectives would address what will be done to translate policies into action. Furthermore, strategies would be developed addressing how the objectives will be put into practice. These (strategies) include addressing ownership, legal status of the site, environmental mitigation measures, future conservation of the site, future site interpretation and presentation to the public, visitor facilities and experiences, staffing levels and job description to mention a few.

Management planning is concerned with the notion of how sites might function in the life of the community and how to integrate management decisions into planning practices and programs such as the responsibility summarized in Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention, “to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community, and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programs”.



Source: Demas, Martha/ (2000) *Management Planning for Archeological Sites*, page 30

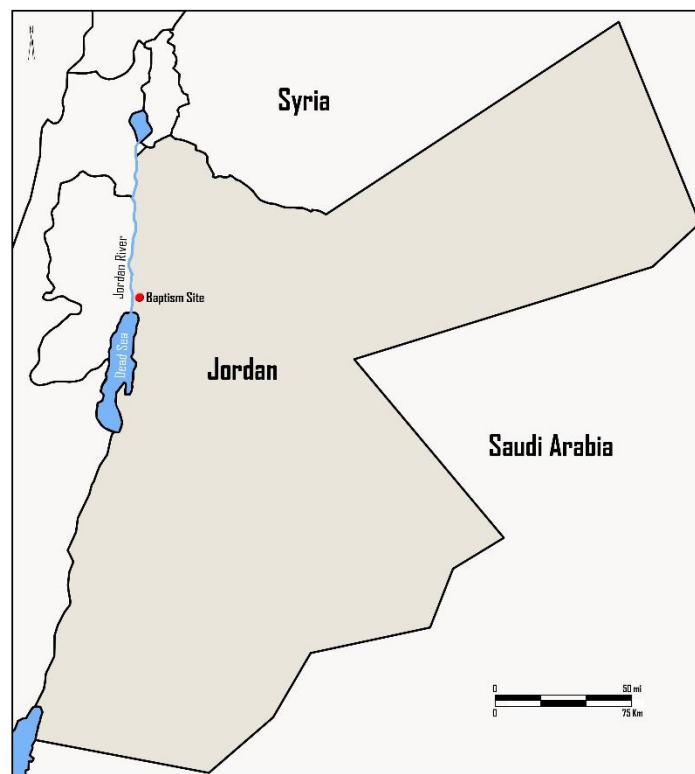
**Figure (1):** Planning Process Methodology

## Part I of the Management Plan: Identification and Description

The purpose of this step is to delineate the components of the site and to collect and synthesize information and documentation. This involves identifying and inventorying important documents and archives, delineating the boundary and the Site (both legal and cultural, and identifying and naming its specific components for purposes of defining discrete management entities, and for consistent reference the planning process.

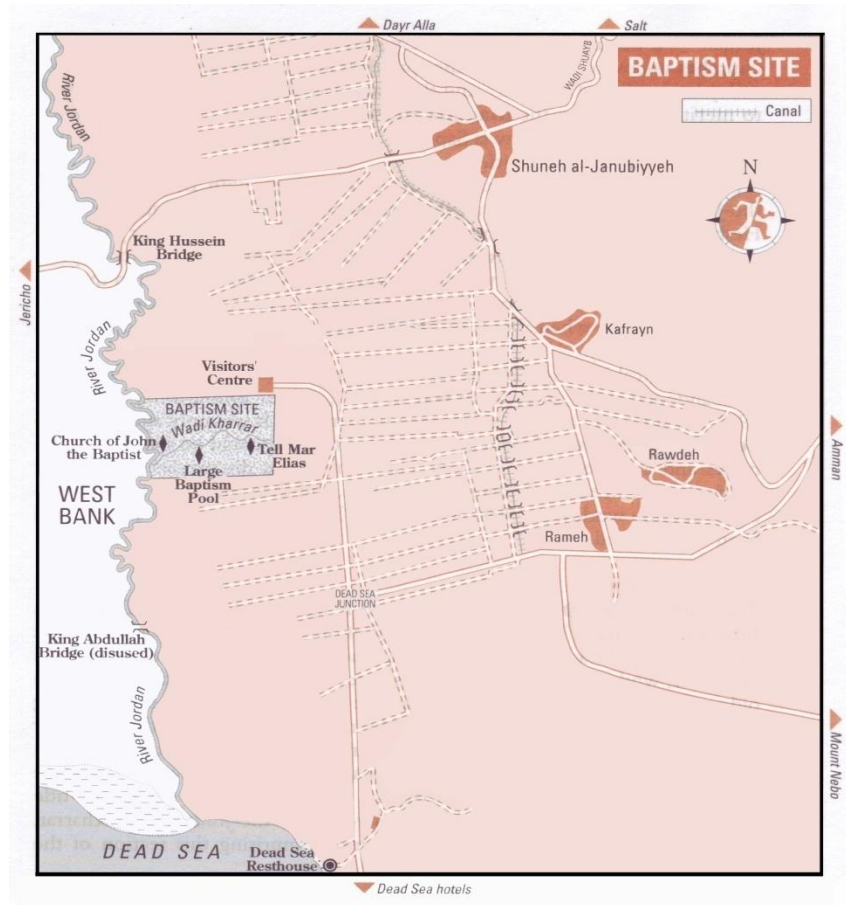
### Documentation & Description

#### A Brief Introduction to the Site



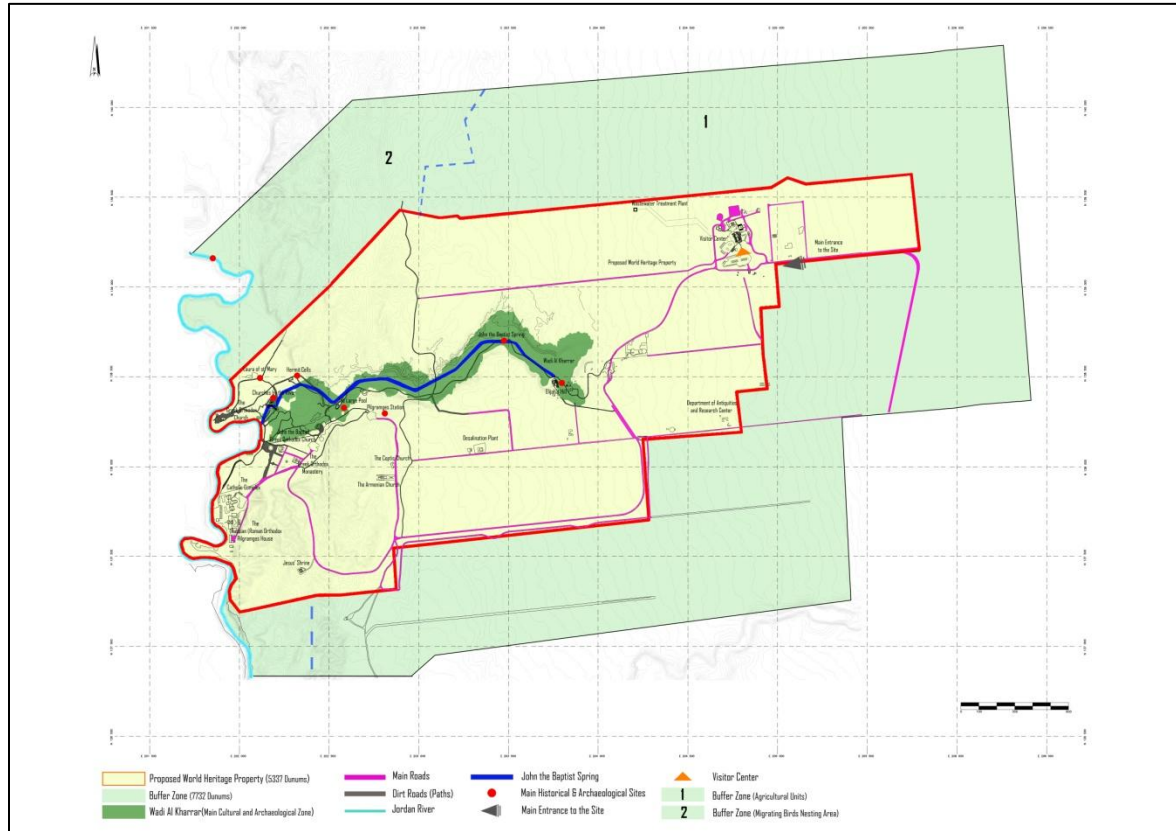
Source: <http://www.google.jo>

**Map (1):** Map of Jordan



Source: <http://www.google.io>

**Map (2):** Location of the Baptism Site in relation to the Jordan River and the Northern shore of the Dead Sea



Source: Daher, Rami (TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants)/ (June 2012)

**Map (3):** The Baptism Site Boundaries





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (1):** A view of the Jordan River



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (2):** Interpretive Paths below the Rhotorius Monastery in Wadi Al-Kharrar with a view of the North Church's Protective Shelter in the background



**Image (3):** White marl cliffs overlook the Jordan Valley, with caves cut into them for hermits or resident monks who needed a place quiet contemplation

Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

The Baptism site is located in the southern Jordan Valley, the lowest spot on earth, in a special environment. The area of the valley is the broadest zone (ca. 16 km wide) between Lake Tiberius and the Dead Sea and is considered the most fertile area in the entire region. In this region there are many archaeological sites representing a continuous history of occupation starting with the origins of settled life up to the present. This area was a cross road between the east and west sides of the Jordan River. Especially since the Roman period the area was densely populated until the Ayyubid/Mamluk period (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century AD). Recent (second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) major agricultural developments in the Jordan Rift Valley area increased the number of population of the area due to the inception of the Eastern *Ghor* Canal.

The Baptism area was carefully selected next to a spring known as Al-Kharrar close to the actual floor of the Jordan Valley (the *Ghor*) extending on a gradual smooth slope to the *Zor* where the Jordan River changes its bed from time to time. Such a location allowed continuous construction at the site in an area around 2 km. This situation enabled the monks at the site to utilize the surrounding area for agriculture. The monks themselves lived in caves cut into the Qatar hills facing the *Zor* and the Jordan River to the west.

So far the archaeological site stretches around 2 km from east to west between Tell Al-Kharrar (Elijah's Hill), surrounded by a stream of the Wadi Al-Kharrar on the east, up to the Jordan River in the west. The fenced area is approximately 4 km square, which includes the core and the rest of the site that is owned and designated including possible undiscovered archaeological remains.



The site is mainly accessible from the eastern side. Accessibility from the western side awaits peace in the region or special arrangements among the concerned state parties. The ancient name of the site as indicated on archaeological remains (e.g., Madaba Mosaic Map of the Byzantine period) is *beit Anya* (house of springs or sorrows in Arabic) of which its current name “Bethany” is derived.

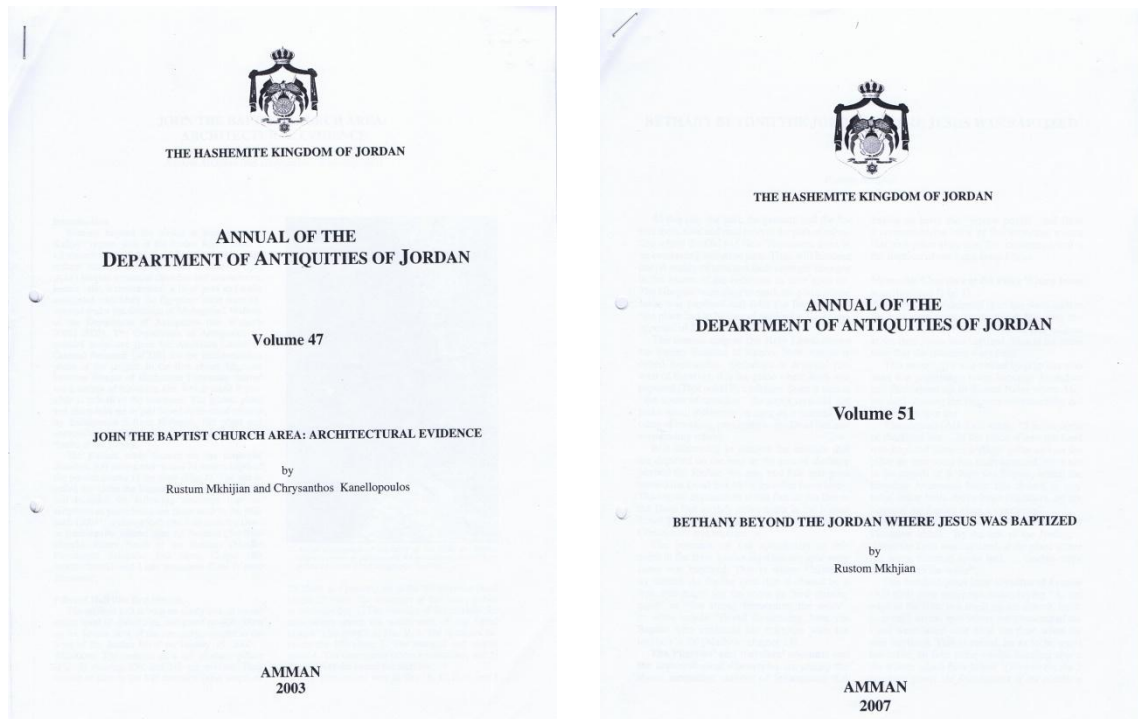
## Data Collection Methodology

The data collection process was very tedious as it involved extensive research and the assemblage of and synthesis between different types of data from various venues that included governmental organizations, personal archives, and published sources to mention a few.

## Types of Data Collection

The different types of data that were collected are summarized below:

- **Available maps of various types (contours, zoning, land-use, other)**
  - Site maps (at the scale of site showing site contours, site features (existing, proposed, and under construction), natural features, archaeological features and remains, infrastructure, contemporary buildings, other).
  - Site maps (at a scale of site and its surrounding areas) including ownership maps
  - Zoning maps at the scale of site and surrounding areas)
  - Land-use maps showing surrounding areas and urban concentrations, other.)
  - Maps related to the Site’s environmental layer
- **Available mapping, reports, or documentation for the excavations and conservation works that had occurred through the years**
  - Available documentation of archaeological excavations and finding (e.g., plans, sections, photographs of particular archaeological areas).
  - Reports and maps on these various archaeological layers and recent conservation works)
  - Reports and studies on the Site’s environmental layer
- **Available print material on site (brochures, pamphlets, other)**



**Figure (2):** Selected Scholarly Research Papers on the Baptism Site excavations from the Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (ADAJ)

- **Available publications on site (e.g., books, research journals, internet publication, other)**
- **Available information on visitors' profiles and numbers.**
- **Available Photographic Record (old and new) including Aerial photographs**
- **Available Archives (e.g., newspaper articles, travel accounts, other)**

### **Fieldwork & Site Visits**

The team working on the management plan conducted several site visits to the site over a period of 7 months in 2012. These visits were coordinated with different stakeholders who are involved with the site such as site staff and members of the local community.

### **Workshops & Experts Reports**

During the period through which the Management Plan was prepared, several workshops were organized with various stakeholders on Site, these workshops were attended by representatives from the local community, from the staff already involved in the site, religious leaders and bishops belonging to the different denominations, in addition to representatives from the researchers (e.g., archaeologists, architects, other) who had worked on the Site previously.

Furthermore, many of these meetings and workshops resulted in the submission of short reports by various experts who had worked on the Site in the past in the areas of archaeology, environment, geology, and other areas. These reports were discussed and read by the team working on the Management Plan.

## **Site & Context Understanding**

### **Site Boundary**

The following is a textual and description of the Site's boundary complemented with images and maps:

The Baptism Site Protected Area is located in the Southern Jordan Valley on the east side of the River Jordan, around 9 km north of the Dead Sea, which is part of the District

of South *Shunah* / Governorate of *Al-Balqaa*. The site is located a few kilometers to the east of the oasis and ancient site of Jericho and ca. 50 km west of Amman, the capital of Jordan. It covers an area of about 4 km square where 15 archaeological sites dating back to the Roman and Byzantine periods have been discovered. The precise limits of the archaeological remains are undetermined, although any identifiable cultural traces were included in the protected area. Several modern villages are located in the vicinity of the property. These include Al-Kufrein, Al-Ramah, Al-Jofah, Al-Rawdah, Sweimeh, New Shunah, Al-Karamah, Al-Nahdah, Al-Jawasreh, Nimrin Al-Gharbi and Nimrin Al-Sharqi.

Geographical coordinates of the Site to the nearest second from Google Earth are: 35°32'49.92" East; 31° 50 11.96" North. Also, the Site's UTM coordinates are: 0743979 e/3526317n; elev. -304). The Palestine grid coordinates for this area 203,770 E 138,460 N. the UTM coordinates are 742,960 E 3525 N. The map number for this area in Jordan is 3 153,4SW 13, and the elevation is ca. 335m below sea level.

### **The Natural Setting (layer)**

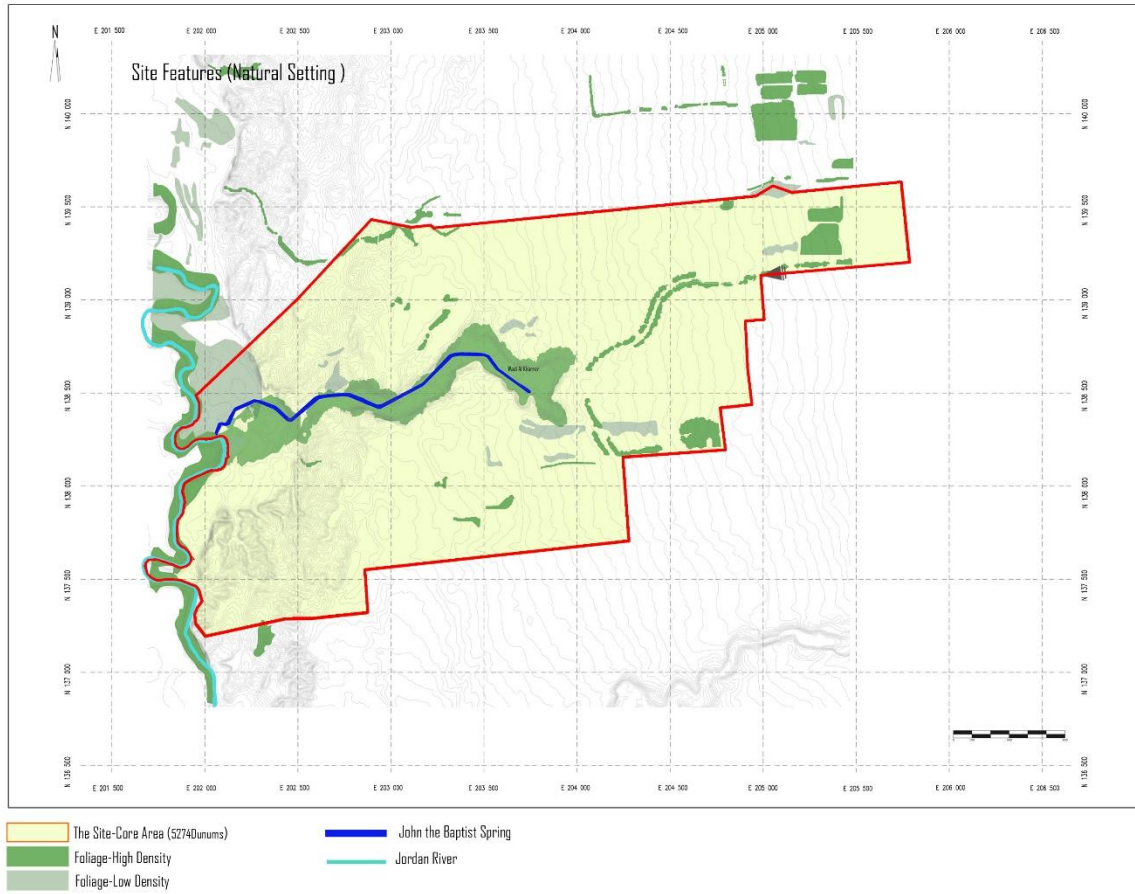
The following is a detailed discussion regarding the condition of the natural layer of the Site.

### **Environmental Information**

#### **Physical**

##### ***Climate***

The site is in a very hot area, reaching 40° C in summer. In winter the temperature is about 10° C. The long-term mean annual temperature is about 20 C°.



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (4):** Site Features (Natural setting Layer)



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (4):** Visitors to the Site Under the hot summer sun

### ***Hydrology***

The site is a part of the Rift Valley formation. The area, a part of the Middle *Ghor*, forms a depression enclosed by mountainous ridges and is composed of a network of small wadis flowing east towards the Jordan River.

Fresh and brackish water flow from beneath the ground and from the adjacent mountains into the major Wadi at the site, moving from east to west towards the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

The site is around 400m below sea level. Annual rainfall does not exceed 100mm and the water table at the site is very shallow due to its low altitude. That, in addition to the presence of adjacent mountain ridges, helps to direct the rainwater runoff into the Wadi system in the form of streams of medium velocity. The area is sub-tropical due to its low elevation.

### ***Ground Water Features of the Site***

The aquifer underlying the site is the Jordan Valley Floor Aquifer, consisting of alluvial fans and other recent sediment inter-fingering with the salty, clayed deposits of the predecessors of the Dead Sea. The ground water flow is directed from the mountain foothills to the course of the Jordan River.

### ***Surface Water Systems:***

The surface water system is found in two perpendicular movement systems. The first is the North-South movement of the Jordan River and the second is the East-West movement of Wadi Al-Kharrar, which ends at the Jordan River.

Wadi Al-Kharrar is a stream that springs at the lower level of soil surface almost 2 km east of the Jordan River. The amount of water in this Wadi fluctuates based on the seasonal amount of rainfall. The water is rather fresh at the starting point, but becomes more saline as it moves along since it leaches some salt deposits until it ends in the Jordan River. Wadi Al-Kharrar does not actually pour into Jordan River as a water stream but rather forms a delta saturated with water supporting very thick vegetation.

### ***The Water Supply System for the Baptism Pools:***

The religious, cultural and touristic value of the site arises from the ritual of baptism. A water system was constructed to feed the several ancient baptism pools in the site. An intricate system of earth channels between the Baptism pools was constructed to cover the whole area.

The source of baptism water is a ground water well to the east of Wadi Al-Kharrar. A pipe line connects the well to the mouth of the Wadi, where it will fill the first Baptism Pool near the Churches on the Monastery on Wadi Al-Kharrar dating to the Byzantine period. The pipe will run underground to the second Baptism pool near the Al-Kharrar spring and then to the third pool near the Jordan River.

The waste Baptism water will be piped back upstream of Wadi Al-Kharrar and then run in earth channels in the Wadi to continue as a source of water for the wetlands. This added amount of permanent water flow in the Wadi system increases the amount of water and thus preserves the ecological features of the site against any possible drying out in the future.

### ***Geology & Soil Type***

Most of the soil in the Rift Valley is alluvial in origin, transported from the high mountains and down into the valley. Since the texture and composition of the soil is dependent upon the place of origin and manner of transport, some areas have red clay, while other places have brownish and yellowish soil, depending on the soil mixture.

The soil cover is porous and allows the ground water to percolate as well as to ooze from the ground water to the surface. The soil color depends on the origin of the mountain rocks surrounding the site as well as the transported mature soil.

The soil types in the site can be classified into the following groups:

**Alluvial soil:** this soil is arable due to the low concentration or absence of salt. The soil usually supports the natural vegetation of tropical trees and shrub land vegetation.

**Saline Soil:** this type supports a special type of vegetation often characterized by the formation of silt dunes dominated by *Nitraria Retusa*.

**Lisan Marls (Katarat):** this type of soil is highly saline since it was formed under the ancient sea that once linked the Sea of Galilee with the Red Sea along the Rift Valley. This soil becomes very sticky when wet.



## **Biological**

### ***Habitat Diversity***

According to the references, the site can be classified into the following habitats:

- Major Wadi with permanent flow of water
- Reed beds
- Brackish marches
- Jordan River

### ***Plant Diversity***

According to the references, 77 species belonging to 28 families are present in the site. In spring time 200 species are present.

The floral composition is as follows:

10% are rare species

30% are of limited distribution

18% are edible

44% are fodder plants

10% are wood plants

8% are used for handicrafts

21% are medicinal plants

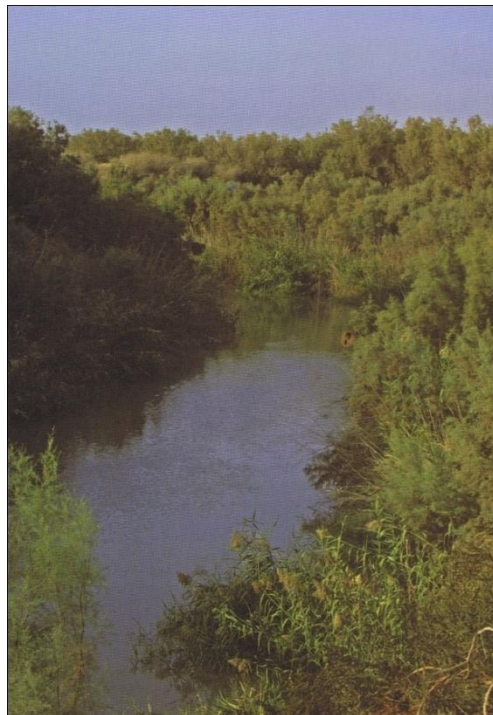
13% can be used as ornamentals

According to Al-Eisawi et al. (1999), four subdivisions can be identified at the site: Sub-tropical and Sudanian vegetation, fresh water vegetation (which occurs at two places: the Jordan River and Wadi Al-Kharrar), saline vegetation and Katarat vegetation. Some of the site most noticeable plants are the reeds (*qussaib* in Arabic), which were mentioned in the new testament and were associated with John the Baptist; and also another plant called Yanbout (in Arabic) which is the natural habitat for bees. Therefore, the Site produced honey in different periods of its history. Another local plant is the Tamarisk (with its ancient name as Saphsaphas), today it is called Tarfah (in Arabic). This plant in particular was mentioned and associated with the Site on the ancient Byzantine Mosaic Map of Madaba in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD.



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (5):** The Untidy nest of a Dead Sea Sparrow



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (6):** A bend in the Jordan River at the Baptism Site



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (7):** Abundant reeds and a pair of palm trees in Wadi Al-Kharrar



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (8):** A Laughing Dove on her nest in a Tamarisk tree



### **Faunal Diversity**

The site is highly diversified in terms of vertebrates, birds, reptiles and mammals. In addition, around twenty-five fish species inhabit the Jordan-Dead Sea drainage basin. Fourteen species belonging to five families were recorded in the lower Jordan River.

Around 380 species of birds have been recorded in Jordan, of which more than 80 were recorded in the site, representing 21% of Jordan's diversity in avifauna. Based on that, the site is an Important Bird Area for Jordan.

A total of 18 species of mammals were recorded in the site during the period June-July and it is anticipated that 15 species more can be found. Examples of the species found are *Canis lupus*, *Canis auerus* and *Lupus capensis*.

### **Environmental Evaluation of the Site**

The site is an attraction to many naturalists. The catchment basin of the Dead Sea embraces the southern part of the Levantine landscape over a length of 360 km. It forms an important area where species from different zoo-geographical realms coexist. The vegetation is well preserved in comparison to the surrounding areas due to the fact that the site was off-limits for a long time as a military zone. The site has different characteristics explained below.

### **Naturalness:**

The fact that Jordan Valley has been irrigated for fruit and vegetable production (c.f. Andrews 1995) means that little of the natural subtropical vegetation remains, although the southern course of the Jordan River including Wadi Al-Kharrar has been less affected by direct human impact, due to the limited access and reduced quality of the saline soils for agriculture. The area along the east bank of Jordan River is very important since it has not changed much over the years.

The presence of the fresh water aquatic system, with thick vegetation in addition to the climatic conditions, makes the area suitable for many aquatic and terrestrial animals. It is also suitable as an important global migratory route. The whole site has this "naturalness" character to it.

### **Rarity:**

The Baptism site is a salt marsh wetland with several unique features.

There are two wetland types in the Baptism site: the major *wadi* system starting from Wadi Al-Kharrar and running towards the Jordan River, and the Jordan River itself. Many wetland flora and fauna are present such as the tree frog and marsh frog, as well as several species of hydrophilic dragonflies, water beetles and crustaceans. A considerable number of migratory and wetland birds are recorded in the site (e.g., the Dead Sea Sparrow), some of which are endangered globally, regionally and locally.

The dense aquatic vegetation has created special conditions for the survival of many endangered amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. *Bird Life International* and *Wetland International* have both declared the whole Jordan River basin to be an important bird and wetland area in Jordan.

### **Fragility:**

The site is one of the last natural refuge sites in Jordan, due to the fact that the site had been under the military control for more than 40 years before the site was recently discovered.

It is essential to control tourist activities in a sustainable fashion within the carrying capacity of the site in order to conserve the cultural and natural assets of the site.

### **Potential Value for Future Development:**

The site has tremendous potential to be managed as a National Park with World Heritage Site status. The amount and diversity of resident and migrant birds qualifies it to become an important bird watching area in the Jordan Valley.

The cultural and natural values of the site give it an advantage over other areas in the Jordan Valley to become an eco-tourism base in the Middle *Ghor* District. The site should also be developed for wetland study and management as a core for the Jordan River Ecosystem. Important features of the Site include:

- The wetlands of the Baptism site represent the basis of the food web in the habitat.
- Another major function of the wetland habitat is to remove suspended solids and sediments from the watercourse and prevent a source of turbidity from entering downstream ecosystems.
- The reed beds situated in many sections of the site, especially at the beginning of the *Wadi* and close to the stream mainly consist of *Phragmites Comminus* and *Typha Angusta* mixed with Tamarisk in some areas. These dense reed beds

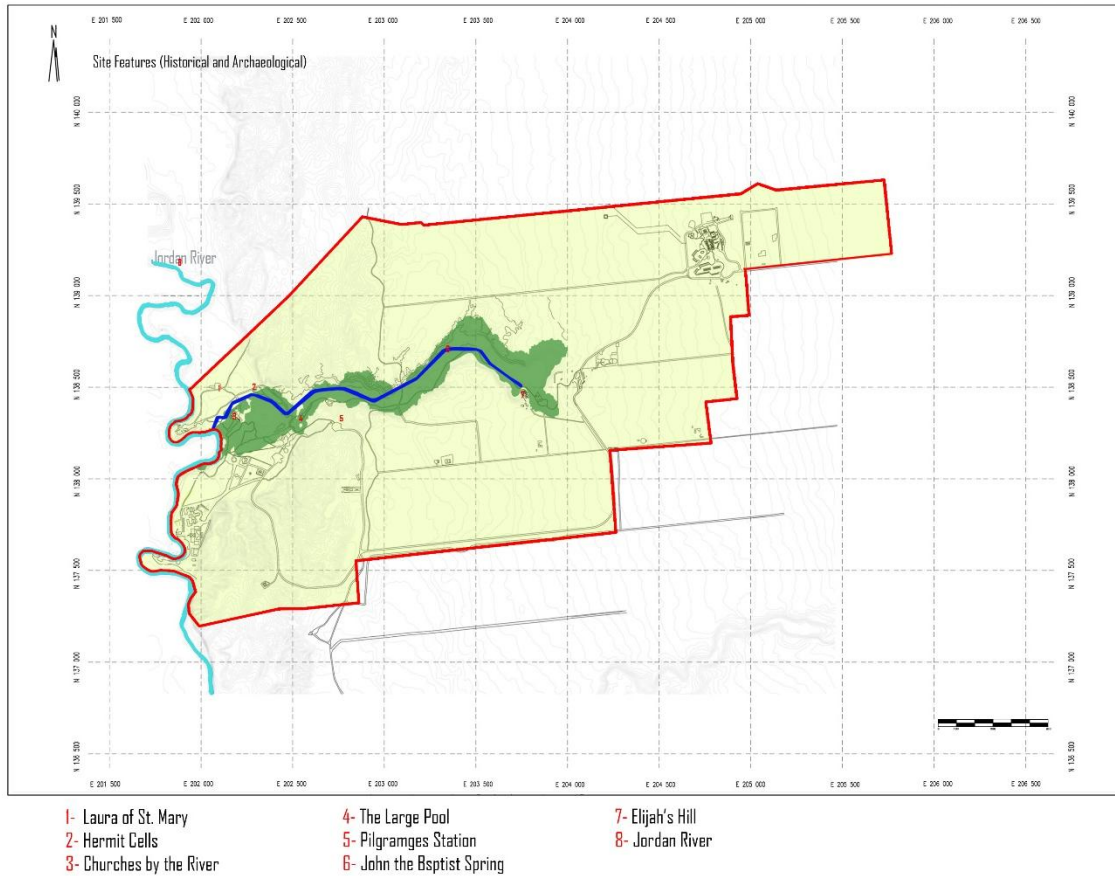
are highly dependent on the water flowing from the mouth of the Wadi down to the Jordan River.

- The bushes found in the site are perfect feeding and roosting areas for many wild animals, such as amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.
- Birds dependent on such reed beds are Herons, Warblers, Kingfishers, and Passerines among others. Amphibians observed at the site are Tree and Marsh Frogs.
- The site is an important bird area, as it supports breeding populations of Black Francolin, Sand Partridge, Dead Sea Sparrow, Arabian Babbler and Clamorous Reed Warbler.
- Many mammals use the reed beds for refuge and passage such as Wild Boar, Red Fox, Jackal, Wolf, Caracal, Wild and Jungle Cat and rodents.

### The Historical/Archaeological Layer

Archaeological investigations have uncovered various Roman and Byzantine remains distributed over the Qatar hills and terraces extending from the floor of the Jordan Valley (the *Ghor*) until the *Zor*. The main remains start at Tell Al-Kharrar (Elijah's Hill) adjacent to the *Ghor* up to the east bank of the Jordan River. These remains include a major church, several small churches (chapels), water pools of various sizes and other water system installations with large plastered pools and a ceramic pipeline. Caves and cells, where monks lived and performed their religious rites, were found at the western face of the Qatar hills north of the site. Other settlement remains were attested east of the Baptism site on the route to Mount Nebo. All these archaeological discoveries are of high cultural and religious/spiritual significance for Christians, Muslims and other believers.

The archaeological evidence shows that the site was first occupied during the Late Chalcolithic (ca. 3500 BC), represented by a small village farming community. The next period of occupation dates from Hellenistic times (2<sup>nd</sup> -1<sup>st</sup> century BC) but the major occupation dates to the Roman and Byzantine periods (1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) which shows that the site was heavily used during the time of Christ and John the Baptist and on a much larger scale during the Byzantine period, once Christianity was declared as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. These dates depend largely on pottery assemblages, coins, epigraphic and historical documents.



Source: Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (5):** Site Features (Historical & Archeological Layer)

The archaeological remains from the Byzantine period so far uncovered can be divided into four main components:

- Tell Al-Kharrar (Elijah's Hill) (with its Rhetorios Monastery, Churches, and Water System)
- The Zor area (with its several Byzantine and Later Churches)
- Other Archaeological remains such as the caves (Hermit Cells), the Tombs, and other features.

### **Tell al Kharrar (Elijah's Hill) /The Bethany Sapsaphas**

The Kharrar Valley is the modern name for the ancient "Sapsaphas" that appears on the Madaba mosaic map. The site is located two kilometers east of the Jordan River, west of the village of *Kafrein*, which is across from the famous site of Jericho on the west side of the Jordan River. More than a century ago, in 1881 Conder mentioned a site called (Am Al-Kharrar) or (Murmuring Spring) which is a small spring close to Jordan. He stated that the site is "in the jungle at the edge of *Zor* near the lower bed of the Jordan River" (Waheed, 2009, 38). In 1975 Ibrahim, Sauer and Yassine visited Tell Al-Kharrar (Elijah's Hill) during their survey and dated the site to the Early Roman, Late Roman, Early Byzantine and Late Byzantine periods (Ibrahim et al, 1976).

The Tell is a small hill consisting of white Lisan marl mixed with red soil and was occupied during the Roman and Byzantine periods. Excavations revealed the presence of three churches, three caves, three baptismal pools and a circular well built of well-cut sand stone ashlar, in addition to an outer wall surrounded the hill. Two entrances were used to access the site. The main components of the hill indicate a sacred complex on the Tell. It can be identified as the Monastery of Rhetorios built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, based on an inscription found in the apse of the northern church dedicated to a person named Rhetorios.

### **Churches and Mosaics at Tell Al-Kharrar (Elijah's Hill) (Rhetorios Monastery)**

The Monastery was named after Rhetorios the abbot who headed it, the inscription was found at the apse of the northern church at the monastery. The Monastery was built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD on a small, low hill and was surrounded by a wall (Mkhjian, 2005, 403-5). The Monastery enjoys remains of several Byzantine Churches in addition to remains of a water system. It is important to mention that this might be the first monastery built east of the Jordan on the Christian Pilgrimage route.

#### ***Northern Church***

The Church consists of two sections: the chancel area, which measures 4.20 m N-S x 4.15 m E-W, and the nave, which measures 8.85 m E-W x 4.15 m N-S. The Church has two entrances, one located in the northern wall 0.70 m wide and the other located on the western side. What distinguishes this church is the Greek inscription found inside. The Greek inscription set in the apse area reads: "By the help of the grace of Christ our god the whole monastery was constructed in the time of Rhetorios, the most God-



beloved Presbyter and Abbot, may God the Savior give him mercy”.” (Mkhjian, 2005, 405)

The floor of the church was covered with a colored mosaic floor composed of a frame and crosses with geometrical designs. Pillars along the northern wall of the church were designed to support the roof. No roof tiles were recovered from the excavations, pointing to the possibility that the roof consisted of wooden beams that were washed away. The internal walls of the church were covered with a layer of smooth white plaster. Other buildings associated with the Church near the northern wall were severely damaged by natural factors during later periods.

### ***The Western Church (“Cave Church”)***

After the western Lisan marl slope of the hill was cut away, a retaining wall was built, and afterwards a church measuring 13 m x 13 m was constructed, consisting of two parts. The well-preserved apse, an old natural cave (which was later considered as part of the apse of the Church), was cut into the natural rock and located under the northwestern pool. A lamp niche was dug in its southern side. The remains of the door of the chancel screen were still visible. The other part of the Church consisted of four bases built of well-dressed sandstone ashlar forming a nave and two aisles, making the church a basilica type. The roof and the arch system were demolished, and only remains of the beginning of the arch springs were found. The floor was covered with colored mosaics that unfortunately were destroyed. Only fragments with remains of gray lime mortar were found during the excavation. Some of these fragments show designs of crosses that decorated the floor. It is essential to understand the reasons behind this destruction, since the nearby mosaic floor of the northern church was still preserved. Pottery shards indicate a late Byzantine date.

The excavations uncovered a small building that measures approximately 6 m x 6 m located north of the cave church and west of the northern church. What remains of the site is the colored mosaic floor, decorated with floral designs. The mosaic floor is in a poor state of preservation due to natural factors and erosion. The walls of the structure were built of fieldstones. Unfortunately, only the foundations are still in situ. The function of this structure should probably be interpreted in association with the nearby Churches.

***Water System (Cylindrical well, north eastern pool, Rustom's Well, north western pool, southern pool, water cistern***

*The Pools:* Two rectangular pools (3.8×3m and 4.3×2.3m) are located on the northern edge of the Tell. The pottery shards found under the Byzantine floor of the first pool dated to the Roman period. The third pool was located on the southern slope (5.3×3.7m) with a staircase on the eastern side. The main purpose and use for those pools is the ritual of baptism.

*The Water System:* Water was carried to the pools in pipes through settling basins before emptying into a cistern (6.3×4.3m) with a total capacity around 100 cubic meters. The cistern was roofed by a vault system and carried a white mosaic floor on the top. The water flows through ceramic pipes from valleys next from the east and the south east. Even though the Monastery is close to the natural spring down in the Wadi of Al Kharrar, the water system was needed in order to store water for the dry seasons of the summer when the Spring has no running water in it. It is interesting to notice that archaeological findings included various ceramics flasks used by the pilgrims during the ritual of baptism. It is apparent that the monks living in the Wadi needed more water which triggered them to dig out more wells (the cylindrical well) which is also named *Rustom's well* in reference to the current engineer and conservationist responsible for the Sit's restoration).

***Church of the Arch: Church of Pope John Paul II (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Century AD)***

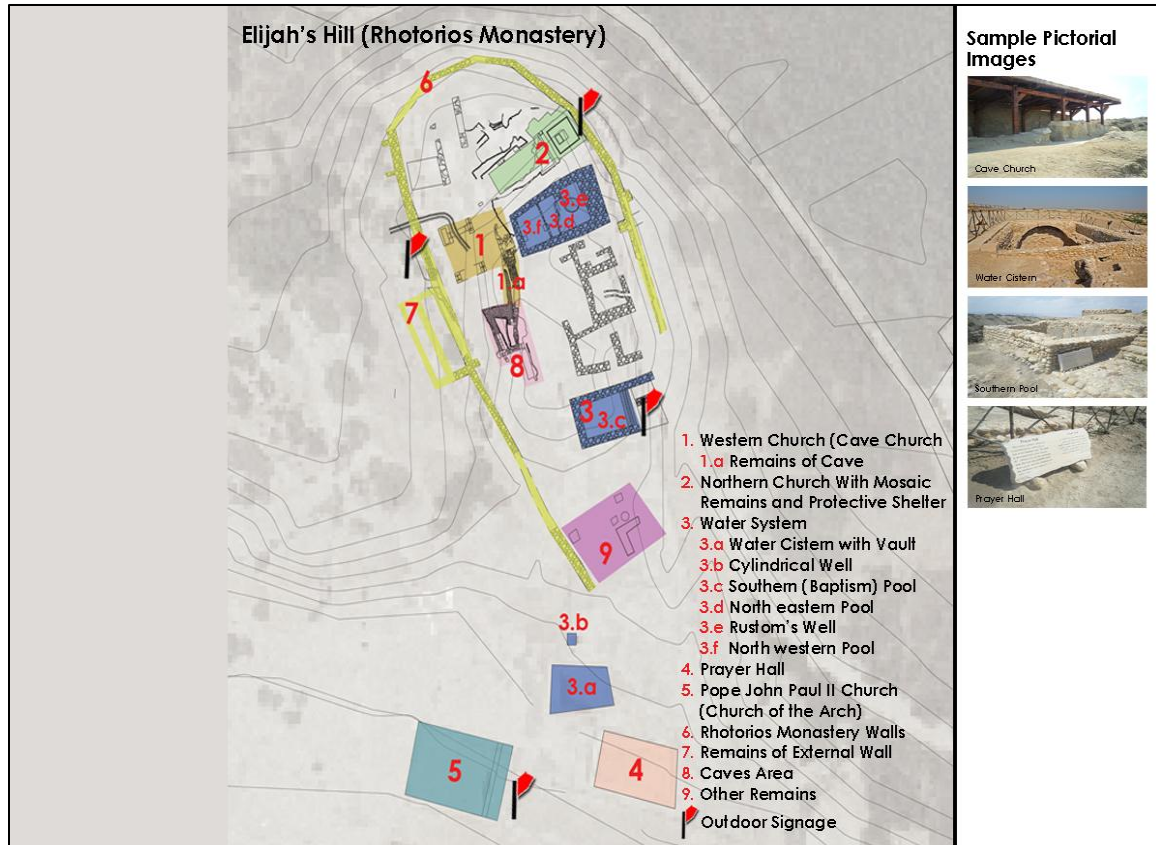
Excavations conducted in Area C to the south of Tell Al-Kharrar uncovered a structure built of well-dressed sandstone blocks. The general shape of the structure is rectangular, its dimensions are approximately 13.5 m E-W and 9 m N-S. Many parts of this building have disappeared, especially the upper courses, the walls and part of the floor, with only limited portions still preserved. What remains are a few stones resting on a lime-plastered surface overlying carefully prepared rubble stones and gray to dark ashy mortar that resembled the bedding cement of the structure. The colored mosaic floor with cross marks depicted on it was largely destroyed and removed, and only a small portion in the south-eastern corner of the church is still in situ. The fill contained fragments of lime with some mosaic tesserae still adhering to it. Impressions on the mortar bedding and the springs of arches indicate that a system of arches was used to support the roof of the structure. It is clear that the structure represents a small chapel located near the southwestern corner of Tell Al-Kharrar (Elijah's Hill). The chapel consisted of two parts, with three arches to support the roof. During a recent visit of

Pope John Paul II to the Site, the Church was named after him, and the main restorer of the Site took on his responsibility to reconstruct one of the arches of the Church which he himself considers not so much an act of reconstruction; but rather of celebration in the occasion of the Pope's visit. This is the only attempt for "reconstruction" all over the site. All other conservation works fall within what is considered consolidation and stabilization. This will be explained in Part II of the Management Plan in details.



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (9):** Elijah's Hill as it was in its pre-excavation state in the early 1930's, photographed by Father Abel



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (6):** Elijah's Hill (Rhetorios Monastery)





Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (10):** Elijah's Hill as it is today



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (11):** Elijah's Hill



Source: Taylor, Jane/ (July 2012)

**Image (12):** Elijah's hill- John the Baptist Spring



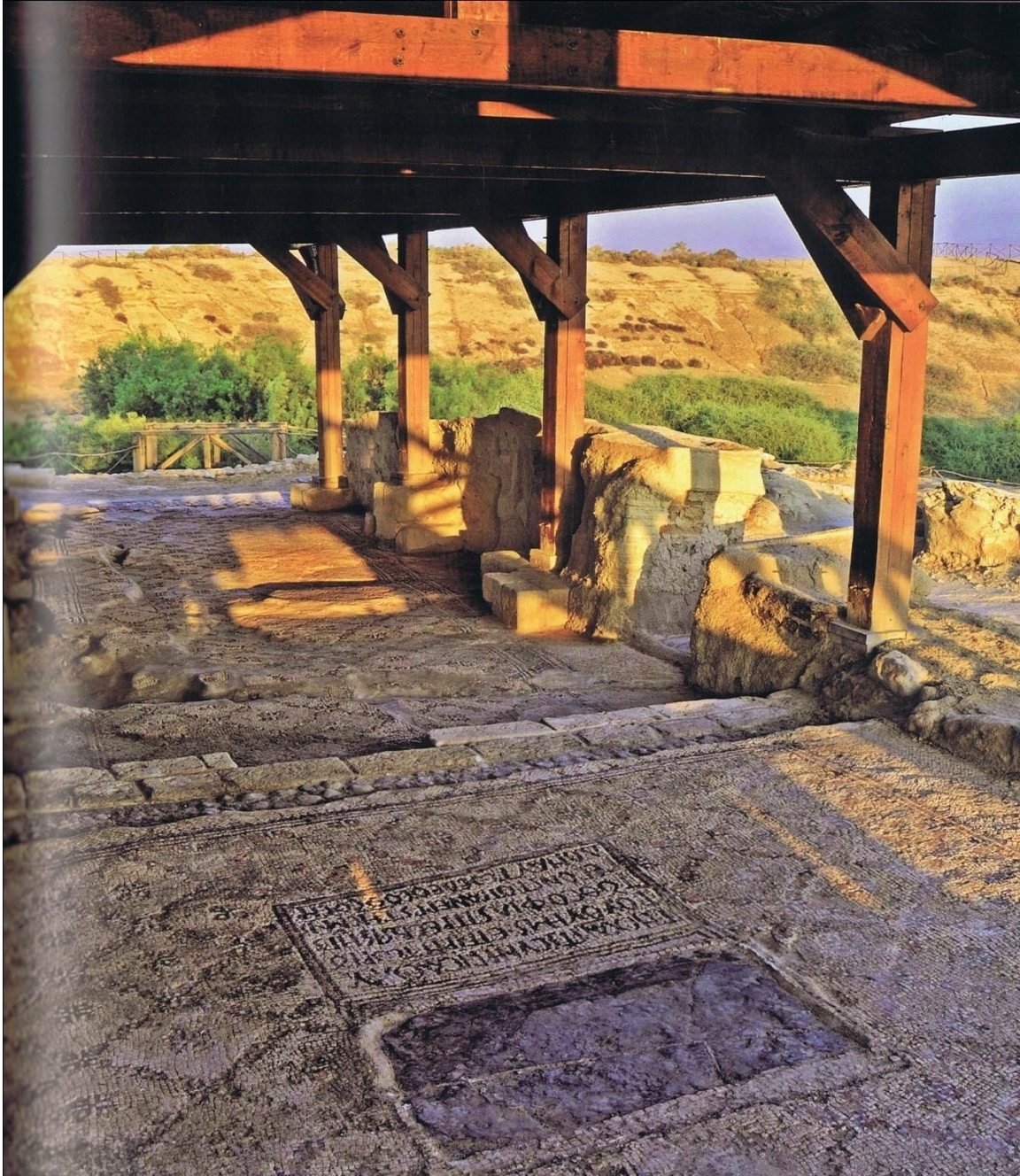
Source: Ruben, Isabelle– Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*



Source: Sciorilli, Franco /(2012)

**Image (13-14):** The 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century mosaic floor of the Church of Pope John Paul II (Church of the Arch)





Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (15):** The Northern Church of the Rhetorios Monastery, looking west, with the Greek dedicatory inscription in the floor of the chancel





Source: Rami Daher (TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants) June 19, 2012

**Image (16):** Northern Church with protective shelter



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (17):** The Mosaic Floor of the Northern Church



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (18):** Northern Church inscription





Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (19):** The Prayer Hall, with its white mosaic floor, looking toward the monastic complex on Elijah's hill with Wadi Al-Kharrar below it



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (20):** The arch Church of Pope John Paul II can be seen behind the Prayer Hall





Source: Jane Taylor/ (July 2012)

**Image (21):** The Western Church (Cave Church)



Source: Jane Taylor/ (July 2012)

**Image (22):** Water System- Main water Cistern



Source: Taylor, Jane/ (July 2012)

**Image (23):** Water System – Southern Baptism Pool



Source: Sciorilli, Franco/ (2012)

**Image (24):** Water System - Northwestern Pool

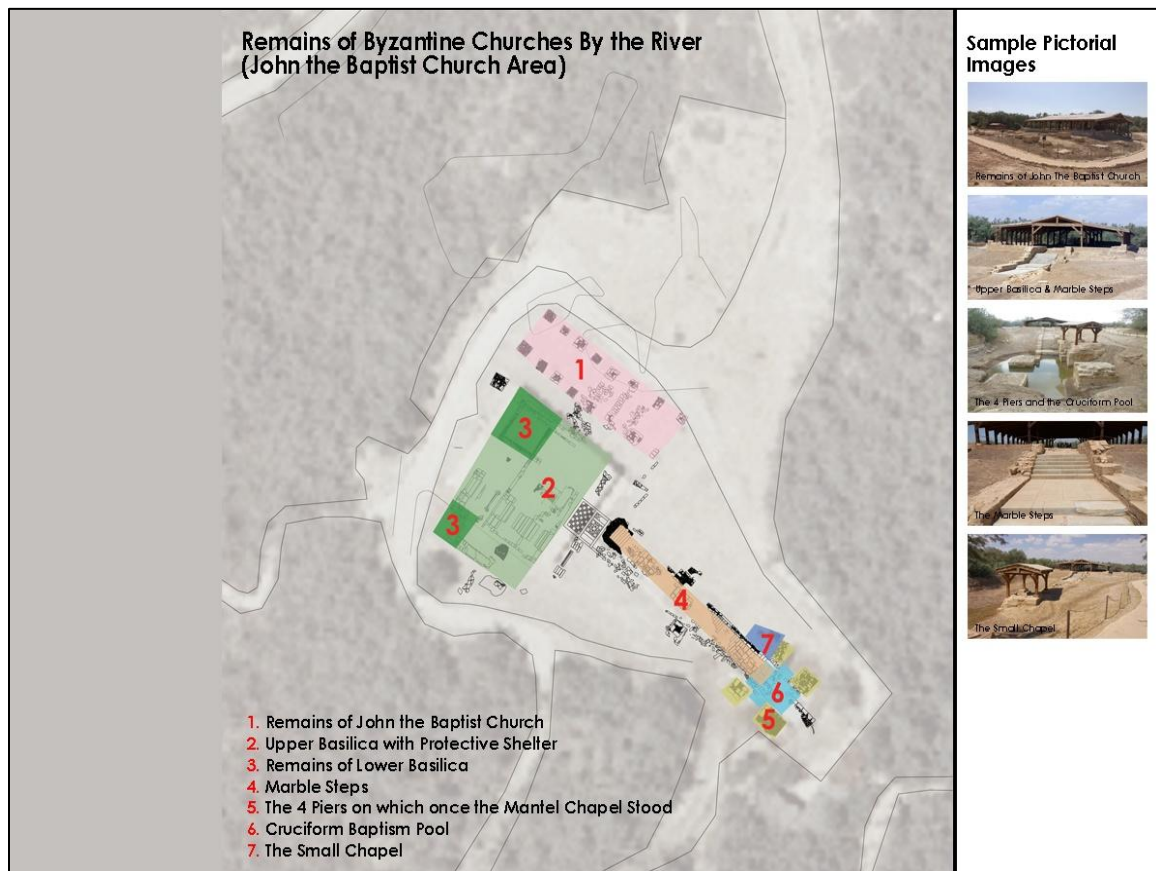


Source: Sciorilli, Franco/ (2012)

**Image (25):** Water System - Cylindrical well



## Churches of the ZOR Area (Byzantine Churches by the Jordan River)



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (7):** Remains of Byzantine Churches by the River (John the Baptist Church Area)

### Pillared Hall "Church of John the Baptist"

The pillared hall is built on sandy soil at an absolute level of -394.81m, compared to the lowest level of the site at -400.00m and the level of the Jordan River on 15 January 2003 of -402.00m (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 9-10). The remains of a set of stone pillars running east-west and north-south are evident. They consist of nine in the east-west direction (total length of the church 25.15m), and possibly six in the north-south direction (total length 25.80m). The existence of that many pillars is evidenced by:

- The remains of foundations for two pillars along the south wall of the "Basilica church".
- The distances between the north-south piers.
- The material and mortar used.

- The dimensions of the foundations and their levels.

The preliminary results of the excavations revealed foundations for arches and walls, with partially preserved mosaic and marble floors in site. Since no excavations have been previously carried out on the eastern side of the Jordan River, Church No. 1 may represent (and fit) the descriptions of the ancient pilgrims who passed through this area east of the Jordan River on their way from Jerusalem to mount Nebo at the area of the newly discovered churches. This discovery clarifies all doubts about the exact location of the church, which was built on the eastern side of the River to commemorate the sacred event of the baptism (Waheeb 2009, 26).

The foundations vary in size but they are constructed of fieldstones of average size bound together by a cementing material of gray color with plaster remains noticed at the surface of some of the foundations. The pillars also vary in size. Sandstone ashlar were used in building the outer sides of the pillars, whereas the core consisted of field stones and cementing material. The pillars were raised to a minimum height of 2.5m judging from the remains of one of them. A large number of sandstone ashlar were found between several of the piers; some of these ashlar were covered with a whitish plaster. Some fragments of white, medium-sized mosaic tesserae were also found just to the east of two of the piers. We can therefore conclude that these sets of pillars were designed to carry or support a large platform that, in turn, might have supported or formed the elevated floor of a monastery, basilica or other structure. The lack of a floor supports the identification of the set of pillars as the substructure for an elevated building (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 9-10).



Source: Ruben, Isabelle– Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (26):** Remains of John the Baptist Church (Pillared Hall)



Source: <http://www.baptismsite.com/index.php/the-place-where-jesus-was-baptized.html>

**Image (27):** The pillared Hall, the Basilica and the Small Chapel

Among the discovered materials from the excavations were some pottery shreds, mostly dated to the Byzantine period, and some coins dating to the fifth and sixth centuries AD, including some remains from the reign of the emperor Anastasias (AD 491-518) (Waheeb 2009, 27). This church is believed to have been built during the reign of Emperor Anastasias between 491-518 AD (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries) to commemorate the baptism of Christ. Although a great number of pilgrims visited the site, only a few described what they saw in any detail. In AD 530, Theodosius elaborated that "*in the place where the Lord was baptized there is a single marble pillar, and on the pillar an iron cross has been fastened. There too is the Church of St. John the Baptist, which the emperor Anastasias built: this church is very lofty, being built above large chambers, on account of the Jordan when it overflows*" (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 16).

### **Lower Basilica Church**

Test trenches in the western parts of both northern and southern aisles of the Basilica uncovered marble floors of various geometrical shapes and colors, generally tilting towards the west with fallen ashlar directly over the southwest part of the marble pavement. Parts of the southern wall of the Lower Basilica could also be seen in those trenches. Since the sections formed by the difference in height between the floor levels of the "the second and the third churches", about 2m in its westernmost parts included mixed material such as marble fragments, ashlar, pottery, etc., and since the walls of the Basilica were partly built of the remains of the Lower Basilica, it can be assumed that the Basilica overlaid the remains of the Lower Basilica and made use of those remains to strengthen its foundation. Since the floor tilts to the west, floods from the west must

have caused the destruction of the Lower Basilica by undermining its foundations. This is an indication that the main course of the river was probably just west of the Lower Basilica (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 10-11). Floods would also be the cause of the destruction of the Basilica itself, since most of its western parts have vanished. The Lower Basilica has not been completely investigated because it would have been inappropriate to excavate through the floor of the Basilica to expose the complete remains of the lower Basilica.

### **The Basilica (Church of the Trinity)**

The Basilica (built during the Islamic period in the eighth century around 754 AD) was built at a ground level higher than the surrounding remains, so relatively little remains of the Basilica. The building had a minimum length of 27m and a width of 15.80m.



Source: Sciorilli, Franco /(2012)

**Image (28-29):** Remains of the Lower Basilica Church



Source: Sciorilli, Franco /(2012)

**Image (30):** The Basilica (Church of the Trinity)



A plan of part of the Pillared Hall and of the Basilica, with the remains of the Umayyad walls noted, shows an interior width of 13.38m (the interior dimension of 15.80m equals 50 standard early Byzantine feet measuring 0.315m each). Since the basilica was partly built over the remains of earlier structures (the Lower Basilica and the Pillared Hall); its construction made use of those remains as foundations, especially for its northern and southern walls (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 12-13). Elsewhere, the foundations are of fieldstones of medium size, well cemented with a grayish lime mortar, the height varying according to the original topography. The existing external walls indicate that they were built of sandstone ashlar forming both the inner and the outer faces, with a mixture of fieldstones and sandstone pieces cemented together forming the core of the walls. Those have an average width of 1.10m. The ceramic ruins found in the eastern parts of the Basilica (Third Church on site) prove that the damage and destruction of the previous two Churches goes back to the Byzantine era, and this may be an explanation for the reason why the architect had built a strong wall in the north side of the north corridor using destroyed church stones; trying to stop the flood of the Jordan River water coming from the north. Excavations have showed, moreover, some decorated stones used in building the wall (Waheeb, 2009, 13-14). Excavations revealed the presence of fallen stones from the wall. It is most likely that the reason standing behind the destruction of the south wall was Jordan River (Waheeb, 2009, 17).

Rectangular piers with section dimensions of 1.30 x 0.58m and 1.42 x 0.58m supported the roof. The westernmost standing piers are spaced 3.42m apart. Certain blocks at foundation level can be interpreted as infrastructure for more piers. The clear width of the nave is 5.12m and the widths of the south and north aisles are 3.45 and 3.63m respectively. Features in the central aisle include the sandstone foundations for the chancel screen, a rectangular apse measuring 7.6m long (N-S) and in its center the altar, made of sandstone (remaining marble slabs on both its western and southern sides indicate it was riveted with marble). West of the altar are the remains of a mosaic floor of medium-sized, colored tesserae; among the motifs, a vase with two handles and flowers can be noted. On the east corner of the vase a rosette is depicted, north of the altar there was a marble floor of geometrical design. The marble has totally vanished but the underlying mortar (of grayish color) retains the impressions of the pattern. The remains of a wall foundation of an apse built of sandstone indicate the extent of the rectangular apse. In both the northern and southern aisles, only the floor bedding survives, with some remains of a mosaic floor in the eastern part of the northern aisle showing a geometric motif with large colored tesserae.

It is important to note that after the apse, there is a room to the east and a gate with a stair case to the east (this is very particular to this Church and is not very common), it is

the only Church with a gate to the east, it is there to link it with the stairs that takes one down to the baptistery and pool below in the shape of a cross underneath the raised mantle chapel that once stood over the 4 piers.

### **The Marble Steps**

The marble steps leading from the upper basilica down to the 4 piers and baptismal pool were constructed as well during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD around 570 AD. The steps had been renovated but the original parts are easily distinguished visually from the restored parts. One has to take into consideration that the Jordan River's course changes over the years, and still, during certain parts of the year, this pool still enjoys water in it. Two stone walls on both sides of the stair support it significantly.

The stairs are essential structures at the eastern part of John the Baptist Church that is connected to the Third Church. The stairs were separated from the Third Church for about 1.5m because of the water flow from the Jordan River and the earthquakes that the region witnessed. The stairs are 2.50m width and has 22 black marble steps. What distinguishes the stairs at the end is the discovery of a marble panel. That was in paving the small space at the end of the stairs. The panel was installed parallel with the mid of the stairs in a way that makes it the final standing point for who wished to use the stairs to descend to the water (Waheeb 2009, 17-18).

### **The 4 Piers on which the Mantel Chapel once Stood, the Unique "Baptismal Pool", and the small Chapel on the North Western Pier.**

Research and excavations on the Site inferred that the piers belonged to an original arrangement that consisted of four piers. The fourth (SE) pier has almost totally vanished, but can be assumed by symmetry, and excavations carried out in the summer of 2002 uncovered a few ashlar and fieldstones scattered in the presumed location of the SE pier (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 14). .

Sandstone ashlar, about a foot high, were used to construct the outer skins of the piers, which in turn had a core densely filled with fieldstone and sandstone pieces well cemented with a lime mortar. At the lower parts of the existing piers grayish plaster covering them is still well attached (total thickness of 15-20mm) with hundreds of cross marks incised all over them. Inscriptions were also noted on the southern part of the NW pier (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 14).

A study of the arch stones found in the center of the four piers indicated that they belonged to arches of about 1.8m in radius, knowing that the distance between the piers is about 3.50-3.60, we could conclude that they belonged to arches and vaults on

top of the piers. Remains of a large arched gateway with doorjambs, each 1m wide, are in the western pair of piers. The clear opening of the gate is 2.50m, thus corresponding to the width of the staircase that leads from the four piers to the basilica (the third church) (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 14).

A small Chapel was built (around the 12 Century AD during the Islamic periods) on the remains of the NW pier. The existing remains of the Chapel show that it was built using materials similar to all the churches mentioned above. There is only one course of sandstone wall remaining in its northern and northeastern parts (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 14). However, these remains are enough to assume a Chapel of about 3.05m wide and 5m long. In the middle of the northern wall an entrance, 1.6m wide, led to the Chapel in which only the whitish bedding of the pavement now remains. The northern wall is 0.60m thick and was built using sandstone ashlar (0.30m high) on the outer and inner faces. The core of the wall is densely filled with boulders and sandstone pieces that are well cemented. The apse is enclosed within the rectangular external walls and is almost semicircular (0.95m deep, 2.25m wide) with the eastern wall about 0.85m thick. The apse floor is around 0.15m higher than the floor of the nave. Again, only the whitish bedding of the floor remains in the apse. It is interesting to note that *Arcolas* (a French traveler), who visited the site around 670 AD describes in details the level of the water at the end of the Marble Steps in the summer and winter, arriving to a man's chest in the summer and almost fully submerging him in the winter.

In the center of the chancel screen there is a reused white marble capital with sandstone ashlar around it. The architects made use of the best-preserved pier (the NW pier) as the main foundation for the Chapel. But it is important to note that the chapel was not built parallel to the pier walls. In other words, the Chapel is oriented almost exactly east-west, and was larger than the pier (Mkhjian & Kanellopoulos 2003, p 15). Hence the following can be deduced:

- Floods and/or earthquakes had destroyed whatever superstructure the four piers carried, and debris filled the area. Archaeologists reconstruction rendering assume that the 4 piers were the foundation of a mantle chapel that stood over the 4 piers and no longer exists today. After the destruction of the Mantel Chapel, a small chapel was built on the ruins of the NW base (pier).
- The baptistery area below the structure of the four piers was no longer in use.
- The staircase had partially collapsed and was covered by alluvial deposits.

- The Basilicas had also been destroyed; a reused marble capital at the center of the chancel screen and other reused stones can be seen in the southern section of the Chapel.



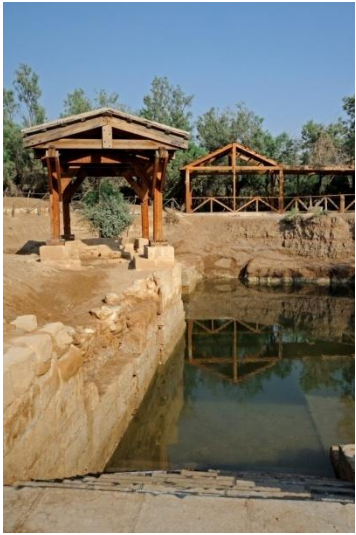
Source: Sciorilli, Franco /(2012)

**Image (31):** The Marble Steps.



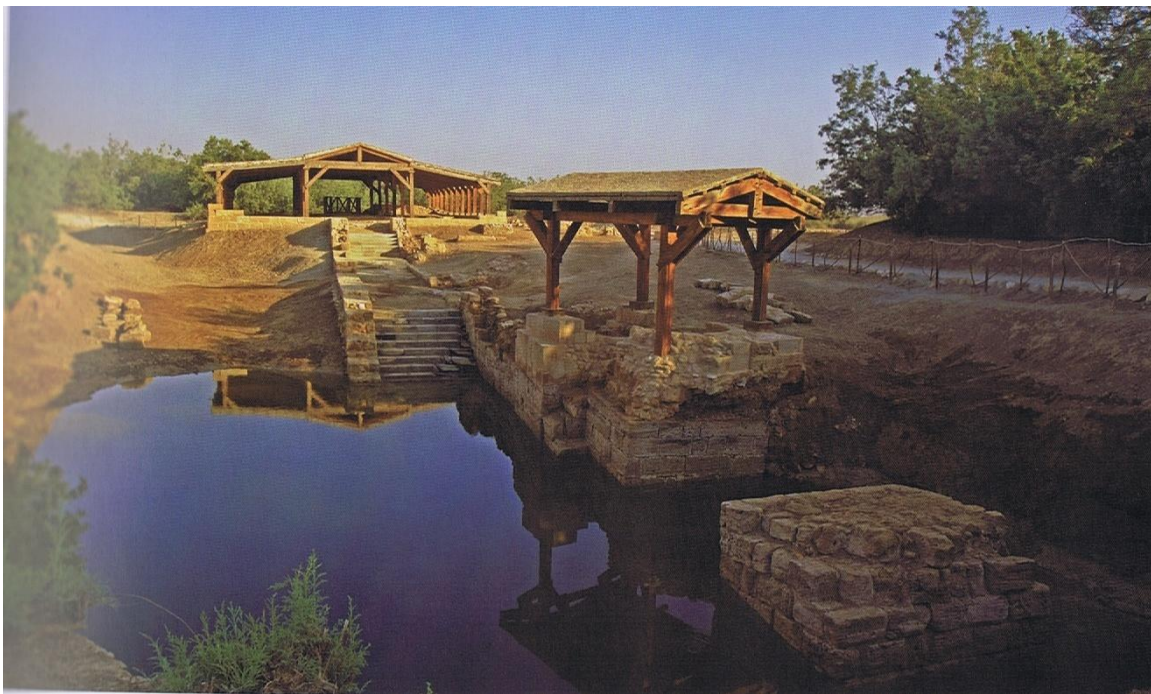
Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (32-33):** The Marble Steps leading to the cruciform pool & The 4 Piers on which the Mantel Chapel once Stood and the Unique “Baptismal Pool”



**Image (34):** The steps leading down from the Church of St. John the Baptist to the supposed place of baptism; the Chapel of the mantle, where Jesus is said to have left his cloak prior to being baptized, is on the pier to the left of the Picture

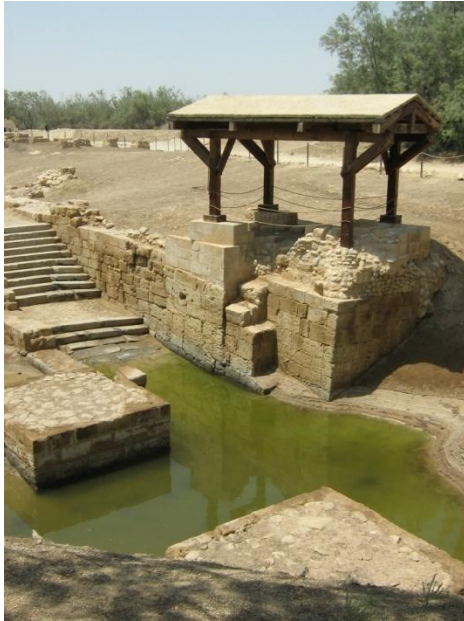
Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (35):** The remains of the Church of St John the Baptist, and the steps in front of it which led to the place of baptism, Here St. Willibald described seeing a church ‘raised on stone columns and beneath the church the very place where the Lord was baptized’





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (36-37):** The Small Chapel which was built after the destruction of the Mantle Chapel on the northern base



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (38-39):** The Small Chapel

### Other Archaeological (Historical Features on Site)

#### **“Laura” of Saint Mary of Egypt (“Maqam”)**

Located 50m east of the Jordan River, this structure is bordered by lisan marl cliffs to the east. Systematic excavations revealed an architectural complex consisting of four rooms, this building was mentioned by such travelers as F.M. Abel, who suggested that the rooms were used by Saint Mary or built after her death in the Byzantine period. Occupation in this complex continued to the Ottoman period. The measurements of the rooms vary from one to the other but the outer shape is rectangular, through the date of the pottery, we are assured that the complex was built in the Byzantine period.

#### **The Hermits’ Cells**

The monks’ caves are located ca. 300 m from the Jordan River and were carved into the *katar* hills overlooking the *Zor*, the Jordan River and the western side of the Jordan Valley. These caves were accessible from the western and southwestern sides by ropes, ladders or staircases which have been demolished. The caves were difficult to reach from the eastern side as they are located in the middle of a steep cliff. These caves have semicircular niches carved in the eastern side which served for prayer and which remind one of a typical design of a Byzantine church (Ruben and Taylor 2010, 71). One of the caves measures 5x4 m and its height rises up to 2m. Each of these caves has a bench at the entrance and was divided into two chambers. One of the rooms served for living and the other for prayer. The pottery from inside the caves and around them dated to the Byzantine period (Waheeb et al. 2011, 182).

There are three other caves carved at the same level, close to the Tell el-Kharrar (Elijah’s Hill) settlement and its spring. One of the small churches built on the used one of these caves as the apse for the Byzantine church (Waheeb et al. 2011, 177). These caves were also mentioned frequently in the records of early pilgrims and travelers starting in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. They were described by Waheeb et al. 2011:

The area of the caves was reshaped by Byzantine architects and a retaining wall was erected to prevent any collapse or erosion, in addition, a wide wall was constructed in front of the first and second caves to provide space for those who used the area, while the church was built on the third cave. A point about the dating of the churches on top of the hill that have cross motifs in the floor mosaics is that there was an edict by the Emperor Theodosius II in 427 AD that

prohibited the use of the cross and other Christian symbols in pavements, which would be walked on. This is relevant in the context of the tradition that St Helena decreed that a sanctuary to the prophet Elias should be built on the hill long before 427 AD. The entrance area was made by building three arches and a wall that surrounded the whole Hill, sometimes supported by buttresses, especially on the western side opposite the cave. The buildings around the caves from the south, north, west and on top of the hill over the caves represent a complete Byzantine monastery that was established in the fourth century AD and flourished during the sixth century AD.

### **“John the Baptist” Spring**

This of course is a natural feature that starts from Wadi Al-Kharrar and pours into the River Jordan. But it is considered part of the historical layer of the Site due to its symbolic value and meaning. Several pedestrian trails were incorporated along this significant Spring.

### **The Tombs**

A number of tombs were identified adjacent to the churches or within them, seemingly indicating a close relationship to the monks and their families. Burying associated persons close to churches or inside them was a common practice in the Byzantine period. Most of the graves were rectangular in shape with vertical sides designed to receive a single outstretched body. The length of each shaft was roughly adjusted to the height of the person buried.

Skeletal remains of six male individuals were retrieved in 1998 and 2000 at the Baptism Site, between 25-40 years of age and a child 7-10 years old. According to the researchers they were in bad health and their teeth were in bad condition (Nabulsi 2009, 66). The burials were dated to the Byzantine to early Islamic periods (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century AD).





**Image (40):** Father Abel's early 1930's photograph of a late Ottoman chapel dedicated to St. Mary of Egypt

Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (41):** The remains of a room from what may have been the Laura of St. Mary of Egypt, with the white marl cliffs in the background



Source: <http://www.baptismsite.com/images/g/archeology/cavecells/cavecells-002.jpg>

**Image (42):** Hermits' Cells



Source: <http://www.baptismsite.com/images/g/archeology/cavecells/cavecells-003.jpg>

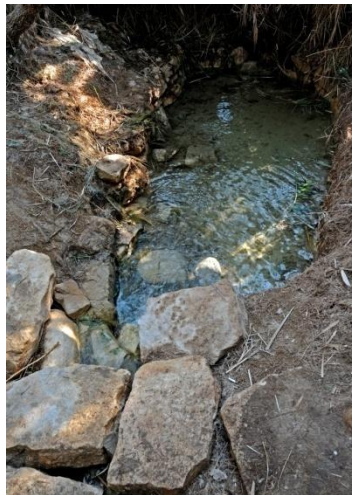
**Image (43):** Hermits' Cells from the Inside





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (44-45):** John the Baptist Spring



Source: <http://www.baptismsite.com/index.php/john-the-baptist-spring.html>

**Image (46):** John the Baptist Spring

## The Contemporary Layer

This section of part I of the Management Plan describes the contemporary layer within the site which is composed of roads, trails, various facility buildings, and new different churches belonging to various denominations.

## Paths and Panoramic Lookouts & Outdoor Signage & Shaded Areas

### **Major & Minor Pedestrian Trail**

In order to facilitate a smooth experience for the visitors and pilgrims within the Site, several unobtrusive pedestrian trails were incorporated within the site. They were designed with minimal intervention in mind and were composed of compressed earth and simple wooden railings when needed.

### **Belvederes: 1, 2, 3 (Panoramic Lookouts)**

Several panoramic lookouts were also incorporated overlooking the Jordan River. Their design was simple, unobtrusive to the site and at the same time, they provided shade for visitors and pilgrims in addition to other users of the Site.

### **Other Shaded Areas & Outdoor Signage**

Along the pedestrian paths one can find several locations (approximately every 200 meters or so) where simple wooden structures with roofs made of palms and reeds were constructed. They provide rest stops for the visitors and a relief from the hot sun. Furthermore, several interpretative outdoor signs were also provided to explain about the various significant historic and archaeological layers of the Site. In addition, and along the routes of the visitor, an audio tour is possible with certain stop points marked on site with audio explanations.

## Roads

In certain selected areas of the Site, and away from the core archaeological area of the Site, certain asphalted roads were constructed to facilitate the movements of visitors and pilgrims. The roads were very simple in their design and only provide access to certain areas away from the archaeological structures. Two golf cars, that are battery charged, provide access to areas where the roads do not reach. The gold cars only can

exist on parts of the pedestrian trails to protect the character and ambiance of the Site, and they are used in cases of elderly or physically challenged visitors who are not able to walk the whole distance.

### Contemporary Visitor Facilities

The following images and maps illustrate the various visitor and infrastructure facilities that exist on Site, they include:

- The Main Entrance Gates
- The Restaurant
- The VIP Lounge & Administrative Offices
- The Convention Center
- The Shops for souvenirs and other site related goods
- The Management Offices
- The Department of Antiquity & Research Center
- Several WC Facilities which are present in various locations within the Site.
- The Visitor Center & Museum
- Various Infrastructure Facilities including the Service centre, the Desalination Plant, and the Waste & Water Treatment Plant.
- Parking for cars and coach buses.

### Contemporary Religious & Cultural Facilities (Contemporary Churches)

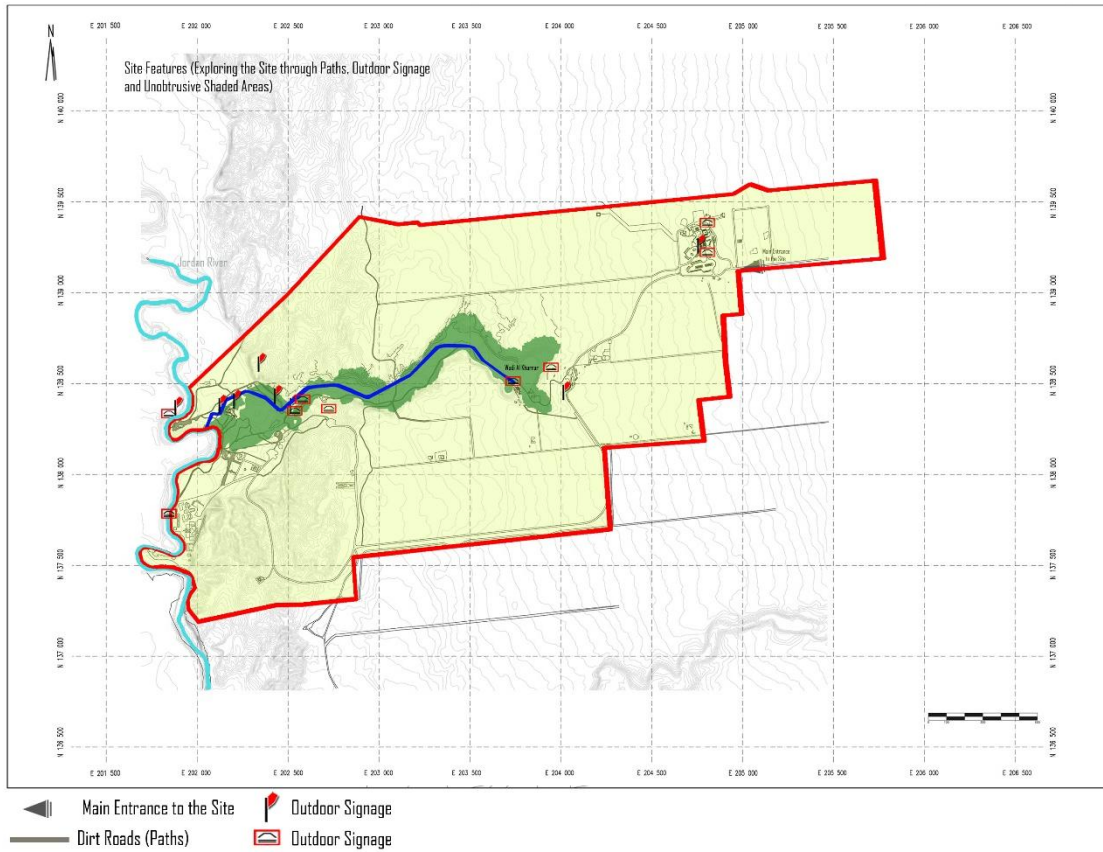
The Baptism site had been significant for various religions for ages. The ritual of baptism had been practiced on the Site since early Christian and Byzantine periods and continued to be practiced all through Muslim periods and up to the present. The site represents a spot on Earth that is associated with religious tolerance where different religions and religious denominations of the Christian faith had come together recently to celebrate their diversity and provide new churches to serve their different constituencies. Furthermore, these contemporary religious structures, with their

diverse architectural styles; not only represent the diversity amongst the Christian of the World, but also relieve the pressure of the archaeological fragile layer on Site which is protected from massive visitations and also religious celebrations. Such celebrations (e.g., Baptism, Epiphany, other) are held in the premises of the contemporary Churches. All of these factors rationalize the existence of this contemporary religious layer.

The existing and planned contemporary churches include:

- The Greek Orthodox Complex & Greek Orthodox Church
- The Catholic Complex
- The Russian (Roman Orthodox) Pilgrimage House
- The Coptic Church (Under Construction)
- The Lutheran Church (Not Built Yet)
- The Armenian Church
- The *Sirian* Church
- The *Maronite* Church (Not Built Yet)
- Jesus' Shrine
- The Roman Catholic Church (*Latin*)





Source: Daher, Rami (TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants)/ (June 2012)

**Map (8):** Site Features (Exploring the Site through Paths, Outdoor signage & Unobtrusive shaded areas)



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (47):** Trails for Visitors



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (48):** Trails for Visitors



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (49):** A Rest Area along the Interpretive Path down Wadi Al-Kharrar in the direction of the Jordan River





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (50):** A Panoramic Lookout



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (51-52):** Panoramic Lookouts and Shaded Areas



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (53):** Fencing at the boundary of the Site



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

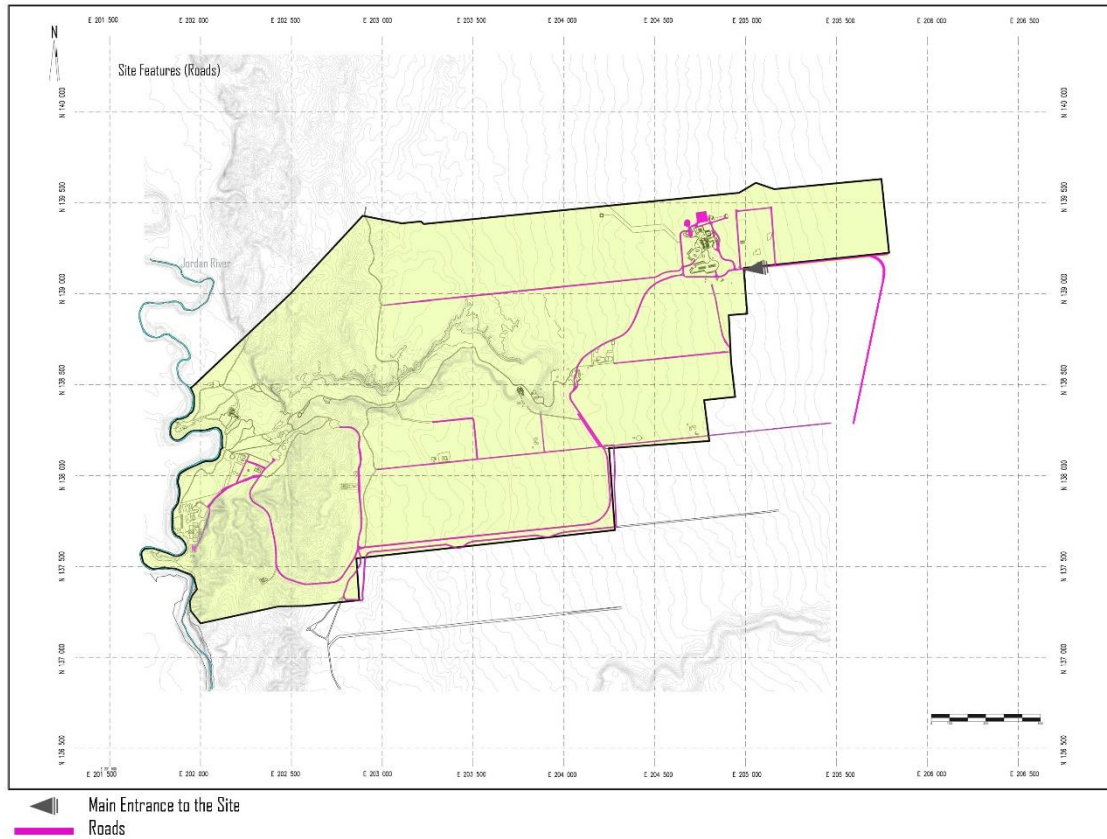
**Image (54):** Pedestrian Trails for Visitors



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (55):** Filtered Cold Water





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (9):** Site Features (Exploring the Site through Paths, Outdoor signage & Unobtrusive shaded areas)



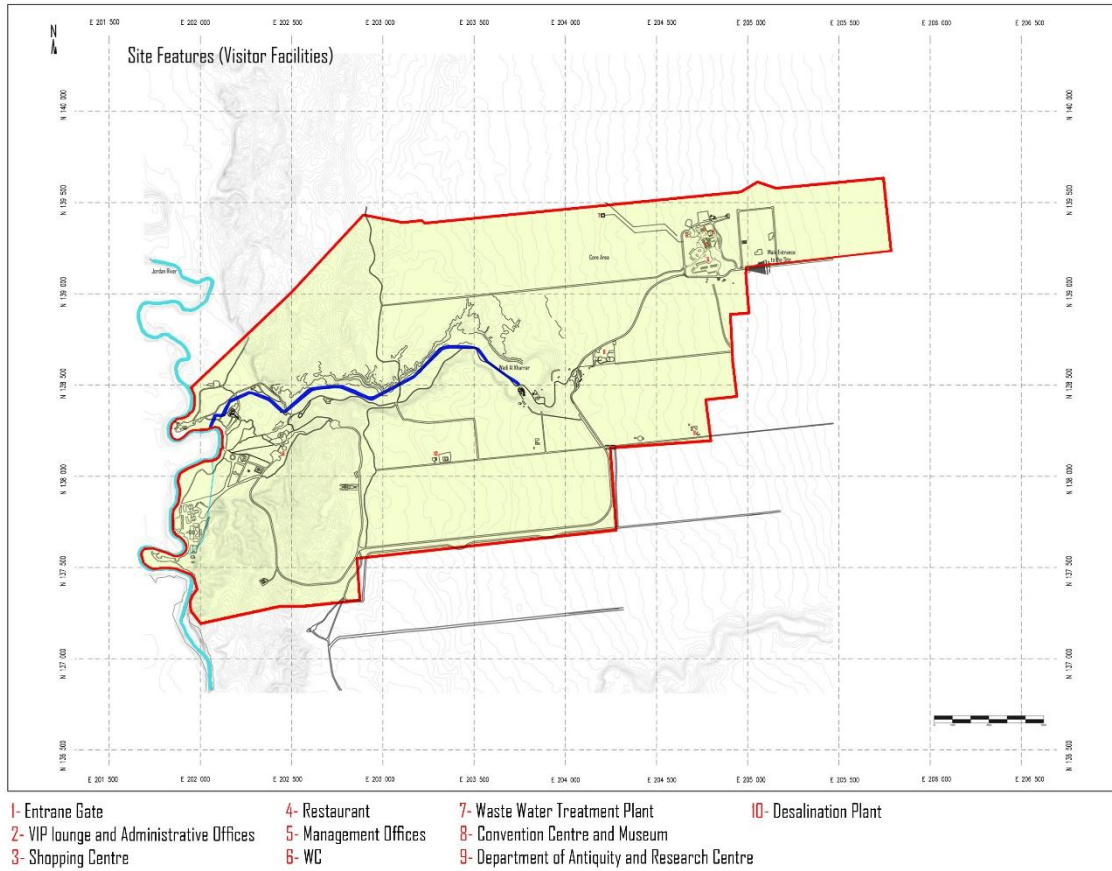
Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (56):** The Road to the Entrance Gate



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (57-58):** Roads within the Site



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (10): Site Features (Contemporary Facilities Layer)**



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (59): Entrance Gates**



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (60): Entrance Gates**





Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (61):** VIP Lounge and Management Offices



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (62-63):** Convention Center



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (64):** Museum





Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (65-66):** Souvenir Shops (Al souk)



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (67-68):** Desalination Plant



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (69):** WC Facilities in various locations along the trails



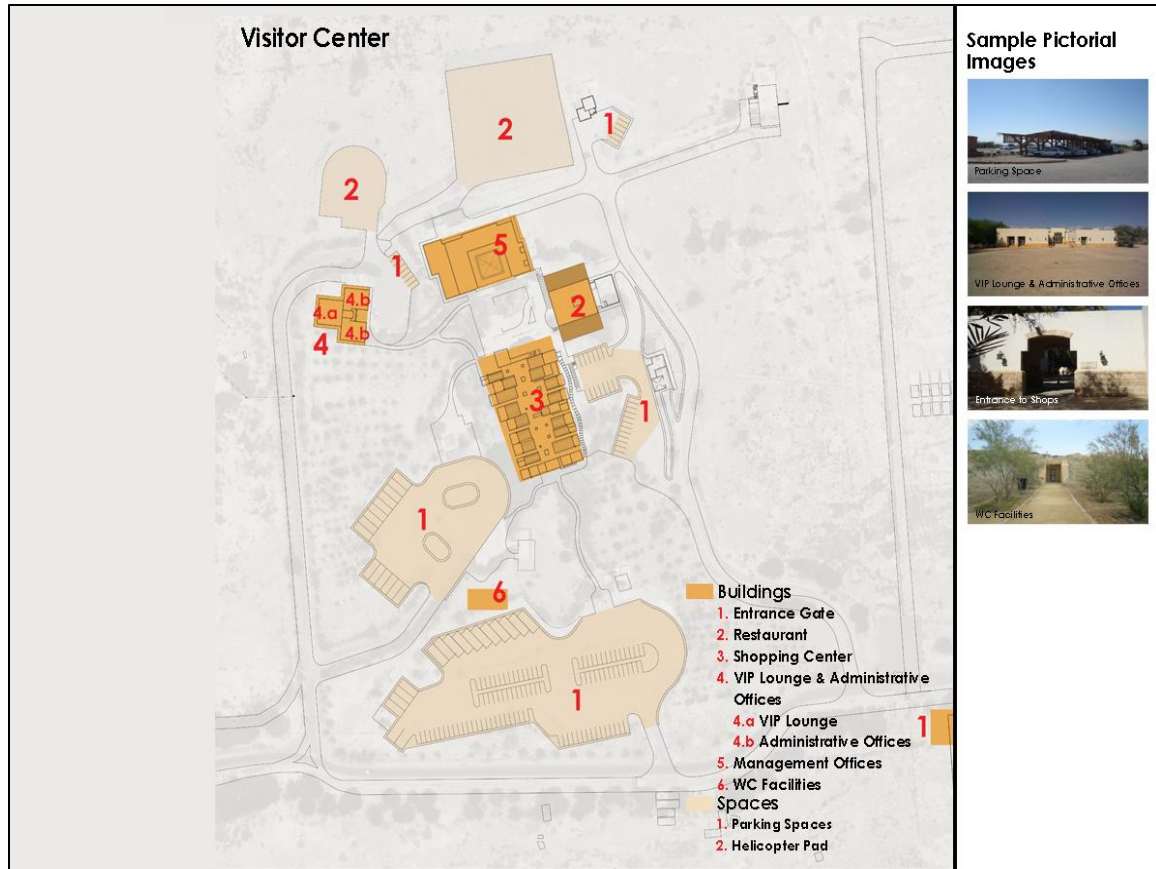
Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (70):** Shaded Parking



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

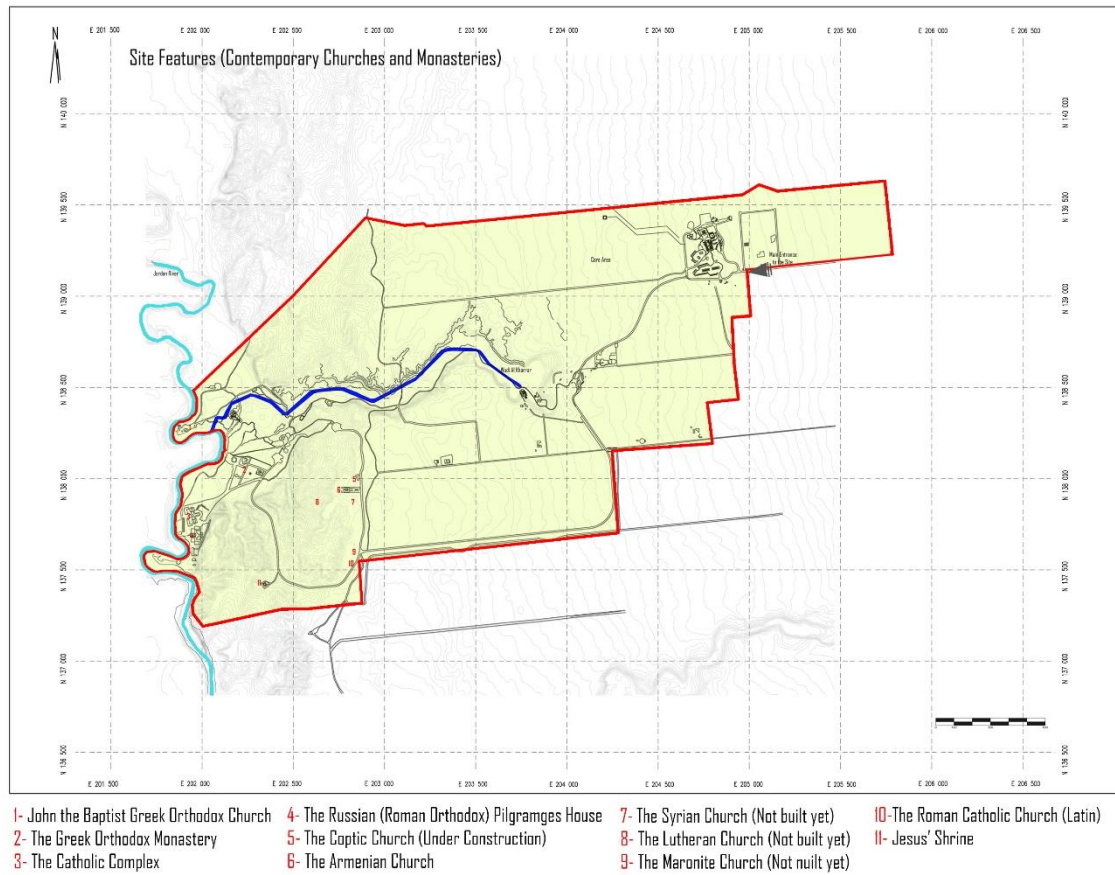
**Image (71):** Shuttle Collection Point



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (11):** Site Features (Visitor Center)





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (12):** Site Features (Contemporary Churches & Monasteries Layer)



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (72):** The Greek Orthodox Complex & Greek Orthodox Church



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (73):** The Catholic Church



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (74):** The Coptic Church & Monastery (Under construction)



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (75):** The Russian (Roman Orthodox) Pilgrimage House



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

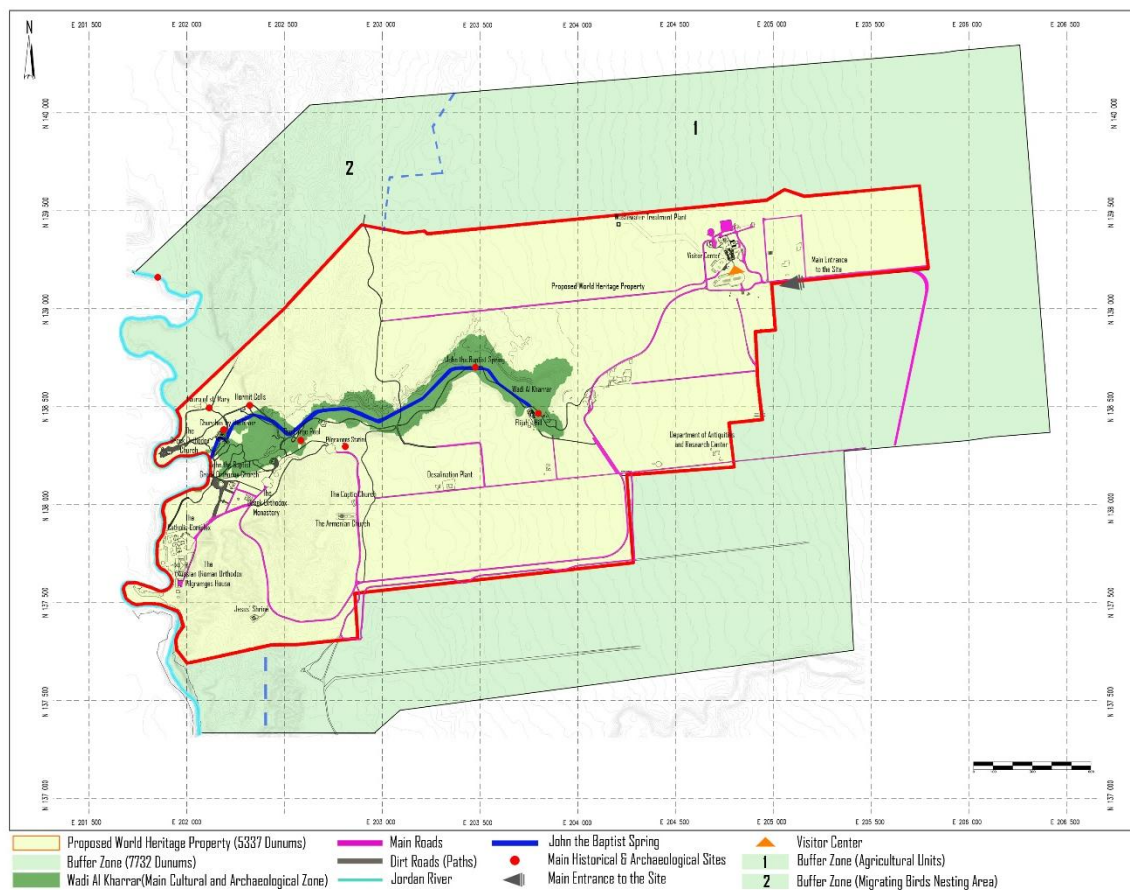
**Image (76):** Evangelical Lutheran Church (Not built yet)





Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (77):** The Armenian Church



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Map (13):** Site Features (Juxtaposition of Site's Layers)

## Stakeholder Analysis

### Stakeholders

A management plan should adopt a participatory process involving various stakeholders that are involved in the Site in one way or another. A management plan should acknowledge the fact that communities are different, they have different expectations from the management plan and these should be incorporated when possible. Furthermore, local narratives of the Site should be part of the “Story” told on Site and any management plan should thrive not only to achieve the conservation and better presentation of the Site to the public; but also, and as much as the Site permits; the economic prosperity of its local community. The following is a review of the various stakeholders that are associated with the Site in one way or another including not only the local communities, but also the staff and workers, visitors, pilgrims, and researchers and scholars who had worked on the Site, to mention a few.

### Local Communities

The Site is located within the South Shouneh District. There are several villages south of Wadi Nimrin and north of the Dead Sea that can be seen in connection with the Baptism Site and its property. These villages belong administratively to the town of Shunah South, the main trade and tourist center, especially for residents of the Jordan Valley and visitors from the highland towns of Jordan. Major settlements include Al-Kufrein, Al-Ramah, Al-Jofah, Al-Rawdah, Sweimeh, New Shunah, Al-Karamah, Al-Nahdah, Al-Jawasreh, Nimrein Al-Gharbi and Nimrein Al-Sharqi. According to the Jordanian Department of Statistics, and based on a 2011 census data, the population of the South Shouneh district reached 43850 of which 53.8% are males and 46.2% are females. Most of the villages are located along two main highways, one between the Yarmouk River and the Dead Sea and the other coming from Amman to the Dead Sea. None of these settlements is located in the immediate vicinity of the Baptism Site, although some villagers own agricultural land surrounding its buffer zone.

The area in general, is famous for tourism and agriculture with approximately 110,000 cultivated *donums* (1 *donum* equals 1000 meter square). Yet, and according to a 2008 survey, the percentage of poverty in the district reached 40.2% which is considered way above the national average of about 20% in general.

A detailed study by Mefleh Al-Edwan entitled "Al-Maghtas and its Neighborhood, a Study of the Place and its Society" (in Arabic) was made available to the team working on the Nomination Dossier and the Management Plan for the Site. The author himself comes originally from the same area of North Shuneh. According to George Tarif, two plots of Al-Kufrein village were *waqf* endowments for the Christian communities: one is 45 ha (450 dunums) and the other 44.8 ha (448 dunums). Raouf Abu Jaber, in an interview with Mefleh Al-Edwan, stated that these endowments belonged to the Roman Catholic Monastery that bought them from the locals at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and were registered in Salt, a major town on the highland east of the Baptism Site.

The majority of the inhabitants of the area surrounding the Baptism Site are Muslims. Mefleh Al-Edwan mentions in his above study that in the nineteenth century, six out of forty families were Christian, forming around 13 percent of the total population of the area and they lived side by side in harmony. Today, some of the inhabitants of this area and other areas of the Jordan Valley emigrated during different periods from other areas of Jordan, Palestine and even North Africa as agricultural workers. Other residents of this area come from Amman and other highland towns and own winter houses in North Shuneh, Al-Jofeh, Sweimeh and other locations.

In terms of the social map of the area, it is known as the Ibn Adwan Shouneh in reference to the clans of al 'Udwan all over the district. Other clans include the Ghawarneh, Mashalkhah, and Beir al Sabeh. Even though the District suffers from massive unemployment at 15.1 %; non-Jordanian workers employed mainly in agriculture amount to 15000 workers. They came originally from Egypt or from different Asian countries.

In terms of involving the local community in the Site's management, it is interesting to know that the local inhabitants knew about the existence of this important archaeological site before the archaeologists who undertook surveys and excavations in this part of the Jordan Valley. In the 1990s they were able to guide concerned archaeologists to the center of the ancient site east of the Jordan River. The local citizens around the site east of the Jordan River belong to the large tribe of al 'Udwan who have inhabited the area for a long period of time.

The involvement of the local community continued during and after the archaeological excavations. They felt responsible for the protection of the site and considered themselves part of its cultural history. The local citizens have also their own stories related to the site, which contribute to a better understanding of the place. They also participated in the excavations and conservation works that took place on Site, and later in managing and guarding the property. They are also involved in the visitor services

and in decision making regarding the management of the Site. Around eighty percent of the staff members of the Baptism site were employed from the local community. Researchers belonging to this tribe were invited to be part of the team involved in the preparation of the nomination dossier of the property in addition to participating in several workshops that included other stakeholders while preparing the Management Plan.

The local community surrounding the baptism site is increasingly playing an important interactive role in the development of the Site. The villagers of the tribal groups consider themselves to be part of the history of the site and they share in its growth and responsibility.

### **Permanent Staff and Employees**

An important group of stakeholders include the permanent staff and employees. While preparing the Management Plan, the team worked in close relation with many of the Staff including the Director of the Commission of the Baptism site (Eng. Dia' Madani) and also Assistant Director (Mr. Rustom Mkhjian), originally a civil engineer but trained as an archaeologist at the Department of Antiquates of Jordan and as a conservationist at ICCROM in Rome and also at the Site working hand in hand with many of the researchers and archaeologists who had studied and worked on the Site.

It is extremely important to mention that the strong sense of belonging and dedication to the Site; coupled with enthusiasm and eagerness to learn more about its historic, natural and archaeological layers in addition to unobtrusive measures for its continuous conservation and stabilization; are some of the main characteristics of Mr. Mkhjian. The presence of such individuals in culturally and archaeological significant site is crucial and would be a central reason for the success of any management plan that is put forward.

### **The Various Christian Denominations**

The various Christian denominations together with their priests are considered an important group of stakeholders associated with the site at different levels. Several of these priests are permanent residents within the Site, and also the various Christian communities from Jordan and outside frequently visit the Site as pilgrims and as visitors as well.

### **Pilgrims**

The site had been visited by travelers and pilgrims since the Byzantine period and even before that. The site is considered an important point on the Christian pilgrimage route which includes Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Madaba and the Baptism Site itself. These pilgrims are important stakeholders and had been as such since antiquities.

### **Visitors and Tourists**

The site is also frequented by many visitors and tourists from all over the World, these tourists are also important stakeholders and the nature of their experience on the Site is an important aspect of the Management Plan.

### **Archaeologists, Historians, and Other Experts**

Several archaeologists, historians, and other researchers through the years had worked on the site including Ibrahim, Yaseen, Waheeb, Abu Shmais, Hadidi, Mkhjian, Kanellopoulos to mention a few. Several of these individuals had developed special ties to the Site and many of them are considered significant stakeholders as well.

Other potential stakeholders include tour operators, donor agencies, and hotel operators within the Dead Sea area and beyond.

## **Aims & Objectives of the Management Plan**

One important question to be asked is the reasons for devising a management plan for the Baptism Site. The answer to this question is multi-folded. The Management Plan will offer a collective vision and provide a decision making tool that would guide future excavations, conservation and intervention on the site. Being a collective vision to the management of cultural and natural sites, the management plan provides an anchor to accommodate how different stakeholders relate to the site and to its management.

Objectives of the Management Planning of the Baptism site are multiple, they include:

- Create a shared vision among staff responsible for the site and external parties who have an interest in the site.
- Protect the fragile layers of the site (natural and archaeological) for future generations.

- Properly research, interpret, and present the site in the most suitable approach possible and also in accordance with the updated findings of the scientific community about the Site.
- Orchestrate and facilitate the experience on Site whether for pilgrims or visitors and tourists alike.
- Involve stakeholders (and thereby strengthen relationships, negotiate conflicts, and form alliances that will benefit the site.
- Engage in transparent decision making; that is to make the decision making process open and clear to all.
- End up with a flexible management plan that is also affected by the changing contextual reality of the Site and Country and also by available resources for future implementation.





Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (78):** Workers from the Local Community helping with restoration works



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (79):** Workers at Rest after a day's work



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (80):** A Working from the Local Community tilling the land

**Table (1): Population Statistics of Villages Surrounding the Baptism Site**

No.	Zone	Populations	Percentage of major general
1	South Shuneh District	43850	11.2%
2	South Shuneh	3936	8.97
3	New Shuneh	4354	9.93
4	Al-Karamah	9180	20.94
5	Al-Rawdah	8992	20.51
6	Al-Ramah	4773	10.88
7	Al-Kufrein	2055	4.69
8	Al-Jofah	6364	14.51
9	Sweimeh	4196	9.57

**Table (2): Housing Units in each of the Villages**

No.	Settlements	Number of housing units
1	South Shuneh	1300
2	New Shuneh	1500
3	Al-Karamah	2000
4	Al-Rawdah	1880
5	Al-Ramah	500
6	Al-Kufrein	400
7	Al-Jofah	1500
8	Sweimeh	1700
Total		10780



Source: Ruben, Isabelle– Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (81):** A Jordanian Roman Catholic priest baptizes a child at one of the stone fonts beside the River Jordan.



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (82):** Epiphany Celebrations

## Part II of the Management Plan: Assessment & Analysis

### Cultural Significance of Site & Values Assessment

It is important to identify the various values of the site and assess its significance as it plays an important role in management decisions and planning for archaeological and cultural sites. We would start by identifying the various values of the Site and the criteria under which it is nominated to the World Heritage List.

### Diversity of Values and the Criteria under Which the Site is Nominated to the World Heritage List

The site is nominated for the World Heritage List under Criteria III and VI. Criteria III states or identifies with sites that *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared*. As far as the Baptism site is concerned; the various elements of the site demonstrate a strong, traditional Christian character and constitute a unique combination that indicates clearly the function of the place as a significant historical and religious site. It was at this site where the tradition of baptism started and continued. The cultural significance of the site can be defined as a result of a rich archaeological heritage and unique architectural formation within a special cultural and natural setting. Recent discoveries demonstrate the sacred, cultural and archaeological uniqueness of the Baptism site "Al-Maghtas" as the traditional site of Christ's baptism by John.

Criteria VI is related to sites that are directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. As far as the Baptism Site is concerned; the churches and other structures including water installations, pools, cisterns and caves are directly and tangibly associated with the first steps of Christianity, which was later recognized by the Muslim rulers and population. The built and natural elements of Bethany beyond the Jordan "Al-Maghtas" are directly linked to spiritual, historical and long-term traditional values. Religious practices were resumed as soon as the site was rediscovered in the mid-1990s. The various Christian denominations were granted permission to build new churches outside the core area of the property to enable sustainable use of this important Christian site.



### Spiritual & Religious Values

One very obvious value of the Site is its religious and spiritual value. Not only that the site is associated with the ritual of Baptism; but it is also significant for its association with the community's believe system (Christianity). It is important to understand that currently the ritual of Baptism is still continued on Site through the practices of the various Christian churches and their different denominations. In retrospect, the act of "building" of churches is a continuous practice in the Site since early Christianity and Byzantine periods, through Islamic periods, and until the present.

### Historic & Archaeological Values

The historic and archaeological value of the Site had already been elaborated in details in previous sections of this Management Plan. Yet, and in summary, the Site is associated with several religious structures (Monastery, Churches, Baptismal Pools, Hermit Cells, and other structures) that are related to the ritual of Baptism dating to late Roman and Byzantine periods.

### Cultural Values

The Site's most significant cultural value is its association with the notion of religious tolerance, and especially in a time of misunderstanding and lack of peaceful co-existence. The Site is not only significant for Christians, Muslims and Jews, but also can be used as a vehicle for demonstrating the commonalities and shared values between them. Furthermore, different Christian denominations come together in the Site and celebrate their diversity which is also reflected through their contemporary presence in the Site. The Site has a unique cultural message to the World. The Site is supposed to be a unique place on Earth that enables people to build bridges of love, co-existence, and peace.

Furthermore, the Site is a place frequented by the Christian community of Jordan to hold several celebrations such as the Epiphany celebrations. At the celebrations of the third millennium, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2000, Epiphany was celebrated with the

presence of the heads of the churches in Jordan. A mass was attended by over 25,000 believers from Jordan and the neighboring Arab countries. Two thousand candles were lit on the occasion. Ever since then, Epiphany has been celebrated annually at the Site, by various denominations, where people are blessed by the waters of the holy river.

Once again, the values of the Site are revived with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and visitors from the four corners of the world, and through the construction of churches, baptisteries and pilgrimage houses. All this was achieved through the arrival of heads of churches throughout the world to this graceful holy site as pilgrims. They sent letters to the Baptism Site Commission identifying this site as one of the three holiest sites for Christians on earth and asking for pieces of land to build their new churches just east of the river where Jesus was baptized.

### Informational Values

The Site is considered as a major source for the reading of Early Christian and Byzantine history in this unique location of the Holy Land. The beginning of settled life at the site goes back to the Late Chalcolithic period (ca. 3500 BC) and continued until late nineteenth century. The major occupation, however, dates from the Roman and Byzantine periods. This was preceded by brief occupation in the Hellenistic period (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC). The field investigations have uncovered several major buildings including churches, pools, and cisterns. Monastic caves and tombs associated with the churches were also investigated. The period of significance for the Site is associated with the Byzantine Period between 480-640 AD.

### Criteria under Which Inscription is Proposed

The following is the criteria under which the inscription of the Baptism Site to the World Heritage is proposed:

***(iii) The Baptism Site, “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas) bears unique testimony to the cultural and religious tradition of baptism and the importance it holds in the Christian belief system.***

The archaeological components of the Baptism Site constitute a unique assemblage that clearly indicates the function of the place for Christian religious rites associated with the tradition of baptism, over more than a millennium of continuous use from the Late

Roman/Early Byzantine to the Mamluk periods (4<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> c. AD). The cultural significance of the site results from a rich archaeological heritage and unique architectural features within a special cultural and natural setting. Recent discoveries demonstrate the sacred, cultural and archaeological uniqueness of the Baptism Site, “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas) as the traditional site of Christ’s baptism by John, and its association with the life of John the Baptist, with the ascension to Heaven of Prophet Elias/Elijah, and the life of St. Mary of Egypt, venerated in Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches as the patron saint of penitents. The structures found at the site, such as churches, chapels, baptismal basins and pools, monasteries, hermit caves, and pilgrim hostels, all point to the high religious significance this location had for Christianity since its earliest times. Together, they bear unique testimony to the tradition of baptism and to its fundamental importance for Christians of all denominations.

***(iv) The Baptism Site, “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas) exhibits outstanding examples of buildings and architectural ensembles which illustrate a fundamental event in the history of one of the world’s great religions.***

The performance of the rites of baptism and the physical constraints of the location required new forms of buildings and installations, not found anywhere else. These buildings are characterized by unique features, such as construction on piers as a way to protect two of the churches from flooding, or the marble staircase leading to the water of the river Jordan, where huge pillars served as base for a cruciform baptistery and the Chapel of the Mantle, commemorating the location where Jesus deposited his garments before being baptized by John. This Chapel was probably destroyed by floods and rebuilt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in smaller form using only one of the four pillars it originally stood upon. The churches, marble steps, baptistery, and the smaller chapel are preserved in situ, providing physical evidence to the narratives of pilgrims such as Theodosius (530 AD), the Piacenza Pilgrim (570 AD), Arculfus (670 AD), Willibald (721-727 AD) and others.

The nearby church was built under emperor Anastasius (491-518 AD). This church, the remains of which are still visible in situ, was considered as the most notable memorial church of St. John the Baptist on the bank of the Jordan River. Theodosius wrote “5 miles north of the Dead Sea in the place where the Lord was baptized..... there too is the church of S. John the Baptist, which the Emperor Anastasius built: this church is very lofty, being built above large chambers, on account of the Jordan River when it overflows” (Macpherson 1895). The archaeological and architectural remains match this description. Forty years later (570 AD) the Piacenza Pilgrim wrote: “There is an obelisk

*there surrounded by a screen and in the water where the river turned back in its bed, stands a wooden cross. On both banks there are marble steps leading down to the water” (Stewart 1890).*

These steps were discovered and are still preserved in situ, descending eastward from the church of St. John the Baptist towards the water of the cruciform baptismal pool. Descriptions of the area matching the archaeological remains are also found in Arculfus (670 AD), who also saw a wooden cross in the middle of the river, a little church built on four piers, and a large monastery on a nearby hill (*“Right at the river’s edge stands a small rectangular church which was built, so it is said, at the place where the Lord’s clothes were placed while he was baptized. The fact that it is supported on four stone vaults makes it usable, since the water, which comes in from all sides, is underneath it. It has a tiled roof. This remarkable church is supported, as we have said, by arches and vaults, and stands in the lower part of the valley through which the Jordan flows. But in the upper part there is a great monastery for monks, which has been built on the brow of a small hill nearby, overlooking the church. There is also a church built there in honour of Saint John Baptist which, together with the monastery, is enclosed in a single masonry wall”*) (Wilkinson 2002:190-191). Willibald in the first half of the eighth century saw a church raised on stone piers, as well as the same wooden cross in the middle of the river. All these accounts coincide between them in their descriptions and are confirmed by the remains found at the site, in particular the church on piers, the steps leading to the cruciform baptistery in the river, and the Chapel of the Mantle.

***(vi) The Baptism Site, “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas) is directly associated with the Christian tradition of the baptism of Jesus, an event of universal significance. It is also associated with characters and events of high significance for all Abrahamic religions.***

The built and natural environments of the Baptism Site are associated with spiritual and religious values and traditions, historical events, and characters of universal significance, in particular for the Abrahamic religions. It is here that Prophets Elias/Elijah and Elisha crossed the river parting its waters, and where Elias was first fed by ravens and finally ascended to Heaven (2. Kings 2:5-11), where John the Baptist lived as a hermit, practicing baptism and announcing the coming of the Christ, and finally baptizing him (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:28-34), and it is also here that St. Mary the Egyptian lived a life of repentance.

The strongest of these associations, for which the site is universally known especially to Christians of all denominations, is the one with baptism. Baptism is considered a sacrament by most denominations while the Catholic Church considers it the first of

seven sacraments, both in time (as it is normally received in infancy) and in priority, since other sacraments cannot be received without it being performed first. This gives to the location of Bethany Beyond the Jordan (Al-Maghtas) an extraordinary associative value, as it can be considered the place where Christianity originated. Physically, this is confirmed by the millenarian use of the place by monks, hermits, saints (St. Mary of Egypt, for example) and pilgrims since the Late Roman period until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the structures that have now been excavated were abandoned. The tradition of baptism, however, was not lost and it continued throughout the centuries, until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Religious practices were resumed in the mid-1990s, as soon as the site ceased to be a closed military zone. The heads of several Christian denominations declared the site the true site of the baptism of Jesus, and new churches are being built outside the core of the property to allow their congregations to perform their pilgrimage without impinging on the site, and each year Epiphany is celebrated at the site. The site was also visited by Pope John Paul II during the 2000 Jubilee year, by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009, and it will be visited by Pope Francis II in May 2014, making it one of the most visited locations in the world by Roman Catholic Popes, adding to the significance of the site the official recognition of this Church.

### **Statement of Significance & Justification for the Sites' Universal Outstanding Value**

Heritage site must possess a universal symbolism above and beyond regional, national, or purely political, religious or economic significance. If one of the advisory bodies of the World Heritage Committee (ICOMOS, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)) and/or the Committee itself expands or changes the statement of significance and the justification of outstanding universal value formulated in the application during the evaluation or inscription process, the relevant documents must be adapted accordingly. The following is the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the Site:

Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

The site is located in an area with a long and uninterrupted occupational history since the beginning of human settled life until now. The area was densely populated during



the Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad and Ayyubid/Mamluk periods(1<sup>st</sup> century BC until 15<sup>th</sup> century AD).A large number of Byzantine churches have been discovered in the southern Jordan Valley on both sides of the Jordan River, as well as twenty related sites within an area stretching some four kilometers east of the Jordan River.

The archaeological material uncovered by the excavations for over fifteen years is substantial enough to establish the chronology of the site used for baptizing Christians for around 1000 years. The site represents one of the stops along the early Christian route between Jerusalem, the Jordan River and Mount Nebo.

Although the remaining structures of the Baptism site are not as monumental as one might expect, they give an authentic impression indicating the use of the site for the rite of baptism since the beginning of the Byzantine period until it stopped to be used toward the end of the Mamluk period. Its continuous use for almost one millennium indicates a clear tolerance under Muslim rule in the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ayyubid/Mamluk periods. This kind of tolerance was confirmed in a large number of other sites in Jordan and Palestine where Muslims, Christians and Jews lived side by side.

The various contemporary facilities and constructions of the site were built of local materials including stone, brick, reeds, wood, etc. Mosaic floors follow the same tradition that was practiced on a large scale during the Byzantine and the following Umayyad periods.

The site must have suffered as a result of earthquakes and other tectonic movements which were attested at the site and other parts of the Jordan Valley. Various buildings were rebuilt or modified after each destruction. The shifting of the layers, floors and walls shows that the site had witnessed a strong earthquake which led to its severe destruction and the place had to be deserted. Further research and field investigations may throw more light on the last years of the Baptism site.

According to Eng. Rustom Mkhjian, Assistant Director-General of the Baptism Site Commission, the architectural remains discovered are of unique designs (two churches built high on piers to protect them from floods of the Jordan River, a unique cruciform baptistery that used the water of the Jordan for pilgrims to be baptized in, basilicas with gates at the eastern parts beyond the apse linked through a staircase to the bank of the Jordan, all these remains are located in the middle of the river's catchment area "*al Zor*" in a place where floods and earthquakes kept destroying one church after the other, and in a place with no community to serve. The "wilderness" that John described

himself as living in is similar to Biblical times. The reeds that are mentioned in the Bible and the natural habitat for bees reminding us of what John used to eat.

Mohammad Waheeb, the principle excavator of the site, has reached the following conclusions (2009: 31):

The recovered remains from the survey of Elijah's Hill and the nearby sites are a clear evidence for the settlement of the area from the beginning of the early Roman to the late Byzantine period. According to the descriptions of the pilgrims and travelers, the Byzantines recognized the site of the Baptism on the eastern bank of the Jordan River. After 333 AD emperors, governors, monks, and saints started building monuments, churches. And water installations for the memory of the holy events which took place in this area.

The influx of the pilgrims increased the number of monasteries and churches located on the road between Jerusalem and Mount Nebo. One of the most important memorial churches was uncovered on the eastern side of the Jordan River, established along the pilgrims' route. This memorial church was not built to serve a community or a village, but to commemorate a sacred event (the Baptism of the Christ) and also to perpetuate the memory of the Christ and John the Baptist. It was a destination of pilgrimage and functioned as a pilgrim's station. According to pilgrim's descriptions, a number of monks were attached to the churches to serve the pilgrims.

The newly discovered church (the first church) is part of a complex that consisted of three churches. Emperor Anastasias built the church there and endowed a monastic community attached to it. This church was considered the most notable memorial church of St John the Baptist on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, where the baptism of Jesus is traditionally said to have taken place.

Later on when the first church collapsed, the Byzantines decided to build the second and third churches. The increased number of pilgrims and the holiness of the site pushed them to build the other churches to be used by the pilgrims who passed through this area towards the holy sites in the Jordan Valley.

Heads of Churches have declared the Baptism site east of the Jordan River among three most important sites for Christians on earth: Bethlehem where Jesus was born, Bethany beyond the Jordan where Jesus started his ministry after he was baptized by John, and Jerusalem where his earthly life ended.

### Statement of Authenticity & Integrity

Authenticity refers to the truthful and credible conveyance *of the historic and cultural significance of the site*. Depending on the cultural context, authenticity has to be expressed in a convincing and genuine manner through numerous attributes.

Authenticity manifests itself in form and composition, material and substance, use and function, techniques and administrative systems, location and overall context and other expressions.

Integrity refers to the wholeness and intactness of a World Heritage site. With regard to cultural heritage the physical substance should be in good, conservational controlled condition.

### Statement of Integrity

All churches and other archaeological remains uncovered during excavations were preserved after necessary consolidation and conservation with minimal restoration. No reconstruction work was applied even when enough evidence would allow such additions. Solid wooden reversible skeletons and protective shelters were placed on each major ancient construction. These shelters can be removed easily if necessary or if further archaeological evidence appears. All floors, walls and sections were preserved. In spite of the simplicity of the archaeological remains they demonstrate the function and the exceptional meaning of the remains. They can be compared with many other discoveries in Jordan and Palestine, especially with those of the Roman and Byzantine periods found in the southern Jordan Valley and in the immediate vicinity of the Baptism site. The architectural remains and other constructions display original masonry and building materials from the immediate environment such as earth, stone, wood, etc.

All archaeological remains were fenced and signs in Arabic and English were placed next to each construction indicating the function and the date. In certain cases plans and photos were placed showing the archaeological remains during excavations.

All archaeological finds were documented in terms of their stratigraphy and context; and were kept in special drawers after being classified, drawn and photographed. Some of the objects and other finds will be put on display in a special gallery close to the site for visitors and specialists to see.

The basic principle for the Jordanian government represented by the Commission of the Baptism Site is that any development of the area for tourism and pilgrimage should

entail minimum construction or alternation of the landscape, and that administrative offices and visitor services should be placed away from the core of the site.

### Statement of Authenticity

All the archaeological surveys and excavations undertaken at the site and its surroundings confirm the authenticity of the biblical character of the site as Bethany where John the Baptist lived and baptized Jesus Christ. Field discoveries and historical/pilgrims' records are a substantial addition to Christian archaeology and old Christian tradition. Generations of pilgrims and early travelers confirm that we should find *Bethany beyond the Jordan* east of the Jordan River rather than west of the river. The archaeological remains show that the site represents part of the early Christian pilgrimage route between Jerusalem, the Jordan River, Mount Nebo and other major Christian sites. The archaeological evidence reflects the basic foundation of the exceptional value of this property. Five of the churches excavated here were built starting in the fifth century AD for the performance of the religious practices related to this holy site. Isabelle Ruben and Jane Taylor (2010), the authors of the book *Beyond the Jordan: Baptism, Prophecy and Pilgrimage East of the Jordan River*, state:

*The baptism of Jesus was a vital turning point in his life, marking the beginning of his ministry on earth. That it occurred on is an indication that this terrain is an elemental part of the biblical Holy Lands. And Bethany beyond the Jordan takes its place, alongside Bethlehem (where Jesus was born) and Jerusalem (where he died) as one of the three main sites of Christian pilgrimage. In the three years that followed his baptism it was on the east side of the River Jordan that Jesus performed one of his most compelling miracles, and here that some of his best known and best loved sayings were uttered.*

The authenticity of the baptism site is as pure as the testimonies of the Gospels, the pilgrims' accounts, the Madaba mosaic map of the Holy Land, and the archaeological discoveries at the site since 1997. All of these sources are crowned by official documents sent both to H.M. King Abdullah II and H.R.H. Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad by heads of Churches throughout the world saying that Jesus was baptized east of the Jordan and that the baptism site is one of the holiest sites for Christianity, asking for pieces of land to build new churches, monasteries and pilgrims' houses at the site, bringing back the ritual of baptism to the site after it was abandoned for a period of time. In other words, history is being re-written, where one generation after the other will understand the reason why monastic life continued at the site and how the site

turned once again into a focal point of pilgrimage for believers who wanted to follow the trails of the prophets and be in physical contact with the holy sites. This spot serves again as a destination for baptism where local families and others from all over the world have the opportunity to visit and baptize their children.

The Vatican has listed Wadi Al-Kharrar “Elijah’s Hill” among five official Jubilee sites in Jordan, including the Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo (which Pope John Paul II visited in March 2000), Mukawer, where John the Baptist was beheaded, Mar Elias, the birthplace of the Prophet Elijah, and the shrine of the Virgin Mary at Anjara, Ajloun.

### **Sources for Site Authenticity**

The main source of authenticity (and based on the World Heritage Convention) is linked to the archaeological scientific evidence existing in the site and represented by the remains of structures in addition to epigraphic and other archaeological findings such as pottery and coins. Yet, other supportive non-physical intangible sources (such as travelers; historians, and pilgrims’ accounts through the years in addition to the community’s believe system and religious text might add another (non-physical) layer to the sources of Site authenticity.

### **Archaeological Scientific Evidence (Archaeological Buildings Remains, Epigraphic, and Archaeological Findings of Pottery and Other**

The layout and the function of the Baptism Site “Al-Maghtas” cannot be directly compared with any other site in the region. The churches (especially the basilica type) and other individual buildings, on the other hand, have many parallels at Byzantine sites in Jordan and Palestine. The density of population in the region during the Byzantine period is remarkable and many excavated sites have Byzantine churches that can be compared with the ones from the Baptism Site. Those sites include several ones located in the Jordan Valley: South Shunah, Zar’a, Tabaqat Fahl (Pella) and Um Hadar on the East Jordan Valley and Jericho, Jabal Quruntul (Mount of Temptation) west of the Jordan River. Other sites on the eastern highlands include Um Qeis (Gadara), Qweilbeh (Abila), Jerash (Gerasa), Rihab, Khirbet Al-Wahadneh in Ajlun, Amman, Madaba, Umm Ar-Rassas, Mount Nebo and many other sites. The maps included in this dossier show most of these sites.

The pottery, coins, crosses and other finds from the Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic periods are typical of these periods and parallels were found at most of the sites found



in the Jordan Valley or the highland. They leave no doubt concerning the date of the buildings and the occupational history of the site as well as the connection of the Byzantine sites with the Baptism site.

A variety of discoveries were made at the site during the excavations. These discoveries include several churches with relatively well preserved mosaic floors with colored geometric designs of lozenges and crosses dating from the fifth century AD. Churches and associated structures and facilities continued to be built in the Early and Middle Islamic periods.

These early Christian communities established important units and infrastructure, including elaborate channels, reservoirs and pools for ritual purposes and to serve visiting pilgrims. Christian communities at the site brought water from nearby valleys and springs by ceramic pipes connected to cisterns and to large and medium-sized tanks.

Roman and Byzantine Corinthian capitals were also found within and around the churches. Some of these capitals were observed and recorded by early travelers like the French Father Abel. Other capitals appeared in the course of the excavations. They were made of marble or other stone.

Other finds include large crosses carved in marble. A large number of copper coins were recovered in various locations during the excavations. Some of these coins date from the Early and Middle Roman periods (1<sup>st</sup> century BC-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD). The majority of the coins can be dated to the Late Roman and Byzantine periods (4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century AD). Other coins with Arabic script were struck in the Early Islamic period (7<sup>th</sup> century on).

A Greek inscription was set in the mosaic floor of the Northern Church of the Baptism Site. The complete inscription consists of five lines and reads as follows: "By the help of the grace of Christ our God the whole monastery was constructed in the time of Rhetorios, the most God-beloved Presbyter and Abbot. May God the Savior give him mercy.

The Madaba mosaic map, dating from the Byzantine period (sixth century AD), is another important source for the location of the Baptism site. It shows the area just east of the Jordan River under the name Ainon or Beit Aion (Arabic: 'Ain = spring) which was the ancient name Bethany (now Sapsaphas). Beneath the name is a sign representing the Spring and both refer to Elijah's Hill = Tell Al-Kharrar which means the mound of running water. The Map also shows (Bethabara) on the western side of the River which is the place of crossing of John to the East of the River Jordan.



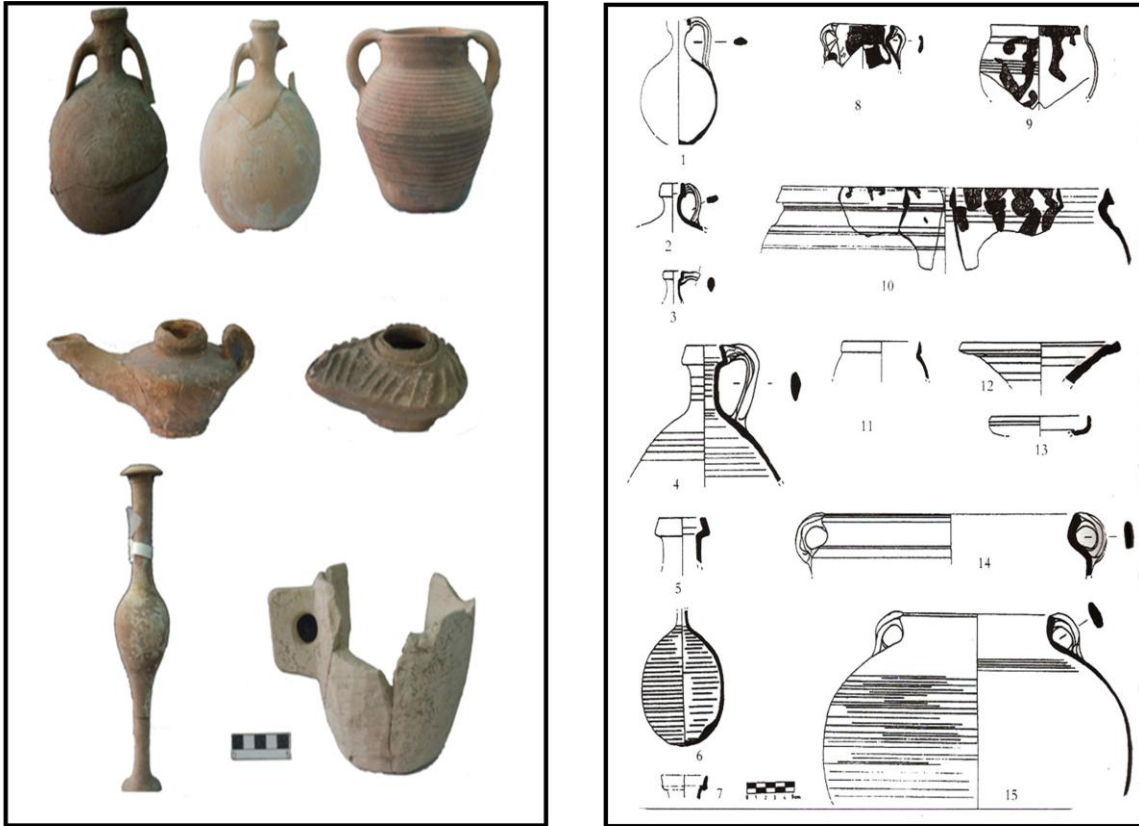
**Image (83):** A late 6<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century pilgrim token made of clay, with the baptism scene stamped on it- easily and cheaply made, using local clay and a stamp that depicted a scene relating to the particular pilgrimage site, these were the common type of pilgrim 'souvenir'

Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/(August 2012)

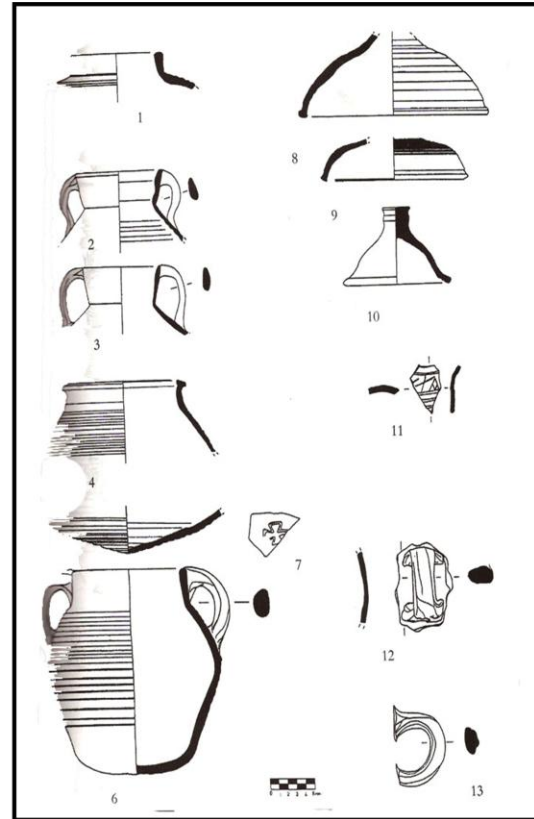
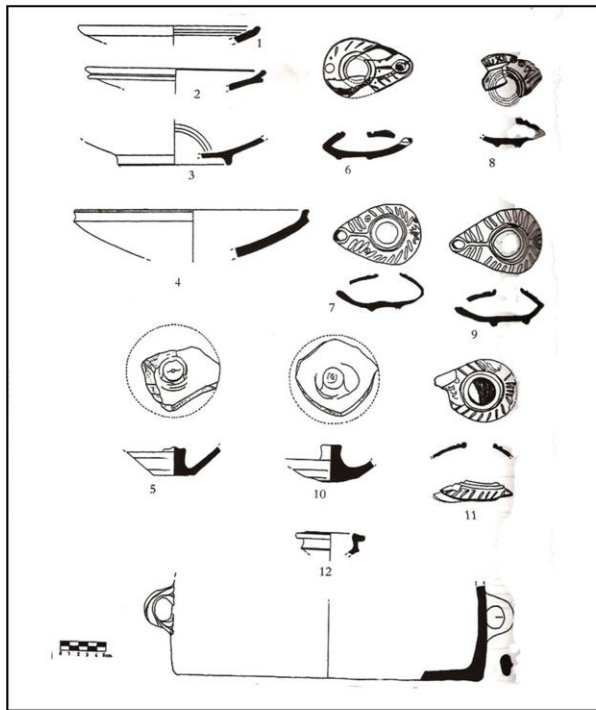
**Image (84- 85):** Some archaeological findings from the Site



Source: Abu Shmais, Adeib / (2001) *Ceramic finds from the Baptism region, The early Roman Pottery, phase I (Pre-Hood) 63-37bc and Herod period 4BC-73AD*

**Image (86):** Roman and Byzantine Pottery

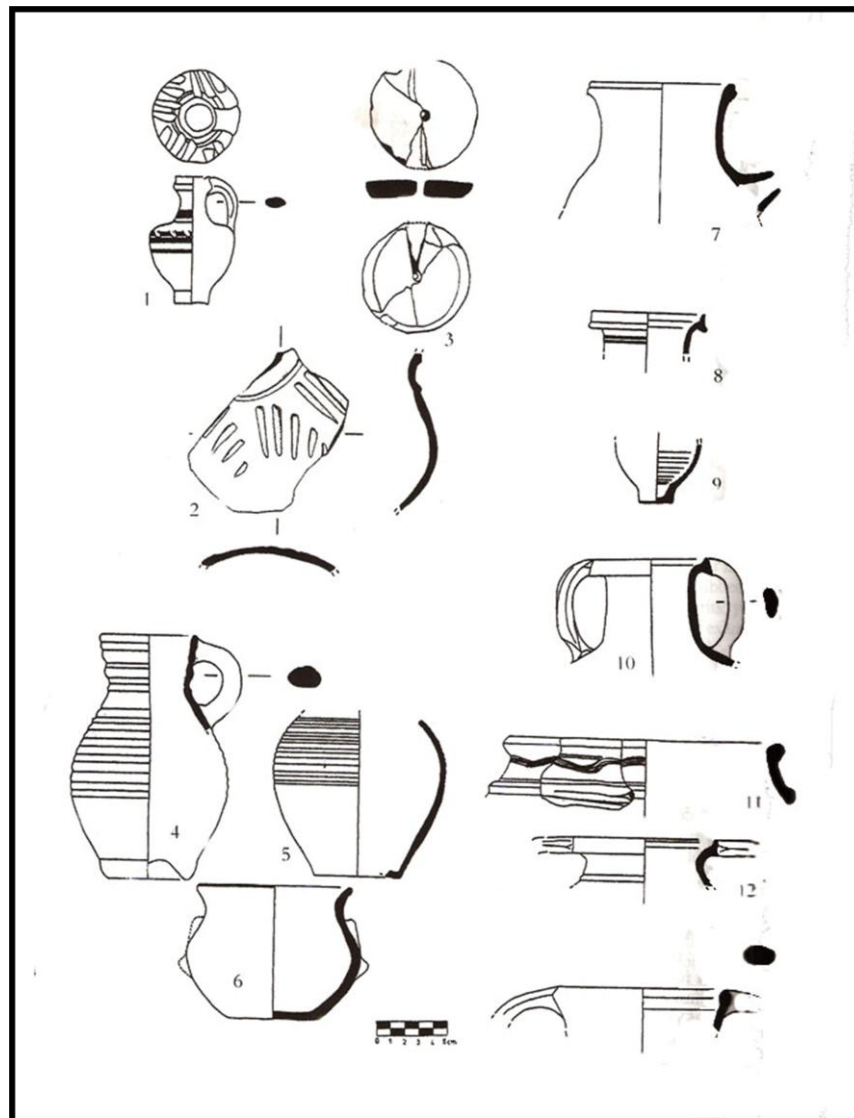
**Image (87):** Early Roman I – Late Roman I Pottery



Source: Waheeb, Mohhamed/2009 *The Great Discovery, Jesus Baptism Site* (Page: 88 &89)

**Image (88):**Early Byzantine IV Pottery- Late Byzantine I Pottery

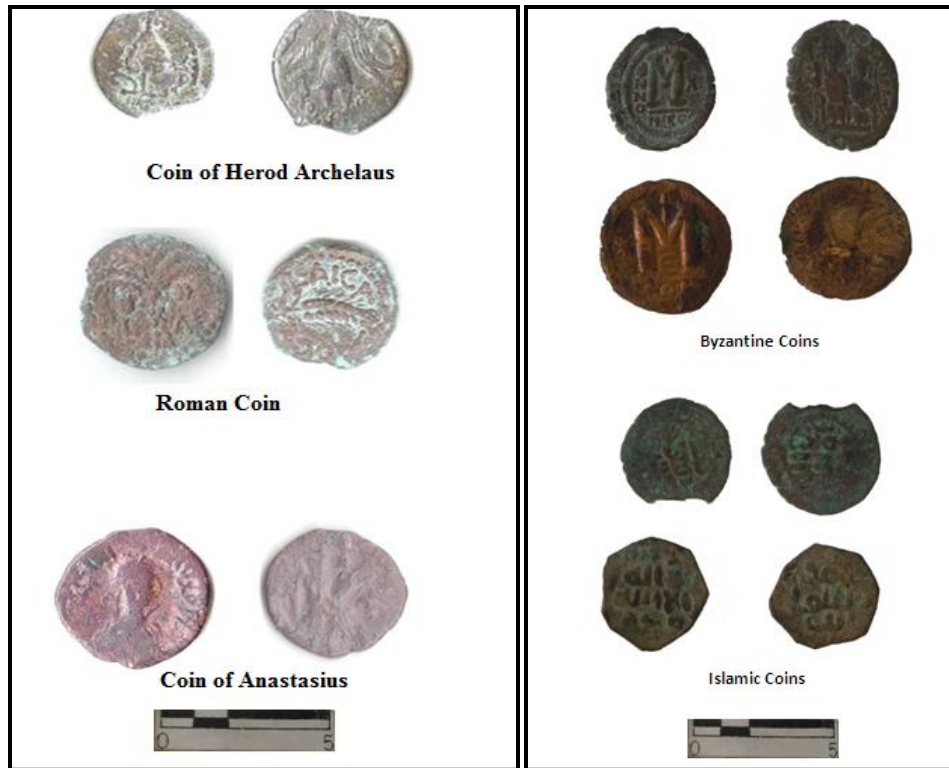
**Image (89):**Early Byzantine IV Pottery



Source: Waheeb, Mohamed/2009 *The Great Discovery, Jesus Baptism Site* (Page: 92)

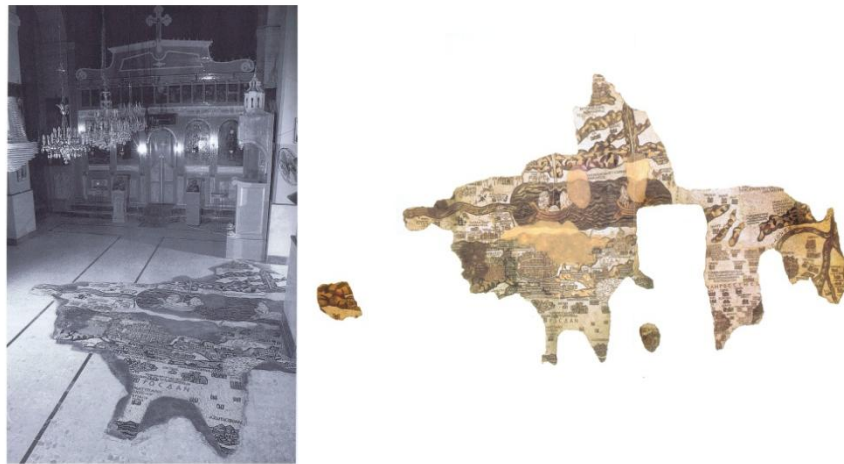
**Image (90):**Early Islamic I Pottery





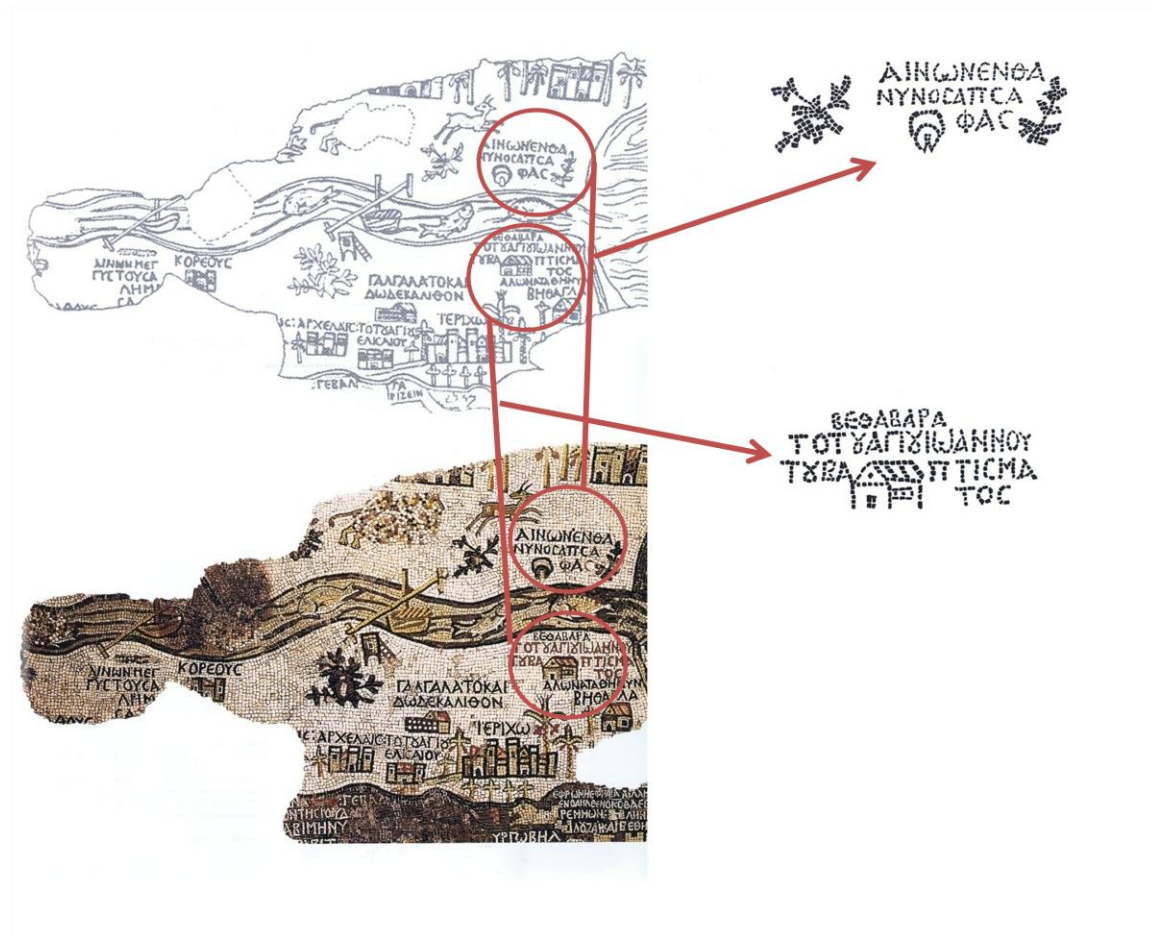
Source: Waheeb, Mohhamed/2009

**Image (91):**Archaeological findings (Coins from Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Periods)



Source: (Piccirillo, Michele- Alliata, Eugenio)/ (1999) *the Madaba Map Centenary (1897-1997), Travelling through the Byzantine, Umayyad Period*

**Image (92):**Madaba Mosaic Map found in the Greek Orthodox Church which was built on the ruins of a Byzantine Church from the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD



Source: (Piccirillo, Michele- Alliata, Eugenio)/ (1999) *the Madaba Map Centenary (1897-1997), Travelling through the Byzantine, Umayyad Period*

**Image (93):** A close up for the Madaba Mosaic Map showing the location of the Baptism Site (which is indicated in the map as (Aenon where now is Saphsaphas), and also (Bethabara) the place of crossing of John to the East of the River)

Pottery is well represented in all the excavation areas of the site through the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods. While there are some cultic objects, the majority of pottery finds show a large variety of forms and sizes representing daily use by the people who were living at the site or visiting it.

The earliest pottery pieces date from the Hellenistic/Roman periods as of the second/first century BC and were found in connection with Tell Al-Kharrar (Elijah's Hill). The pottery includes oil lamps, cooking pots, globular juglets, bowls, amphorae and stone cups. The excavators believe that there was a small settlement in the immediate surroundings of Tell Al-Kharrar which dates from the Byzantine period (fifth – seventh centuries AD). The majority of the pottery was used by monks who settled in the region and constructed cells, chapels, churches and monasteries (Abu Shmeis and Waheeb 2002, 568).

The pottery indicates that the site was reused or substantially reconstructed during the following Umayyad, Abbasid and Fatimid periods. The pottery includes reddish-orange ware and interior glazed vessels as were found at Khirbet el-Mafjar to the west of the Baptism site. Other examples of Early and Middle Islamic pottery include jugs, storage jars, bowls, cooking pots and oil lamps. A pottery pipe was inscribed with cursive Arabic script (without diacritical dots). Other shards were glazed while some were painted with geometrical designs.

**Supportive Non-Physical (Intangible Sources): Travelers, Historians, and Pilgrims Accounts through the Years**

Data obtained from pilgrimage literature, starting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD confirm the location of the Baptism site east of the Jordan River. The *Onomasticon of Eusebius* reflects the first witness of the Christian practice of baptism here. The *Onomasticon of Eusebius*, a directory of Holy Land place names, based on the Bible, written around 314 AD by Eusebius (c. AD 263-339). The Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine is considered an authentic source of place names within the holy land west and east of the River Jordan.

The role of local oral traditions and cultural lore of places and landscapes of the Holy Land should not be underestimated as an integral source for both the *Onomasticon of Eusebius* and the Madaba mosaic map. One could argue that both could be considered a representation of a sacred geography: the *Onomasticon* is in encyclopedic form while the Madaba Map is in pictorial form.

The same practice is attested by other travelers/pilgrims like Egeria (381-384 AD) who travelled with a group of monks from Jerusalem to Mount Nebo through the Baptism Site, the Piacenza Pilgrim, John Moschus and Taleleus. Other pilgrims' accounts and descriptions show how much they match the archaeological remains discovered at the site. These pilgrims include Theodosius (530 AD) and Antoninus known as the pilgrim of Piacenza (570 AD). John Moschus was a monk who at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century travelled with Sophronius and recorded his travels which started with the Baptism Site. Sophronius became Patriarch of Jerusalem (638 AD) and he was the one who surrendered Jerusalem to the Caliph 'Umar bin al-Khattab.

Pilgrims and travelers continued to visit the Baptism site and bathe in the Jordan River after the Arab-Muslim administration of the region (starting in the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century AD). These include Arculf of France (670 AD) who gave an accurate description of the small church "...At the edge of the river is a small square church, built, as is said, on the spot where the garments of the Lord were taken care of at the time when he was baptized. This is raised, so as to be uninhabitable, on four vaults, standing above the waters which flow below." During the first half of the eighth century (725-726 AD) Willibald Bishop of Eichstätt in Germany mentioned the church standing on four vaults. Epiphanius (750-800 AD) also refers to a large church at the bank of the river, a mile west of the monastery of John the Baptist (Elijah's Hill) on present-day Tell Al-Kharrar.

The Baptism Site East of the Jordan continued to receive travelers and pilgrims in medieval times during the Crusader and the Ayyubid/Mamluk periods. The Russian Abbot Daniel came to the site in 1106-1107 and continued to visit the place during the Ayyubid period. He gave a detailed description of the wild life of the area where Christ was baptized "is distant from the river Jordan as far as a man can throw a small stone". Even though the buildings and caves were disintegrating, the stories associated with the location were still remembered. Indeed, in 1187 John Phocas wrote about the cave of John the Baptist, on the east side of the River Jordan which, he said, was 'not capable of containing a well-built man standing upright'; another cave 'in which the prophet Elias (Elijah) dwelt when he was carried off by the fiery chariot'; and he recalled the story of St Mary the Egyptian being visited by the monk Zozimus" (Ruben and Taylor 2010, 96-97).

Within the Ayyubid/Mamluk period or later the churches and other major buildings must have been destroyed as a result of natural causes, but the place was remembered by pilgrims and other travelers such as the German monk Felix Fabri who visited around 1484 (Ruben and Taylor 2010, 97). Travelers and archaeologists visited the area during the last 150 years, such as R. Conder in 1881, R. Abel in 1932, G. Lankester Harding in

1950s and Moawiyah Ibrahim jointly with Khair Yassine and James Sauer in 1976. They all concentrated their description on Tell Al-Kharrar (Tell Mar Elias or St Elijah's Hill), which is located two kilometers east of the Jordan River and according to the pottery, the dating is to the Early Roman to the Late Byzantine periods (Ibrahim et al. 1988).

Extensive field work was carried out by Mohammad Waheeb starting in 1996. He presented the results of his work in two books: *The Great Discovery – Jesus Baptist Site* (Amman 2009) and *The Discovery of Bethany Beyond the Jordan "Site of Jesus Baptism"* (Amman 2011), in addition to several other reports and articles published in the Annual of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and other specialized journals.

After all these important discoveries, hundreds of thousands of visitors have come to the site every year. On top of these were the visits of Pope John II in the year 2000 and that of Pope Benedict XVI who in the company of King Abdullah II and Queen Rania Al-Abdullah unveiled the corner stone of the Roman Catholic Church next to the Baptism Site in 2009.

#### **Supportive Non-Physical (Intangible Sources): Community's Belief System and Religious Text**

The community's belief system and religious text could be considered as a supportive non-physical and intangible source of authenticity for the Site. Many of the Site archaeological discoveries, together with the Site's natural layer today (e.g., the existence of the Reefs, Tamarisk, and Yanbout plants) correspond with the details of the religious text of the old and new testaments.

#### **Assessment of Existing & Previous Site Conservation & Interpretation Works**

#### **The Archaeological Layer & Continuous Conservation, Consolidation, and Interpretation Efforts**

The major buildings at the site were destroyed as a result of earthquakes. There are indications that the churches and other facilities were restored in antiquity and other



buildings were added to the restored ones. The site seemed to have been abandoned after the fifteenth century and the area became a wilderness until the archaeological excavations of the 1990s started. Conservation and modest restoration work took place on a large scale aiming at rehabilitating the site and reopening it for pilgrims and visitors. No reconstruction work was undertaken at any archaeological building. Paths and shelters with water supply and rest areas were also created. In general, the approach of the main Site's conservation architect is minimal intervention that is based mainly, not on reconstruction, but rather on consolidation and stabilization of the archaeological remains while maintaining a clear visual distinction between the original archaeological material and the new.

### **Analysis and Assessment of Previous & Current Excavations and the Conservation & Consolidation of the Archaeological Features in the Baptism Site (State of Conservation of the Archaeological Layer)**

#### **General Conservation Approach & Philosophy**

As stated earlier, the approach of the main Site's conservation architect is minimal intervention that is based mainly, not on reconstruction, but rather on consolidation and stabilization of the archaeological remains while maintaining a clear visual distinction between the original archaeological material and the new. Stabilization is defined as Treatment procedures intended to maintain the integrity of cultural property and to minimize deterioration. It is also a process of intervention which may be used as an interim measure on a severely deteriorated building or it may involve the long-term consolidation of a structure. Stabilization is designed to be reversible and is distinguished from the original material of the archaeological or heritage structure or remains. Stabilization can also be defined as the act or process of applying measures designed to re-establish a weather resistant enclosure and the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property while maintaining the essential form as it exists at present (USA Secretary Of The Interior's Standards For Historic Preservation 1979). This includes the introduction, for example, of protective shelters to protect the fragile remains of mosaic floors. The Getty Conservation Institute defines stabilization as the act of maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding or slowing deterioration (Getty Conservation Institute 2009).

Consolidation could be defined as a treatment used to strengthen deteriorated materials to ensure their structural integrity. Traditional skills and materials are preferred. The intervention should be reversible. REPOINTING is an example of a

reversible consolidation treatment. An example of a non-reversible consolidation process would be the strengthening of a timber by inserting metal rods in a bed of epoxy<sup>1</sup>. In general, the expert working on the Site maintained a visual differentiation (while doing consolidation works on Site) between the original fabric and the new added material. Furthermore, no attempts for reconstruction were practiced (not only to avoid conservation in conjecture, but also to maintain a minimal policy of intervention within the Site) and interventions mainly were based on minimal interventions. Such practices are in accordance with Articles 9, 12, and 15 of the Venice Charter<sup>2</sup> which stated that:

*Article 9: The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp. The restoration in any case must be preceded and followed by an archaeological and historical study of the monument.*

*Article 12: Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.*

*Article 15: Excavations should be carried out in accordance with scientific standards and the recommendation defining international principles to be applied in the case of archaeological excavation adopted by UNESCO in 1956. Ruins must be maintained and measures necessary for the permanent conservation and protection of architectural features and of objects discovered must be taken. Furthermore, every means must be taken to facilitate the understanding of the monument and to reveal it without ever distorting its meaning. All reconstruction work should however be ruled out "a priori". Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognizable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form.*

Sometimes, certain archaeological existing walls needed to be added upon for reasons such as change in level between outside and inside the church that might have cause

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.icomos.org/~fleblanc/documents/terminology/doc\\_terminology\\_e.html#C](http://www.icomos.org/~fleblanc/documents/terminology/doc_terminology_e.html#C) (accessed on August 5, 2012)

<sup>2</sup>INTERNATIONAL CHARTER FOR THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF MONUMENTS AND SITES(THE VENICE CHARTER 1964)

collapsed mosaic floor or any other archaeological material in the future. In such cases, the added courses (approximately 40-50 cm) of stone were done in the framework of consolidation of the wall and stabilization of the original mosaic flooring. Now all care and attention was made to create a visual difference between the original wall and new added portion. Sometimes, they add a lead layer in between the two, but that was expensive, so distinction is made mainly by visual distinction.

In certain cases, consolidation work was conducted on the foundations of fragile areas and foundations. The restorer used compatible material (local stone (Sail Stone) together with a vernacular cement mixture that is anti salinity (the mixture of which is hydrated lime (50%), sand, while cement). The restorer experimented with more than 9 mixtures before deciding which the most compatible one is.

Protected shelters were added in 3 cases (over fragile mosaic floorings and other archaeological remains over the North Church in Wadi Al-Kharrar, and over Basilica and Small Chapel near the River Jordan). When protective Shelters were added, all attention was given to follow the Venice Charter in terms of:

- Using organic materials.
- The foundations (wood) for the protective shelter were located over stone archaeological floorings or walls without causing any adverse effect on them.
- The actual shelter itself follows Venice charter in terms of:
  - o Reversibility.
  - o The shelter itself functions well in terms of protecting the archeological material (mosaic floor, other) from severe sun and rain.
  - o Compatible with the environment around it.

These shelters were not (by any means) considered as attempts for reconstruction, but rather a level of intervention that falls within the approach of stabilization and minimal intervention. Furthermore, these protective shelters are affordable and sustainable, contrary to other examples of protective shelters in other Jordanian archaeological sites that were extremely expensive and needed continuous maintenance which was high-tech and not affordable. The local community was involved in the building of these protective shelters gaining a sense of ownership and stewardship with the Site.

In terms of the philosophy in the intervention within the natural layer of the Site, all attention had been made not to alter the character of the Area (e.g., naturalness feeling for Wadi Al-Kharrar) and to maintain the original landscape coverage (e.g. native plants of the reeds, Tamarisk, and Yanbout). Drip irrigation was used in certain area to maintain also minimal intervention. The original natural habitat was not touched in the

core archaeological area with the exception of unobtrusive interpretative pedestrian paths.



**Image (94):**Wadi Al- Kharrar - Elijah's Hill

Source: Taylor, Jane/ (July 2012)



Source: Taylor, Jane/ (July 2012)



**Image (95-96):** Wadi Al-Kharrar - a Close up in Wadi Al-Kharrar





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

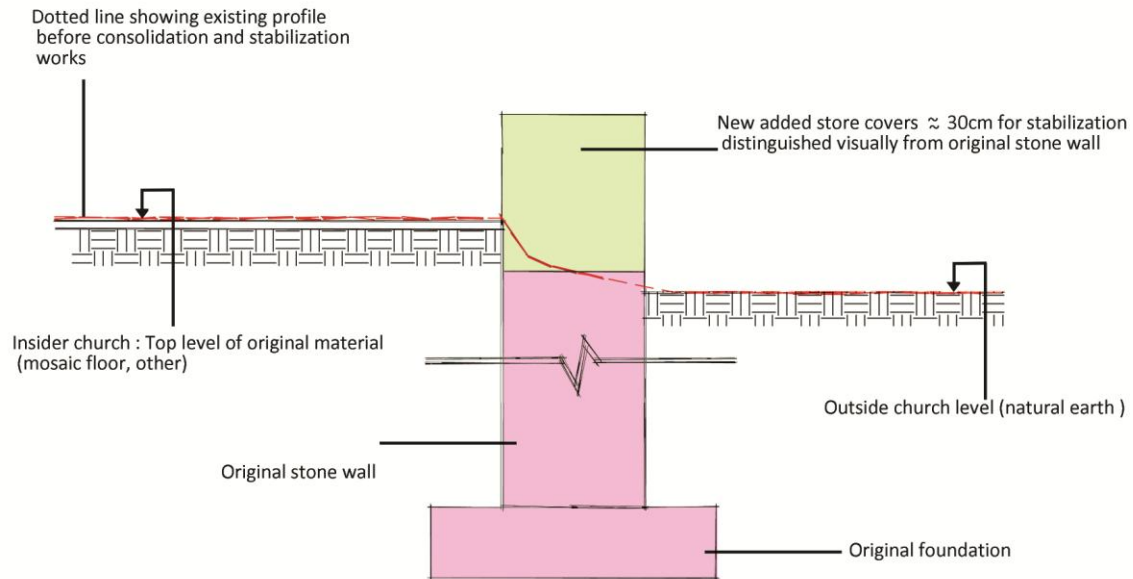
**Image (97):** Interpretive Paths below the Rhotorius Monastery in Wadi AL-Kharrar



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (98):** Abundant reeds and a pair of palm trees in Wadi Al-Kharrar

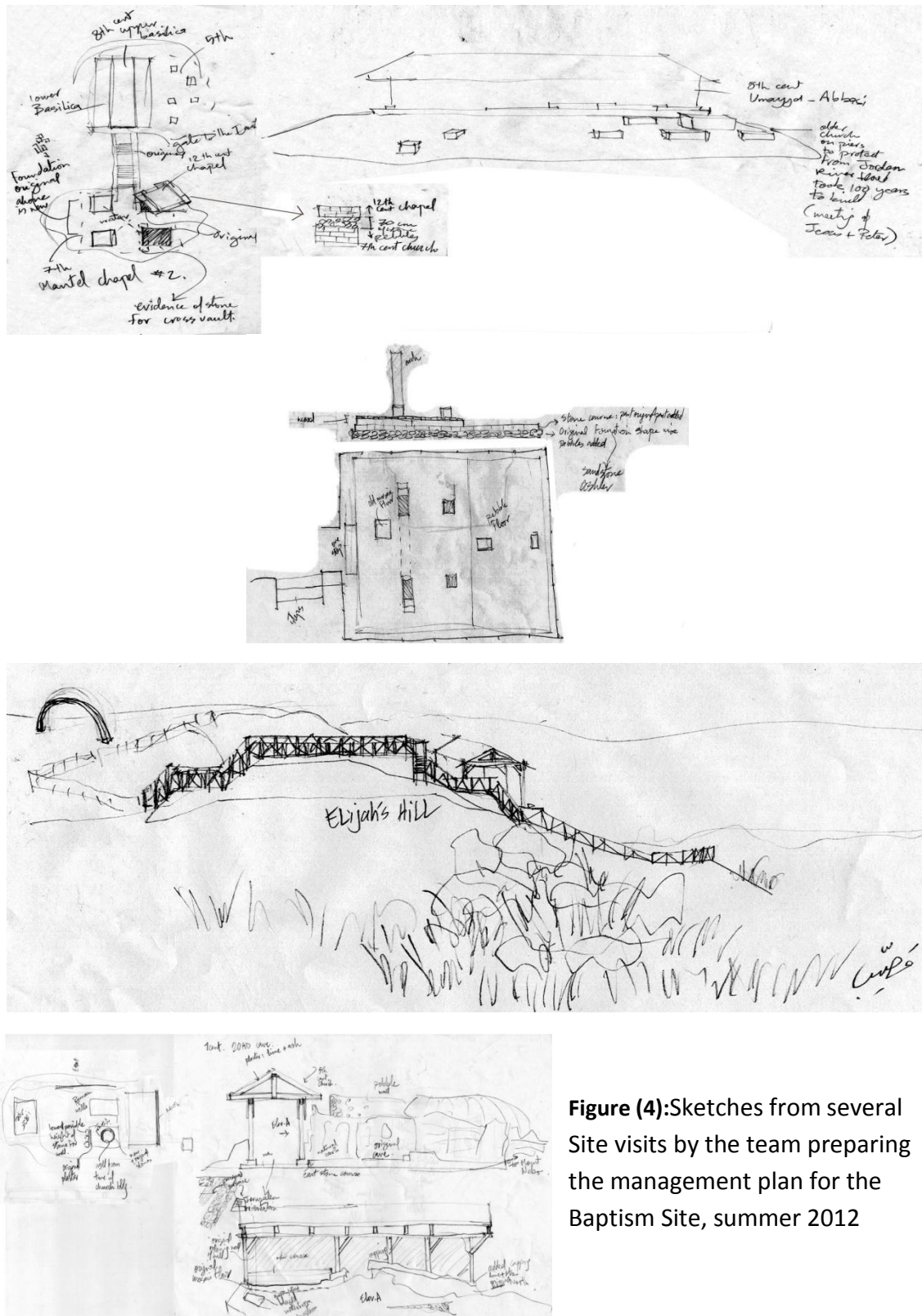




### Approach for Consolidation Stabilization works

Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)- Adapted by Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Figure (3):** Approach for Consolidation Stabilization works



**Figure (4):**Sketches from several Site visits by the team preparing the management plan for the Baptism Site, summer 2012

Source: Daher, Rami (TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants)/ (June 2012)



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/(August 2012)

**Image (99-100):** Eastern part of monastery walls at the beginning of intervention (consolidation works)



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (101):** An image for the wall of the Southern Church





Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/(August 2012)

**Image (102):**Eastern part of monastery walls after intervention



**Image (103):**Consolidation works at the Churches by the River (the 4 Piers and the Small Chapel) showing the approach for consolidation which is based on visual distinction between existing and new interventions.

Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (104-105):** Several details for Mosaics from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century at the North Church within the Rotorios Monastery



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (106-107):** A close up to the Mosaics from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century at the North Church within the Rotorios Monastery





Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/(August 2012)

**Image (108):** Elijah's Hill from the south before excavations and consolidation works



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/(August 2012)

**Image (109):** Elijah's Hill after Restoration

**State of Conservation at Tell al Kharrar (Elijah's Hill)**

The following are detailed analysis of the state of conservation of the archaeological elements in the Baptism Site. The numbers listed in the text below correspond to numbers provided in Map: *State of Conservation of the Archaeological Remains at the Bethany Saphsaphas (Elijah's Hill)* (Map (14)):

Tell Al Kharrar (Elijah's Hill) The Bethany "Saphsafas" Area

*Church of Pope "John Paul II" (Church of the Arch):*

*(M1: the Mosaic,)*

The Church has a rectangular base, of which we have only few remains. Around 60% of the area is covered by a wooden platform to protect the layers underneath and to provide a platform for meetings of visitors. This platform was added on the occasion of the visit of Pope John Paul II. The mosaic floor is patterned with flowers in a sequence forming squares, in white, black and red colors. The visible part of the mosaic measures 87 X 98 cm, but it seems that some small parts are still under the wooden platform. This mosaic has partially been restored recently. Yet, small gaps and fractures still exist, but the tesserae are in a good state of conservation. The black tesserae have a light porosity on the surface. The stone arch is the only attempt for reconstruction on site and is built on the two original bases in blocks of stone, where only few elements have been restored filling the joints of the stones with mortar. This mortar might have caused deterioration of some original stones at the base of the Arch with pulverization or very evident erosion, the same problem is visible in all 6 bases that are remained in situ. The flooring of the western and central areas, which is not covered by a wooden platform, has been reconstructed; yet, two original bases of pillars and the external walls still exist.

*Prayer Hall:*

*(P1 and P2 is the Mosaic)*

This prayer room measures 10.10 X 5.5 meters, has a mosaic floor in white tesserae of around 2 x2 cm with a big gap in the North West side, the tesserae are covered with a uniform deposit of dust, and besides the surface suffers from small fractures and exfoliations. Almost all the mosaic has detachment and swelling from the bedding layer. Plants are also growing between the walls and the mosaic flooring. Also, one observes some incrustation, probably of salt. The recent restoration works had raised the external walls with some local stones (Sail Stones) and filled the joints with a compatible mortar. Basic restoration works took place over the mosaic, filling the edges and some parts with mortar as well. Some of the mosaics are already damaged. A gap particularly, to distinguish the ancient part from the new one has been hemmed with small glass tesserae.

*Cistern at vault with mosaic:*

This cistern adjacent to the Prayer Hall, has lost good part of the vault, a small part (on the western side) has remained. The upper part of the vault has a piece of mosaic of white tesserae. The state of maintenance has some problems; the insulation plaster already has fractures and detachment. The upper part, where the plaster of insulation has been lost, the courses of stone had been revealed, they suffer from swelling, pulverization, detachment, salt and deposits of guano of birds. The re-pointing is visible, yet, in certain cases it is suffering from fractures and detachment. The mosaic in the upper part of the vault has dust deposits on the surface, a small fracture in the corner in addition to detachment from the bedding layer is visible. The rest of the mosaic is in good state of conservation.

*Well cistern:*

The cistern has lost its upper part and parts of its insulation plaster. It suffers from small problems related to pulverization and exfoliation of the stones and of salt deposits on the surfaces. Local stones from the River or the Spring had been used to restore the mouth edge of the well.

*Southern Baptism Pool SBP:*

A certain part of the big pool with the stairs (entrance) had been restored with local stone from the River at the external walls. The original remaining part of the pool is the bottom and vertical walls from level zero (in the south) to 1.5 meters (in the north). The original insulation plaster suffers from pulverization, detachment, swellings, fractures, and salt spots on the surface.

*MS:*

This area consists of various original walls in blocks of stone; these were re-pointed partly with mud and partly with lime mortar and ash. The whole area is very fragile, especially all the natural walls, where pulverization is evident. The new restoration layer is composed of a new layer of plaster for protection and consolidation using mud and straw. For the rest of the walls, only re-pointing is applied.

*MC, Cave Area:*

This small cave is a continuation of the natural wall described in MS. The left part of the entrance has been reconstructed, while the right part is original. This original wall has been restored through re-pointing of the stone joints. The inside natural wall of the cave is original but is in a fragile state; fractures, swellings and pulverization are evident. A small portion of the roof had been added with branches and mud. Certain parts of the walls had been plastered with mortar composed of mud and straw. On the left side, a big fracture of around large 7 cm in width and 50 cm in length is evident, but parts of it are covered by mortar and small pieces of stone

*MB4:*

This area includes four bases of pillars, a small channel for the water, three small pieces of mosaic and three plates in black stone of *Nabi Musa*. The four bases of pillars are constituted in blocks of stone. They suffer from pulverization of the mortar used in the re-pointing of the stone courses using lime and ash. It is possible that the upper part of the NW pillar is of new construction. The channel suffers from major deterioration. The three pieces of mosaic (6x5 cm, 8x5 cm, 19x29 cm) are made of white, red and black tesserae of around 1-1.5 cm. Three courses of the black stone of *Nabi Musa*, are deteriorated with evidence of exfoliations and fractures.

*ME, External Mosaic:*

Remains of a mosaic floor with white background and red flowers exist inside a room of 3.6 x 4.3 meters. This mosaic is made of tesserae (1-1.5 cm) damaged by small fractures and exfoliation, the whole mosaic has various detachment and swelling from the bedding layer. Also a big number of tesserae are no longer there. Recent restoration works are evident at the edges of the fragments of the mosaic flooring; also certain missing fragments had been filled with mortar as well. It is also evident that the external walls of the room had been added upon with new courses (of *Sail Stone*) during the restoration process.

*PC:*

This small area of 130 X 97 cm where various elements of terracotta and black stone of *Nabi Musa* are found on a bed of mud in different layers; probably due to the collapse of the tiles from the roof.

*PE:*

This represents various parts of the external floor of the Church, consisting of black stone of *Nabi Musa* and one other of red color probably in terracotta. This floor seems to still continue under the soil that all around the area. Maybe the area is not all excavated. The stone flooring suffers from fractures and exfoliation.

*SP2, small pool:*

This is a small pool on the north side of the area measuring 140 x 150 cm and is 120 cm in depth. The pool is deteriorated with bulges and pulverizations. The restoration intervention is visible only in the upper part where the edge of the pool had been consolidated and reconstructed with stones from the River.

*North Church, CN:*

The structure of the roof was built on six pillars in the west zone, while in the east zone (the area of the apse) was built on a full wall in the three sides. The zone of the apse is around 30 cm taller than the central aisle and is separated by blocks of stone with two small stairs in the central area. The protective shelter is providing a relatively good protection from rain and sun. The mosaic of the Aisle (9 x 4.2 meters) is patterned with flowers in consequence to form some squares, inside these square there are additional

flower patterns that form a small cross. The colors of the tesserae include a white background with black, yellow, and red flowers with a frame to the south with black, white, grey, and yellow mosaics. The whole mosaic is in a bad state of conservation, collapses of the foundation, swelling, detachment from the bedding layer, fracture, pulverizations, erosion, exfoliations, salt in crusts on the surface of the tesserae and various gaps probably were caused by previous land settlement.

The Mosaic of the apse (4 x 4.3 meters) has similar drawing in flowers, but it doesn't have the frame to the south, and it has two central elements. One is an inscription writing in black tesserae and a plate of black stone (fractured in 8 pieces). This part suffers from swelling and detachment of the mosaic from the bedding layer, but in general, its situation is better than the aisle. The added mortar for the restoration of the mosaic floor (where gaps, fractures have been probably filled with mortar) is visible due to its color. Furthermore, certain mosaics had been reconstructed but are in need of more professional work. The courses of stone that divide the aisle from the apse re-pointed with a similar mortar that had been used for the mosaics.

The vertical walls of the aisle are covered with white plaster. Elements of deterioration there include various fractures, pulverizations and gaps. The edges have perhaps been filled with lime mortar, while the gaps in the plaster had been treated with a mixture of mud and straw. Part of the apse wall had been reconstructed while the lower part is original. The shelter made of wood and straw, with the external part covered by a layer of mortar (as explained in details in the sketches), is built on the original structures of the church.

*PW:*

This pool, beside the North Church is divided into two small pools. One of them includes a well to the centre. The upper structure of the pool had been restored using River Stone. The inside of the pool still contains the original mortar up to about 50cm. The elements of deterioration are particularly visible with traces of pulverization, swellings and various fractures in the insulation mortar.

*C1:*

It is a small channel of about 190 cm, of these only 46 of the original mortar still maintain. Good part has been restored with stones from the River where the edges were repaired with new mortar.

*P Single, PS:*

It is probably the base of a pillar, constituted by stone of the River tied up together by a mortar with lime and ash. The deterioration in the mortar is visible with pulverization and swellings. The restoration is evident in the upper part which has been reconstructed with stones from the River.

*External Wall, EW:*



It is a rectangular wall separated in two parts from another wall, constituted mainly of stones of river tied together by a lime and ash based mortar. This mortar has problems of pulverization. The restoration work on this external wall, as it should have been, is not very visible; it is possible that new stones had been added to stabilize the wall.

#### MCX:

It is a small area with few architectural elements including a small part of a wall, maybe an angle, a part of column and some blocks of stone. All have problems of pulverization and fractures. The restoration interventions, as it should have been, are not very visible.

In general, it is important to mention that the team working on regular maintenance and consolidation works on the Site had done an acceptable job in terms of:

- Consolidation of the mosaic floors and especially at the edges of these floors.
- Protection of the adobe bricks from rainwater by adding a protective layer from a local mixture (called *Howwar*).
- Consolidation of the plaster in the water pools and the wells in addition to cleaning it from salt deposits.

### State of Conservation at the Complex of the Church of “St. John the Baptist” Area

The following is a detailed description for the current status of conservation for the Complex of the Church of “St. John the Baptist” Area. The numbers listed in the text below, correspond to numbers provided in Map: *State of Conservation of the Archaeological Remains at the Complex of the Church of “St. John the Baptist Area”* (Map (15)): The related images will also give a visual reference:

#### Area of the Bases of the pillars of the Hall (St. John the Baptist Church (First Church)):

##### A1, A2, B1, B2, C2, E1, D1, G2:

These bases are approximately all with the same characteristics, constituted by blocks of stone in a good state of conservation. On the surface some deposit of atmospheric pollution are penetrated and stabilized among the pore of the stone, this is evident in dark grey color. Some of the blocks of stone are fractured; some elements are detached, in addition to the existence of plant remains on some of the elements. New consolidation works in the form of re-pointing is visible.

##### C1:

Two elements of the original courses of stone have remained; the rest of the base, after creating a comparison with the drawings of the excavations are new additions as part of the consolidations of the diameter of 10-15 cm. Some of these stones are detached; also there are plant deposits and they suffer from atmospheric pollution.

*D2:*

It is obvious that this pillar had already collapsed, but that is not very visible at the base. The courses of stone are in a good state of conservation. There is a deposit of atmospheric pollution on the surface in locations among the pore of the stone visible in dark grey color. The consolidation works mainly were based on re-pointing the stone joints.

*E2:*

It is obvious that the pillar had collapsed; the stone suffers from deposit of atmospheric pollution that is very visible, in addition to plant deposits as well.

*F1, F2, H2:*

These bases are constituted completely from stones from the river with a middle diameter of 10-15 cm. Deposits of atmospheric pollution are visible. Some of these stones had some consolidation works in the form of re-pointing and adding mortar joints. Some other stones are new and had been probably added as part of the restoration process to regularize the form of the pillar.

*G1:*

The upper part is constituted of blocks of stone with inserts of stone from the River in the middle; while the lower part is constituted only by stones from the River. There is a visible deposit of atmospheric pollution on the surface in addition to deposits of plant remains. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar and probably the addition of new stones in the lower parts.

*H1:*

It is mainly constituted from blocks of stone and with some insert of stones from the River. There is a visible deposit of atmospheric pollution on the surface. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar.

*I1, I2:*

It is mainly constituted from blocks of stone and with some insert of stones from the River. Yet, I1 had been mostly reconstructed. They suffer from some detachments. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar.

*I3:*

Constituted by blocks of stone, with numerous inserts of stones from the River (some inserts are new and not original), some elements are detached and fractured; with presence of atmospheric pollution on the surface. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar.

*C6:*

This is completely constituted of River stones. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar.

*M1:*

This is four small pieces of mosaic of few square centimeters made of white tesserae measuring 2 X 2 cm, completely enclosed. Only one of these areas has some detached tesserae.

*M2:*

Base of a pillar (or maybe of a wall), constituted of River stones with a lime and ash based mortar of light grey color. This mortar suffers from deterioration with evident signs of pulverization.

Area of the church covered by a shelter (the Basilica and Lower Basilica):

*M3:*

A piece of geometric mosaic with an extension of extension of 110 X 270 cm, with the tesserae of 1.5 x1.5 cm of a white, red, black, pink, and yellow colors. The state of conservation of the mosaic is critical, suffering from detachment and bulginess from the bedding layer. Furthermore, the tesserae suffer from detachment, exfoliation and parts of it is fractured. Previous restoration works (using compatible mortar) at the edges of the piece had been damaged. There has also been some works of reconstruction (in relation to the tesserae).

*M4:*

Is a bed of a floor, perhaps a mosaic, a vast area that goes from the Umayyad wall up to the mosaic in M3. This is mainly constituted of stones and fine conglomerated material. The mortar of the bedding area is visible in two places. Restoration works were restricted to cleaning the original fabric from pollution.

*UW1:*

The Omayyad wall is in a good state of conservation. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar. In a corner of this wall there is also a test of excavation contained by wood board for protection, where architectural elements such as a column, blocks of stone and a pavement in Opus pattern formation is visible.

*M5:*

A piece of mosaic with floral elements measuring 70 X 110 cm, with the tesserae of 1x1 cm. The colors are white, red, black and yellow. The state of conservation is acceptable. There is detachment of the mosaic from the bedding layer. The mosaic

flooring in general is in good state of conservation. Certain restoration works for the mosaic had been conducted which is mainly repairs at the edges and minimal reconstruction and replacement of tesserae.

*M6:*

Few tiles have remained of this pavement in Opus formation (15 in the principal area and 6 in the secondary area) in white, black, and pink marble. Mainly the black stone (Nabi Mosa Stone) shows typical deterioration, with exfoliation, fractures, and disaggregation. Certain restoration works for the mosaic had been conducted which is mainly repairs at the edges using compatible mortar.

*M7:*

This is a wall constituted by blocks of stone. It is in a good state of conservation. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar. This wall is found between floor M6 and the mosaic M5 (please, refer to Map (14)).

*M8:*

This 3 x 2.5 meter pavement in of Opus formation tiles of (3X2,5 meter), with different shapes and in three colors: white marble and black and pink stones. This area is in need of major conservation works. Parts of the tiles are fractured, and some of them inside the composition seem to belong to an ancient restoration work. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar.

*M9:*

This area is 2 X 2 meters, where various beds of floors are seen. The lower one is a layer of lime mortal, while upper layers are composed of soil, river pebbles, and pieces of fragment stone.

*M10:*

This represents remain of a geometric mosaic floor that occupies an area of 9.3 X 3.8 meters. The ground is collapsed in different locations. The tesserae for this mosaic are of 1-1.5 cm in red, black and white color. There are various elements of deterioration, mainly caused by the collapse of the ground. As a consequence to this, the mosaic suffers from fractures, gaps, detachment and swelling from the bedding layer, there are plant remains within the fractures. The tesserae are in a good state of conservation. The recent consolidation works are very evident; all the edges of the floor of the mosaic had been repaired with a compatible mortar, also all the fractures were filled with the same mortar. Another level of consolidation is evident, in certain areas, the surface of the mosaic is covered by a very fine layer of mortar, and perhaps this was an attempt of reinforcement of the mosaic floor. Also, there had been some replacement of missing parts within the mosaic floor. On the right side there are blocks of stone, probably part of a wall, some of these blocks put inside the area of the mosaic, while other blocks are found outside that area.

### Steps Down and the Four Piers

#### *M11:*

The stairway that goes down to the water from the Basilica Church (the Third Church) is separated in five flat areas and is contained in two side walls. Parts of these areas are original and the other parts are reconstructed. The difference between the two is obvious visually. The stairway is made from black stone of Nabi Musa, this stone is very deteriorated suffering from fractures, exfoliations and a strong presence of salt deposits in the area near the water. A restoration from ancient periods is visible, with elements in white marble. The recent restoration had been integrated with a local stone of dark color.

#### *M12:*

This could be the remains of a wall or a pillar on the left side of the stairway, constituted of River stones and other blocks of stone. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints with compatible mortar and the adding of new stones as well in certain areas.

#### *M13:*

This is the top part of the left wall, where above there are the remains of the small Church, it is constituted by blocks of original stone with some courses of new stone which were added as part of a recent restoration. The state of conservation is precarious. The stone is very fragile at the surface, with evident pulverization and a uniform incrustation of salt in the thickness of some millimeter.

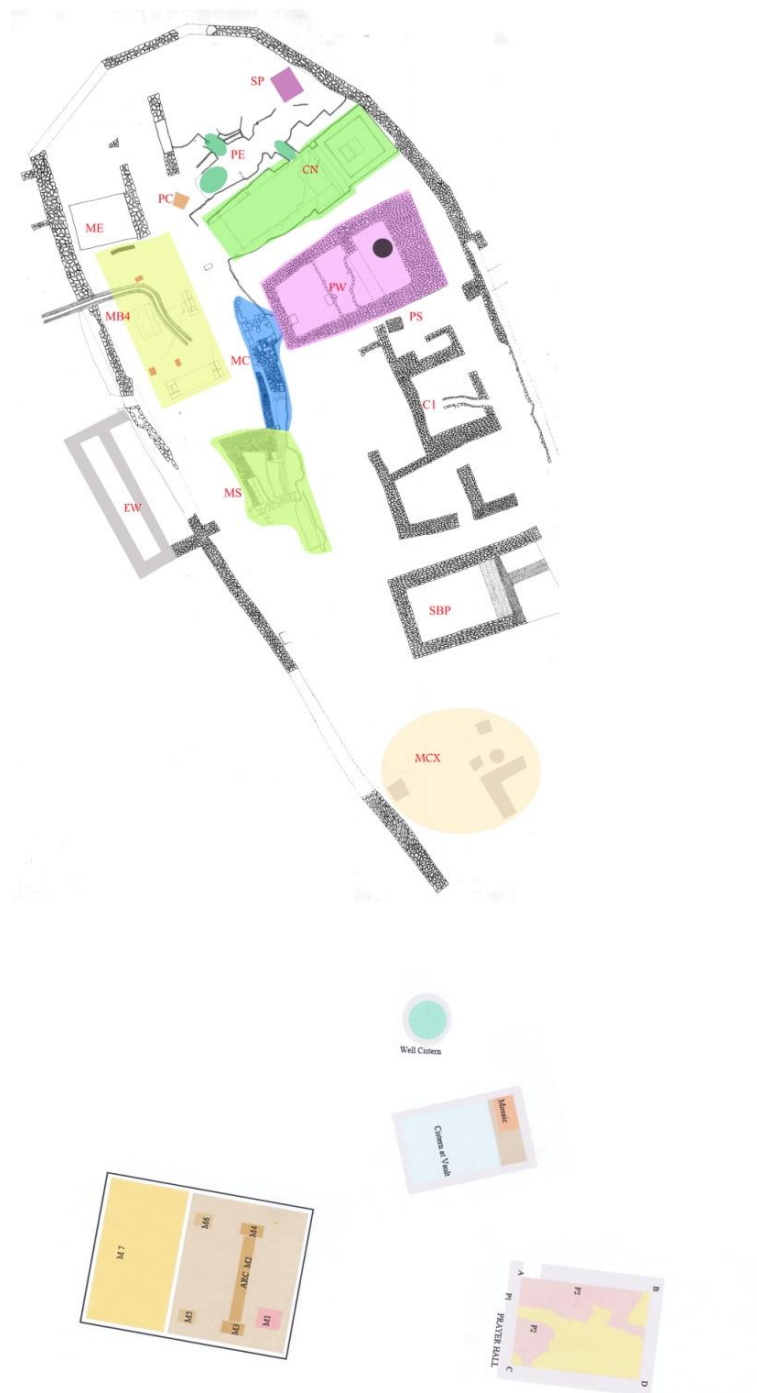
#### *M14:*

The Small Church, built on one of the pillars (one of the four piers). Few blocks of stone of the small apse have remained, the recent restoration works have consolidated the right side that had collapsed, while in the original blocks of the remaining stones, the joints have been filled by compatible mortar.

#### *M15:*

The four pillars, and for a good part of the year, the foundations are inside the water, these are built by blocks of stone. The elements of deterioration are in all the pillars, they include pulverization of the stone and strong presence of salt on the surface. The consolidation works consisted of re-pointing of stone joints (at the upper parts of the pillars) with compatible mortar.





Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Map (14):** *State of Conservation of the Archaeological Remains at the Bethany Saphsaphas (Elijah's Hill)*



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(110):** Southern Baptism Pool SBP



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(111):** MS



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(112):** MC, Cave Area



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(113):** MB4





Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(114):** ME, External Mosaic



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(115):** PE



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(116):** SP2, Small Pool



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(117):** North Church, CN



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

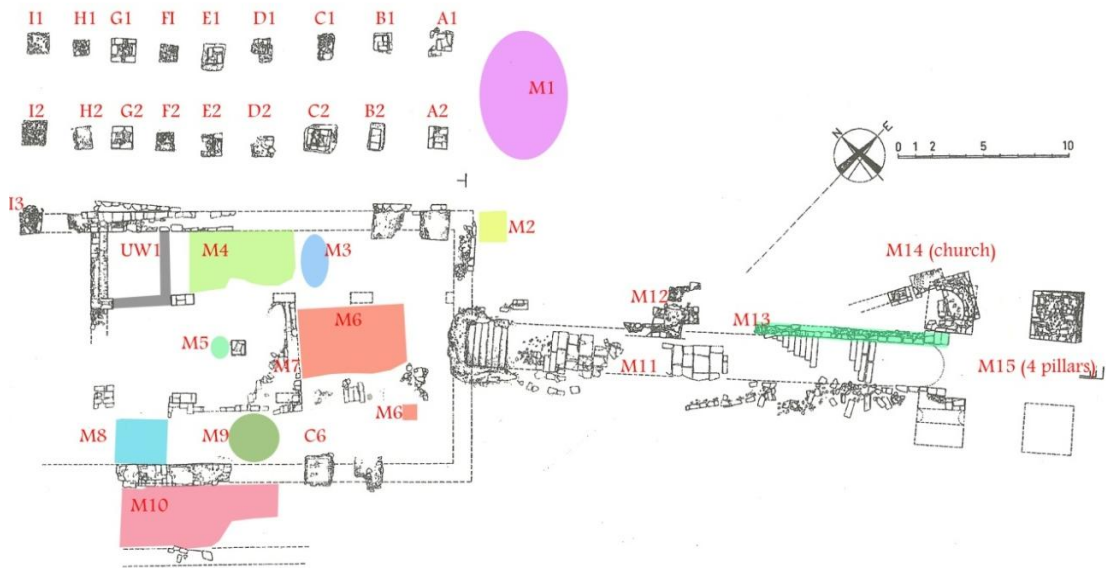
**Image(118):** C1





Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(119):** P Single, PS



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Map (15):** *State of Conservation of the Archaeological Remains at the Complex of the Church of "St. John the Baptist Area"*

Area of the Bases of the pillars of the Hall (St. John the Baptist Church (First Church):



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Image(120-121): A1, A2



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Image(122-123): B1, B2





Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (124-125): C2, E1**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(126-127): D1,G2**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(128): C1**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(129): D2**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(130): E2**







Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Image(131, 132, 133): F1, F2, H2



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Image(134): G1



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Image(135): H1



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Image(136-137): I1, I2



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Image(138): I3



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)



**Image(139): C6**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(140): M1**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(141): M2**

Area of the church covered by a shelter (the Basilica and Lower Basilica):



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(142): M4**

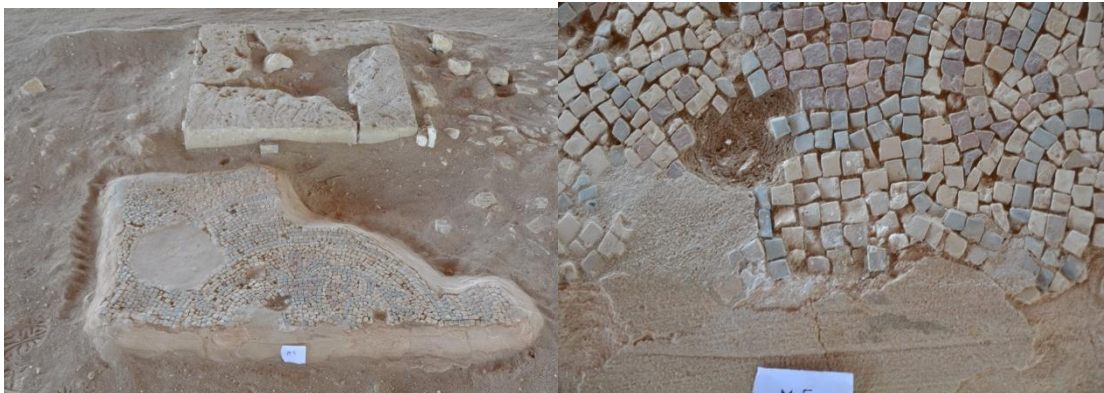






Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(143-144): UW1**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(145-146): M5**





Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(147-148): M6**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(149): M7**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(150): M8**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(151): M9**



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image(152): M10**





**Image(153): M12**

**Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)**



**Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)**

**Image(154): M14**

## The Protective Shelters and Their Approach of Preventive Conservation

Protected shelters were added in 3 cases (over fragile mosaic floorings and other archaeological remains over the North Church in Wadi al Kharrar, and over Basilica and Small Chapel near the River Jordan). When protective Shelters were added, all attention was given to follow the Venice Charter in terms of:

- Using organic materials.
- The foundations (wood) for the protective shelter were located over stone archaeological floorings or walls without causing any adverse effect on them.
- The actual shelter itself follows Venice charter in terms of:
  - Reversibility.
  - The shelter itself functions well in terms of protecting the archeological material (mosaic floor, other) from severe sun and rain.
  - Compatible with the environment around it.

These shelters were not (by any means) considered as attempts for reconstruction, but rather a level of intervention that falls within the approach of stabilization and minimal intervention. Furthermore, these protective shelters are affordable and sustainable, contrary to other examples of protective shelters in other Jordanian archaeological sites that were extremely expensive and needed continuous maintenance which was high-tech and not affordable. The local community was involved in the building of these protective shelters gaining a sense of ownership and stewardship with the Site.



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (155):** View from the east (North Church) before adding the Protective Shelter



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (156):** Local workers from the local community participating in the construction of the Wooden Protective Shelter on the North Church



Source: Rami Daher (TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants) June 19, 2012

**Image (157):** North Church after adding the Protetive Shelter





Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (158):** Reversible wooden columns (lower part of the Protective Shelter)



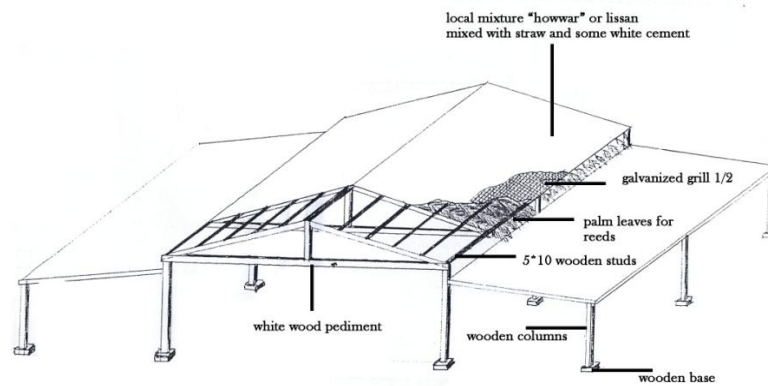
Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (159):** The Basilica from the east after restoration and the addition of a protective shelter



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

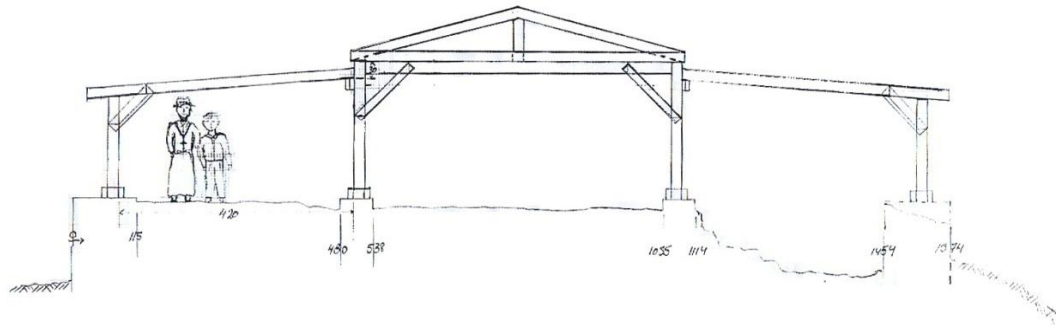
**Image (160):** The basilica after the addition of a Protective Shelter



An Illustrative drawing explaining the details of the protective shelter the Upper Basilica within the complex of "St John the Baptism" Area

Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012) - Adapted by Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

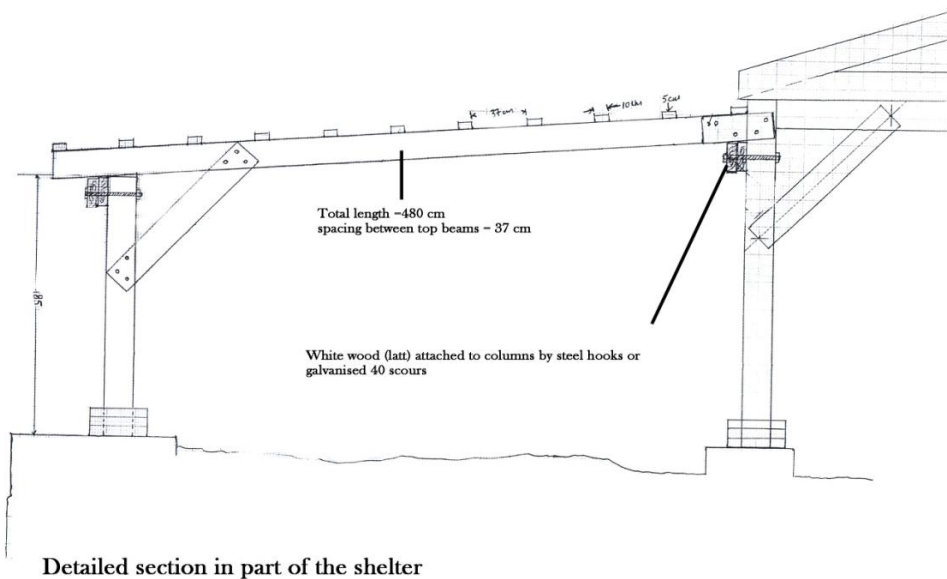
**Figure (5):** An Illustrative drawing explaining the details of the protective shelter the Upper Basilica within the complex of "St John the Baptism" Area



Section through the shelter looking east

Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012) - Adapted by Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Figure (6):** Section through the shelter looking east



Detailed section in part of the shelter

Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012) - Adapted by Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Figure (7):** Detailed section in part of the shelter

## Interpretation on Site: Paths, Interpretive Signage & Museum

The Site enjoys several pedestrian pathways with different types of interpretation. One type is the interpretative stone panels explaining about the history of the Site and its archaeological layer. Another part is the audio tour with certain audio stops along the trails.

The site enjoys also a museum that houses a valuable collection of pottery, stone pieces, and coins from different periods of the Site's occupation. The museum also enjoys certain interpretive panels explaining about the history of the Site.



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (161):** Part of the pedestrian trails with Audio Point No. 4





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (162):** Part of the pedestrian trails with Audio Point No. 2



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (163):** Part of the Site Interpretation Panels that are made of a local Stone. This one in particular explains about the Byzantine and later Churches by the River Jordan.





Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (164):** Part of the newly added pedestrian pathway (bridge) made out of wood within the Elijah's Hill.



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (165):** Pedestrian trails leading from the Prayer Hall to the Monastery. The railing of the pedestrian pathways is unobtrusive.



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (166):** Interpretive Paths below the Rhotorios Monastery in Wadi al Kharrar with a view of the North Church's Protective Shelter in the background





Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (167):** Interpretive Paths for visitors



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (168):** River Jordan showing also to the right, one of the Panoramic Lookouts over the River



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (169):** One of the Panoramic Lookouts with an unobtrusive shaded surface overlooking the River Jordan

### **The Natural Layer & Attempts for Continuous Conservation**

In terms of the philosophy in the intervention within the natural layer of the Site, all attention had been made not to alter the character of the Area (e.g., naturalness feeling for Wadi al Kharrar) and to maintain the original landscape coverage (e.g. native plants of the reeds, Tamarisk, and Yanbout). Drip irrigation was used in certain areas to maintain also minimal intervention. The original natural habitat was not touched in the core archaeological area with the exception of unobtrusive interpretative pedestrian paths.

The planting of trees (e.g., olive groves) and other trees is conducted away from the core archaeological area which in most is kept with the indigenous foliage cover including reeds, palms, Tamarisks, and Yanbouts. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature coordinates with the Baptism Site Commission to conduct base line surveys to collect data on the natural habitat of the Site and its flora and fauna. The Site has its own desalination plant. In addition, proper measures are made for good practices of solid waste management.

## Future Risks and Threats

It is important to distinguish between risks and threats to the site, while risks are inherent characteristics of a site such as high temperature for example; threats represent potential future challenges such as development pressures (e.g., encroachments). Threats are dealt with at a more administrative level (e.g., coordination between various institutions regarding a particular issue).

In terms of potential and existing risks, one could mention extreme temperatures between day and night and specially in the summer seasons, in addition to the high salinity present in the Site which affecting most iron structures (e.g., light posts).

It is unlikely that the site would be suffering in the future from any threats that might be due to future development as the Site enjoys two layers of protection: its ownership line and the buffer zone (which will be explained in details in the next sections). One of the major future pressures on the Site is tourism pressures. While the site is gaining popularity, it is expected that the number of visitors might increase leading to more pressures on the Site. The following is a listing of some of the risks that should be accounted for in the management plan:

### *Risks on Site:*

- Floods
- Fire
- Earthquakes
- Salinity
- Big Temperature changes
- Wars (due to the fragility of the region of the Middle East)
- Risks of human nature (intentional destruction, vandalism, lack of continuous maintenance, no monitoring, lack of training for guides and workers....

### *Risks on Visitors and tourists:*

- Floods
- Fire



- Earthquakes
- Big changes of temperature and pressure
- Dangerous insects.

## **Assessment of Tourism Context**

The mandate of the Royal Commission of the Baptism site is to protect and preserve the entire site and its surrounding, and to facilitate everything related to modern pilgrimage and tourism without affecting its spiritual character and cultural and natural landscape. To ensure this goal the number and flow of visitors is kept under control and periodical assessment for each season is undertaken. It is very obvious from basis observation on tourism management activities on Site that the practices of the Baptism Site Commission are very positive and encouraging in terms of organizing the flow of tourist on site and also in terms of providing facilities for them along the Site as will be explained within the following two sections.

## **Tourism Profiles & Statistics**

Visitors and pilgrims from all over the World visit the Site during all months of the year. In addition, the Site is visited as well by the both Muslim and Christian communities in Jordan. The Site is frequented mainly by the Christian communities in Jordan, from neighboring countries, and from the all over the World. They come to the Site as visitors and tourists, and also as pilgrims; and furthermore, to celebrate certain religious holidays (e.g., Epiphany delectations) and most of all to practice the ritual of baptism which had been practiced on the Site since antiquities and is still continued to be practiced on Site today.

The following chart below illustrates the number of visitors to site by month for the past five years. It is very obvious from the Chart that April and October are the busiest months of the year in general. This could be due to the fact that during these two months the climate in Jordan is very moderate and pleasant. Furthermore, April and October of 2010 were the months that the Site had received the maximum number of visitors so far. In general, the maximum capacity today is 2000 pilgrims/visitors daily.

## Tourism Facilities Assessment

The practices of the Baptism Site Commission are very positive and encouraging in terms of organizing the flow of tourists on site and also in terms of providing facilities for them along the Site. These practices include:

- Accessibility to the Site is easy and is provided with signs on the main roads leading to the Site.

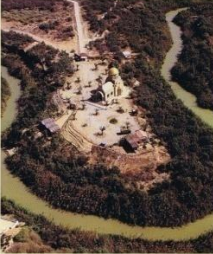
WELCOME TO THE HEART OF THE HOLY LAND

### "BETHANY BEYOND THE JORDAN WHERE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED"

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased." (MATTHEW 3: 16-17)

Jordan River runs through our land as it does through biblical history, purifying and nourishing both physically and spiritually. At this location one can instantaneously go back in history where God and man met in the path of salvation. A reality between soul and faith, reinforced in time everlasting.

The authenticity of this site is as pure as the testimonies from the gospels, the pilgrims and travelers that have visited this cherished site. In addition, the archeological sites discovered show remains of the five churches built in the 5th century as memorials of Jesus' baptism. Finally, all this is crowned by the official letters sent to the royal commission by many heads of churches around the world.



EPHRAIM (A.D. 750-800) mentioned a huge church (the church of the trinity) being built at the bank of the river, a mile west of John the Baptist monastery (Elijah's Hill) where he stayed overnight.

After the destruction of the 4 churches mentioned above, a chapel was built on the remains of the northwestern pier. ABBOT DANIEL (A.D. 1106-1107) wrote "The place where Christ was baptized is distant from the river Jordan as far as a man can throw a small stone. There is a little chapel with an altar. This marks the place where John the Forerunner baptized our Lord Jesus Christ".

The succession of uniquely designed churches at the edge of the river then, is testimony to the forces of nature and to the determination of the believers to build memorials at the spot they believed Jesus was baptized.

Among the Pilgrims who carefully described the site:

THEODOSIUS (A.D. 530) wrote "5 miles north of the Dead sea ... In the place where the Lord was baptized there is a single pillar and on the pillar an iron cross has been fastened, there too is the church of S. John the Baptist, which the Emperor Anastasius built: this church is very lofty, being built above large chambers, on account of the Jordan when it overflows.

Forty years later (A.D. 570) ANTONINUS OF PIACENZA added: "By the side of the Jordan, ... where the Lord was baptized, at the place where the water returned to its bed, ... marble steps descend into the water".

A 100 years later ARCULFUS OF FRANCE (A.D. 670) gave important notes, saying: "... At the edge of the river is a small square church, built, as is said, on the spot where the garments of the Lord were taken care of at the time when He was baptized. This is raised, so as to be uninhabitable, on four stone vaults, standing above the waters which flow below". (We can see the 2 northern piers while only the foundations of the southern piers where discovered recently. Hence, in plan we have a huge cruciform baptismal pool, where pilgrims would descend through the marble steps and be baptized. In fact this is the only cruciform baptismal font on earth that used the river Jordan water "running water" for baptism.)

Other important remains were also found at the site, we can now identify two basilicas, partly built on the remains of John the Baptist Church and uniquely designed being linked through marble steps to the east linking them with the monumental cruciform baptistery that used running water for baptism. Over which the mantle church was built.

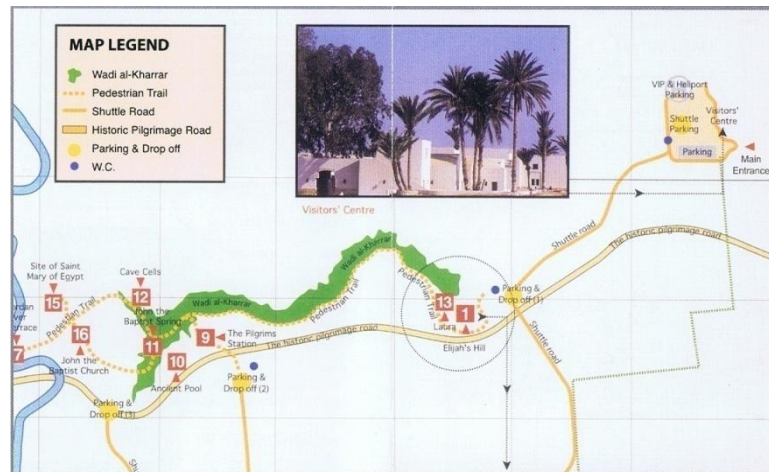
It is also worth mentioning that these remains were used as described by pilgrims from as early as the 5th century until the beginning of the 12th century. (A sign of Christian-Muslim tolerance and coexistence in Jordan until today).

As for the mosaic map of the Holy Land it is interesting to analyze the animals that are depicted on the map in the area of Bethany beyond the Jordan. We note two fish; one going toward the Dead Sea while the other is going away. The logical explanation is that fish do not live in the Dead Sea so they move north in the Jordan. But let us not forget that fish were most frequently used as a symbol of Christ.

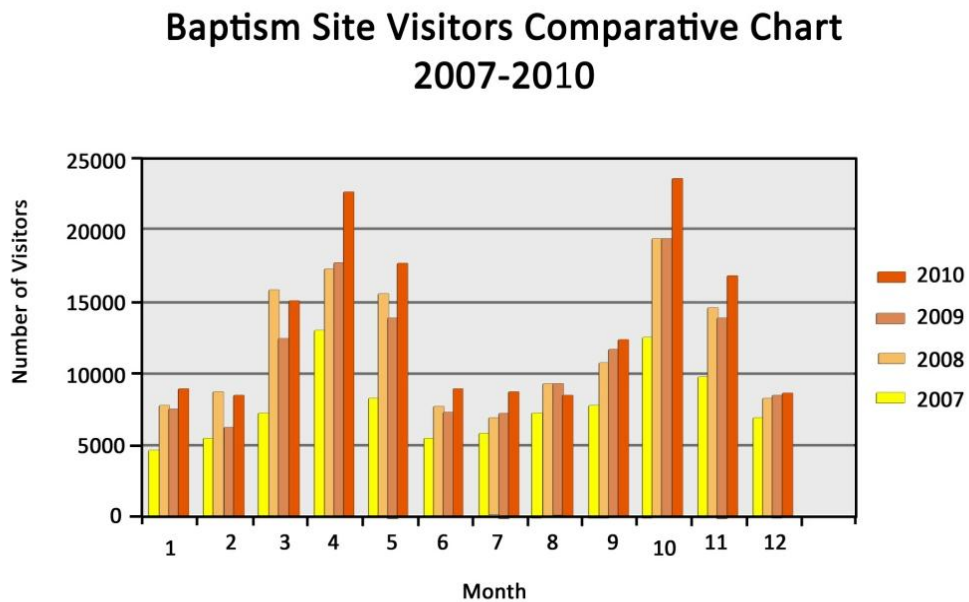
This is because the five Greek letters forming the word "fish" are the initial letters of the five words: "Jesus Christ God's Son Savior". The fish is also used as a symbol of baptism, for, just as the fish cannot live except in water, the true Christian cannot live except by the waters of baptism. Hence, having the fish specifically at this point in the river Jordan is because Jesus was baptized here, so this is where Christianity started. As for the deer that is chased by a lion, one might see it as "evil chasing good" or "the strong threatening the weak" or in other words "Herod threatening John the Baptist who criticized his marriage with his brothers' wife." (MATTHEW: Chapter 14).

Step back in time where purity ruled Judgment, and the heavens spoke of love and pleasure. Jordan baptism site.

Baptism Site  
Commission



**Figure (8):** Samples of various Brochures produced the Baptism Site Commission



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012) - Adapted by Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Figure (9):** Baptism Site Visitors Comparative Chart

The provision of various tourism services in terms of ticking, shops, restaurant, and other services such as WC facilities which are present in various locations along the trails.

- The provision of various tourists trails with a certain level of interpretation about the site and its historical and archeological layers. These pedestrian trails facilitate the movement of the visitors and have minimal impact on the Site. Besides, the site is handicapped accessible in most of its trails and panoramic lookouts.
- The provision of first aid facilities on Site.
- The provision of shaded areas which are unobtrusive in their design using local material (e.g., wood for construction and palm and reeds as cover). In addition, the Commission had provided 3 panoramic lookouts in various strategic locations for the visitors and tourists to enjoy the view of the river.
- The provision of a shuttle bus that takes the tourists to different parts of the Site. Groups visiting the site can start their Site exploration journey immediately. Individuals can make advantage of the Bus Shuttle every half an hour. The shuttle bus will increase its runs to every quarter of an hour in case of increased visitations.
- The provision of off-site services including various pamphlets and brochures that are produced by the Commission in addition to various book publications on the Site that had been supported by the Commission as well.

## Assessment of Management Context

Assessment of the management and administrative context Identifies gaps in the administrative and operational structure of a particular Site in addition to understanding the current situation regarding, authorities responsible, land ownership, local aspects of protection, staffing and capacity building; financial resources, and other issues related to the management of the Site. The assessment of management context answers a basic question of what are the current constrains and opportunities that will affect the conservation and management of the Site.

The assessment of management context answers the basic question of what are the current constrains and opportunities that will affect the conservation and management of the Site.

## Authorities, Responsible Bodies & Procedures

The authority responsible for the Site is the Baptism Site Commission. The Commission has an independent board of trustees appointed by H.M King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein and is chaired by H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad. This has been identified through the By-Law of the *Jesus Christ Baptism Site Board* (Number 48 of the year 2001). The Commission Director is Engineer Dia' Al Madani<sup>1</sup>, and assistant director is Engineer Rustom Mkhjian<sup>2</sup> who is also the Baptism Site Director for Conservation Works.

It is extremely important to mention that the Commission enjoys a very high level of independence in terms of Site management approaches and financial independence. This is very different from other archaeological sites of Jordan where revenues (in most cases) do not necessarily filter back to the Site or community. Furthermore, the Site has the full support of H.M. King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein and also of H.R.H. Prince Chazi bin Mohammad who is considered the champion for its recognition and protection.

The Baptism Site and its Commission had provided a web site that explains about the various facilities and natural and cultural assets of the Site in addition to information regarding visitation and management. This web site could be accessed at [www.baptismsite.com](http://www.baptismsite.com)

Furthermore, The Commission is keen on spreading awareness and knowledge about the Site and its significance to the local community and general public. They had presented in the past years several public lectures to different audiences and had held several training sessions on Site addressing tourist guides training and other issues. Furthermore, several public workshops were held where invited local community members and general public discussed the topic of religious tolerance and co-existence between different religions in Jordan. The Commission thrives to promote the Site as a beacon for tolerance and co-existence in this region.

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<sup>1</sup> E-mail: [baptismsite@orange.io](mailto:baptismsite@orange.io) Contact Information: Cell phone: +962 77 753 1011. Telephone: +962 5 35 90360

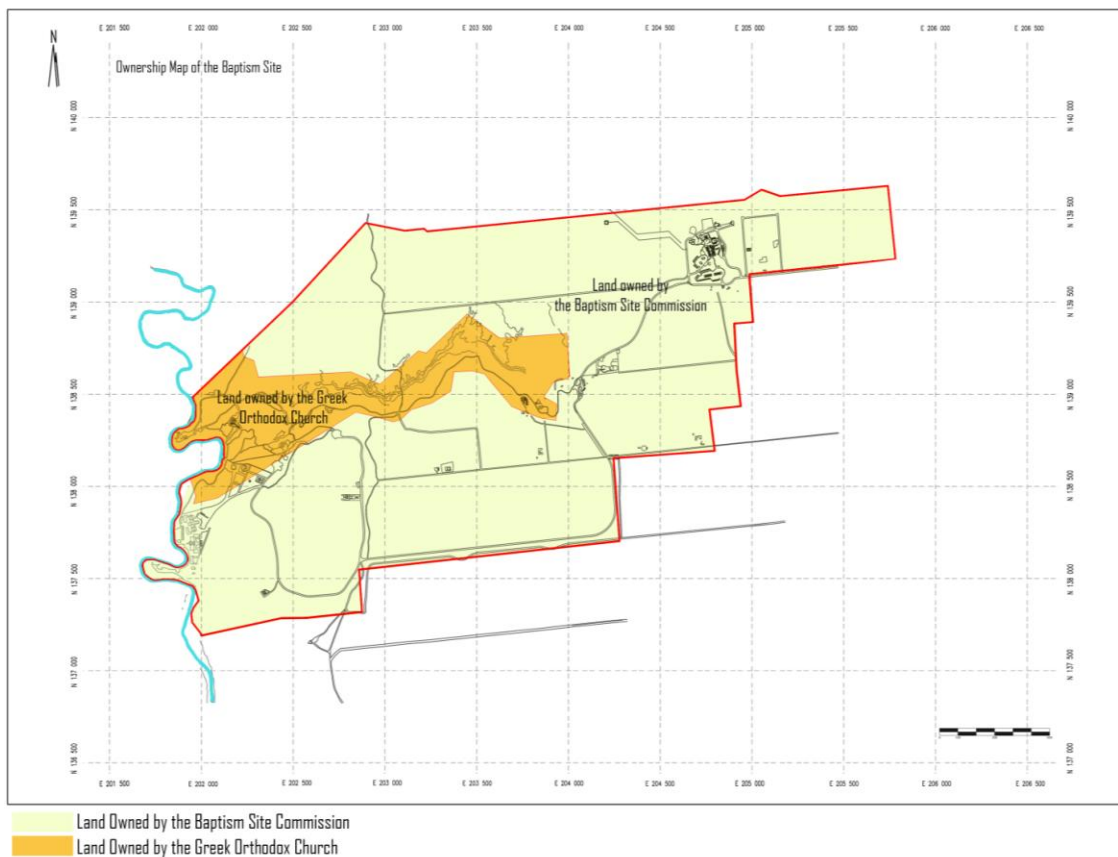
<sup>2</sup> E-mail: [rustom\\_baptismsite@hotmail.com](mailto:rustom_baptismsite@hotmail.com) Telephone (cell Phone): +962 77 784 2300



## Ownership Structure

The ownership structure of the Site is twofold. The main core area of the Site is a Christian *Wafq* (endowment) belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church. The Commission of the Baptism Site owns the remainder part of the Site identified in the Ownership Map (Map (16)). The by-law of the *Jesus Christ Baptism site Board* (number 48 for the year 2001) and its amendments had identified that pieces of land of the site (that belongs to the treasury) were added to the site. Article 4 of the By-law identifies in details the number of plots constituting the Site.

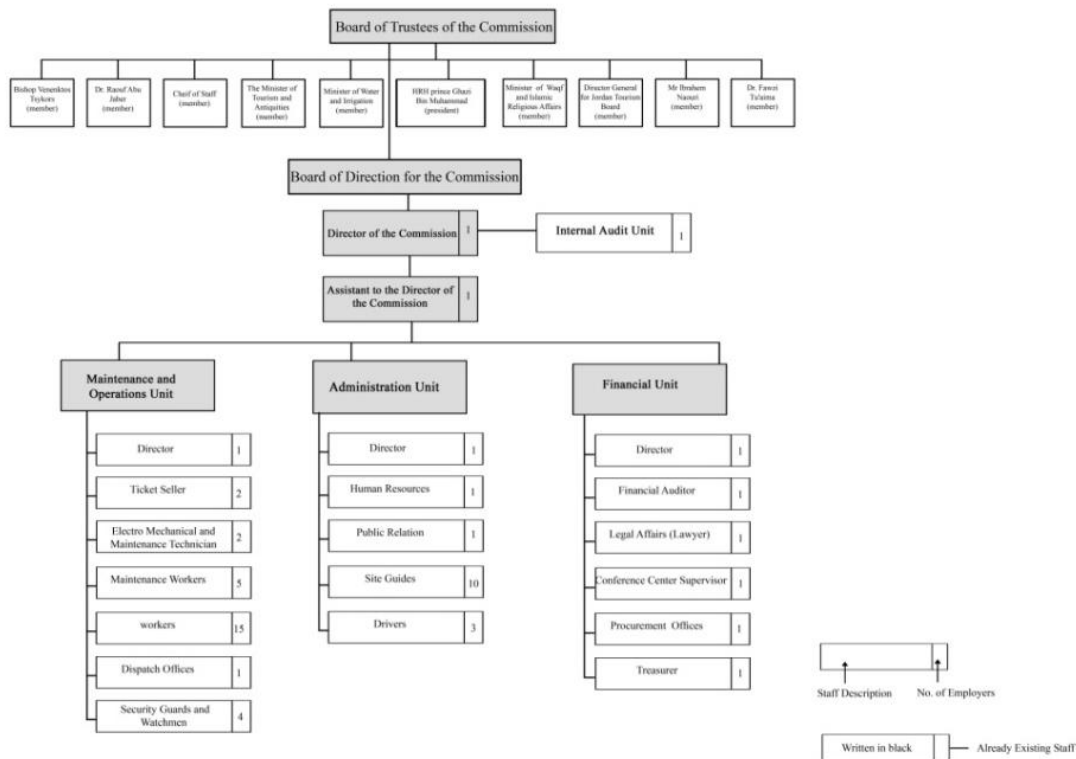
## Legal & Legislative Context (Framework) & Structure of the Organization & Staff Resources



Source: Daher, Rami (TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants)/ (June 2012)

**Map (16):** Ownership Map of the Baptism Site

## Existing Organizational Structure for Baptism Site Commission



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012) - Adapted by Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Figure (10):** Existing Organizational Structure for Baptism Site Commission

The current administrative and organizational structure for the Baptism Site Commission consists of a board of trustees and a board of directors. In addition, the following units exist:

- An Administrative Unit: including a director, human resources officer, public relations officer, 10 site guides, and 3 drivers.
- A Financial Unit: including a director, financial auditor, lawyer, Conference Centre supervisor, procurement officer, and a treasurer.
- A Maintenance and Operations Unit: including a director, 2 ticket sellers, 2 electro-mechanical and maintenance technicians, 5 maintenance workers, 15 workers, a dispatch officer, and 4 security guards and watchmen.

The By-Law of the Commission (identified earlier) provides the legal and legislative protection framework through which the Commission is responsible for the protection and management of the Site. Yet, other laws such as the Jordan Valley Authority law (Law number 3 for the year 2001) which identifies the nature of development (agricultural, tourism, other) that takes place with the Jordan Rift Valley of which the Site is part of. As far as the Baptism Site is concerned, the Jordan Valley Authority and the Department of Antiquities both share jurisdiction in term of licensing any construction or development. As far as the Site is concerned, the basic principle being followed to date is that any development in the area for tourism and pilgrimage should entail minimum construction or alteration of the landscape and visitor services should be placed well away from the core archaeological area of the site. Beside it is worth mentioning that an agreement was conducted with the Jordan Valley Authority to maintain and keep all the pieces of land surrounding the Baptism Site as farm units. This issue will be discussed in details when addressing the Buffer Zone around the Site in the following sections of the Management Plan.

It is extremely important to understand that several laws also can contribute to the protection and archaeological layer, it is important to review these laws in details and study their potential impact on the protection of the Site.

- Cities, Villages and Buildings Planning Law no. 79 of 1966:

This law is the fundamental legislation that controls planning and building activities in all the municipalities of Jordan, including Greater Amman Municipality (GAM). The enforcement of this law lies under the Municipality of Municipal Affairs. MOMA represented by its Minister. Although this law does not address the development of heritage buildings or sites any differently from other developments, it comprises references to the conservation of sites and construction of historical and architectural values in articles 15-19. These articles cover what regional and structural plans should contain. However, in article 23, it does not necessitate that inclusion, and makes it optional by stating that detailed plans may include what is specified in article 19. Considering the existing detailed plans of Jordanian cities and villages in general, these do not comprise sites that are designated as heritage. Therefore, in almost all cases, any new heritage designation will be subject to development rights changes and thus to compensation.

Article 48 from chapter six, specifies that refusal of building licenses due to the damage that construction may cause to antiquates, and natural beauty or their conservation does not qualify for compensation.

- Agriculture Law, Temporary Law no. 44 of 2002

This legislation is concerned with the organization of agriculture and animals production resources. It comprises articles that regulate the various aspects of the agricultural sector, such as safety of products and compliance with standards and specifications, health of animals and plants, agricultural and animal products trading and production activates. It is also concerned with protection of trees, forests, grazing lands from damage. The enforcement of this law lies under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. This law is useful and is relevant to the notion of protection of natural habitat within the Baptism Site. Although heritage protection is not a target of this Law, it has some relevance to the protection of natural heritage, specifically forests (*Haraj* Lands) and indigenous trees. The Law comprises a number of articles, articles 27-36 that include several protection measures.

### - Antiquities Law no. 21 of 1988

This law is concerned with the protection of artifacts and antiquities of older civilizations. The Law covers aspects related to regulating the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, specifically the Department of Antiquities of protecting antiquities. The responsibility ranges between excavations, identifying, designating, protecting and managing antiquities, and antiquates sites, in addition to promoting antiquities and heritage culture.

## **Financial Base and Budgets**

As mentioned earlier, it is extremely important to mention that the Commission enjoys a very high level of independence in terms of Site management approaches and financial independence. This is very different from other archaeological sites of Jordan where revenues (in most cases) do not necessarily filter back to the Site or community.

The sources of revenues for the Site come from different sources:

- Service Charges: in theory, there is no entrance fee; but these service charges are compensating for the services provided by the Commission such as local guides, shuttle buses, and other such as expenses for the baptism.
- Bank Interests: For example, the interests in Banks amounted to about 140000 JDs in the year 2010.
- Investments: such as revenues from rents and other investments.

The expenses are spent on maintenance and operations, salaries, social security, administrative expenses, constructions, equipments, furniture, and several perishable items. (Table (3, 4)) illustrates these sources of revenues and expenses for the years 2009, 10, and 11.

### Annual Budget for Baptism Site

2009-2010-2011

**Table (3): Revenue**

No.	Type of Revenue	2009	2010	2011
1	Service charges	827000	1021000	910000
2	Bank Interest	112000	140000	66000
3	Investments	73000	81000	54000
	Total	1012000	1242000	1030000

**Table (4): Expenditures**

No.	Type of Expenditures	2009	2010	2011
1	Operation and Maintenance	75000	74000	145000
2	Salaries	330000	379000	406000
3	Social Security	21000	25000	27000
4	Administrative Expenses	75000	22000	16000
5	Construction (Convention Center)	502000	1887000	351000
6	Equipment	-	-	6000
7	Cars	36000	-	66000
8	Furniture	-	-	10000
9	Perishables	45000	42000	
	Total	1081000	2432000	1077000



## **Part III of the Management Plan: Response: Future Policies & Objectives, and Future Strategies**

### **Policies & Objectives**

Policies are considered the critical link between the assessments of values, conditions, and management context on one hand; and the objectives and strategies on the other. Policy categories include: researching and finding out appropriate use (or uses) for the site; conservation interventions (e.g., consolidation of archaeological excavations, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, restoration, stabilization, protective sheltering, other); visitation policies, interpretation and presentation policies, maintenance and monitoring, and other categories.

### **General Site Protection Policies and Objectives**

Site protection objectives and policies work to put in place a goal to sustain the outstanding universal value of the Site. This goal rests on providing regulatory, planning, and contractual and other instruments and mechanisms of protection. Furthermore, it puts in place mitigation measures to address threats and risks. Site managers are gradually moving towards an approach that depends on preventive mitigation. In terms of regulatory protection mechanisms, the various laws, by-laws that were discussed in Part II of the Management Plan. The By-Law of the *Jesus Christ Baptism Site Board* (Number 48 of the year 2001), in addition, to other laws such as Jordan Valley Authority Law and the Cities, Villages, and Buildings Planning Law provide a strong regulatory mechanism of protection for the Site. The objectives are to protect the Site from future threats (mainly development and tourism development future projects that might jeopardize the nature and character of the Site and its immediate surroundings). One particular planning policy to come closer to achieving this objective would be the establishment of a Buffer Zone around the Baptism Site. This second layer of protection will be discussed in details in this section on future anticipated strategies.



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Image (170-171):** Visitors and ticketing area at the Entrance gate



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Image (172):** Fencing around the Site



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/(August 2012)

**Image (173):** A View to Elijah's Hill from the North West

## Site Conservation & Interpretation-Related Policies and objectives

Article 2 of the *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* of 1990 addressed integrated protection policies for had stated that: the archaeological heritage is a fragile and non-renewable cultural resource. Land use must Therefore, be controlled and developed in order to minimize the destruction of the archaeological heritage. Policies for the protection of the archaeological heritage should constitute an integral component of policies relating to land use, development, and planning as well as of cultural, environmental and educational policies. The policies for the protection of the archaeological heritage should be kept under continual review, so that they stay up to date. The creation of archaeological reserves should form part of such policies. The protection of the archaeological heritage should be integrated into planning policies at international, national, regional and local levels. Active participation by the general public must form part of policies for the protection of the archaeological heritage. This is essential where the heritage of indigenous people is involved. Participation must be based upon access to the knowledge necessary for decision-making. The provision of information to the general public is therefore an important element in integrated protection.

### Conservation of the archeological layer

Site conservation is more complex; as it includes the activities requiring the input of specialists and the allocation of specific budget. In general, the state of conservation within the Site is good and acceptable; yet, the Site lacks specialized expertise in area of conservation of archaeological heritage and also in specific areas such as material conservation of mosaic floorings. The objective is to arrive at a high-quality conservation of the Site that is based on the most updated theories, practices, and according to the dogma presented in international conventions and charters. Maintaining the specific character for the Site is also very crucial. In order to achieve this, the following policies should be addressed:

- Policies regarding the nature and scope of future investigations, excavations and research. These should include policies regarding site treatment and conservation after excavations. Article 2 of the *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* of 1990 stated that:

*Archaeological knowledge is based principally on the scientific investigation of the archaeological heritage. Such investigation embraces the whole range of methods from nondestructive techniques through sampling to total excavation. It must be an overriding principle that the gathering of information about the archaeological heritage should not destroy any more archaeological evidence than is necessary for the protectional or scientific objectives of the investigation. Non-destructive techniques, aerial and*

*ground survey, and sampling should therefore be encouraged wherever possible, in preference to total excavation. As excavation always implies the necessity of making a selection of evidence to be documented and preserved at the cost of losing other information and possibly even the total destruction of the monument, a decision to excavate should only be taken after thorough consideration.*

- Policies regarding the continuous documentation of the Site. The documentation should address in details the current archeological layer, the associated interpretation and interpretative paths, and also the natural layer of the Site. The documentation should also address the future excavations and conservation works as well.

- Policies regarding the future conservation approach and philosophy to be adopted in the Site while conserving its archaeological layers. Article 6 of the *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* of 1990 addressed integrated protection policies for had stated that

*The overall objective of archaeological heritage management should be the preservation of monuments and sites in situ, including proper long-term conservation and curation of all related records and collections etc. Any transfer of elements of the heritage to new locations represents a violation of the principle of preserving the heritage in its original context. This principle stresses the need for proper maintenance, conservation and management. It also asserts the principle that the archaeological heritage should not be exposed by excavation or left exposed after excavation if provision for its proper maintenance and management after excavation cannot be guaranteed. Local commitment and participation should be actively sought and encouraged as a means of promoting the maintenance of the archaeological heritage. This principle is especially important when dealing with the heritage of indigenous peoples or local cultural groups. In some cases it may be appropriate to entrust responsibility for the protection and management of sites and monuments to indigenous peoples. Owing to the inevitable limitations of available resources, active maintenance will have to be carried out on a selective basis. It should therefore be applied to a sample of the diversity of sites and monuments, based upon a scientific assessment of their significance and representative character, and not confined to the more notable and visually attractive monuments. The relevant principles of the 1956 UNESCO Recommendations should be applied in respect of the maintenance and conservation of the archaeological heritage.*

- Policies regarding material conservation and mainly mosaics and mosaic flooring in situ.

- Policies regarding appropriate use of the Site and the appropriate use of its different parts and zones.



Source: Taylor, Jane/ (July 2012)

**Image (174):**The Western Church (Cave Chapel) and North Church with its Protective Shelter



Source: Ruben, Isabelle– Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (175):** The Cave Chapel on Elijah's Hill, with the reconstructed pool above it, and the water canalization system leading away from it, believed by some early pilgrims to be the cave where John the Baptist lived





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (176):** Assistant to the Director Engineer Rustom explaining about the Western Church move to page 14 in the table of contents



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (177):** The Mosaic Floor of the Western Church



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (178):**Elijah's Hill- Prayer Hall



Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (179):** Church of the Arch





Source: Taylor, Jane/ (July 2012)

**Image (180):** Marble Floor Remains in the Church of St John the Baptist



Source: Ruben, Isabelle – Taylor, Jane/ (2010) *Beyond the Jordan*

**Image (181):** The scanty remains of the mosaic in a room to the south of the later Church of St. John the Baptist



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

**Image (182):** Part of the Floor Seen in the Test Trench



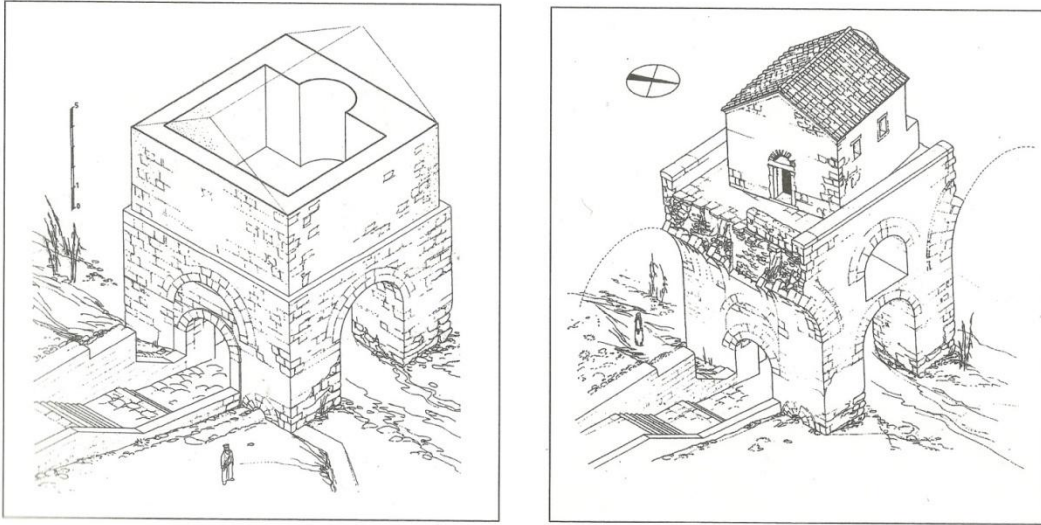
Source: Sciorilli, Franco (2012)

**Image (183):** A Wooden Retaining Wall Being Built



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)

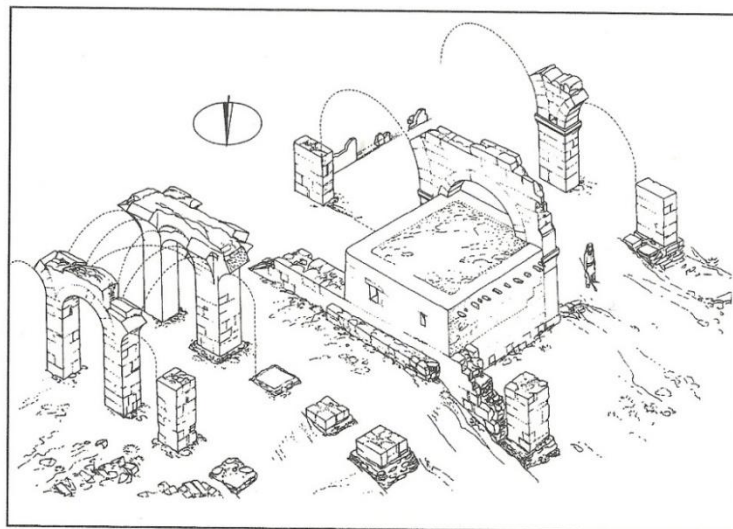
**Image (184):** The Floor of the Lower Basilica after it has been Preserved and Protected



Source: (Mkhjian, Rustom- Kanellopoulos, Chrysanthos) / (2003) *ANNUAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES OF JORDAN (Volume 47)* page: 15

**Image (185):** Hypothetical reconstruction of the piers carrying a Chapel (drawing by Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos)

**Image (186):** Hypothetical reconstruction of the “small chapel” church built on the piers of an older, ruined bridge over Wadi Al-kharrar (drawing by Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos)



Source: (Mkhjian, Rustom- Kanellopoulos, Chrysanthos) / (2003) *ANNUAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES OF JORDAN (Volume 47)* page: 16

**Image (187):** The Chapel atop the ruined piers (drawing by Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos)



### Conservation of the natural Layer Objectives & Policies

One of the main objectives regarding the conservation of the natural layer within the Site is basically not to alter the character of the Area (e.g., naturalness feeling for Wadi Al-Kharrar) and to maintain the original landscape coverage (e.g. native plants of the reeds, Tamarisk, and Yanbout). To achieve such objectives, several policies would be devised:

- Policies regarding conducting surveys of the natural habitat of the Baptism Site.
- Policies regarding natural conservation of the habitat and flora and fauna diversity within the Site.
- Policies regarding future planting and irrigation within the Site.



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (188):**Yanbout(Bees' food)



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (189):** Foliage on the Jordan River



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (190):** Trees in wadi Al-Kharrar



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (191):** Birds' nest

### Site Interpretation and Presentation-Related Policies and Objectives

Interpretation within the Site should address different realities (e.g., the archaeological layer, the natural layer, and also the local narratives and anecdotes (to show the different perspectives of the Site) associated with the Site. The content developed for the interpretation should be reached and presented according to the agreed scholarly

view and should make accessible to the general public the multi layers of significance of the Site. The objectives, according to the *ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites* should be to:

1. Facilitate understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage sites and foster public awareness and engagement in the need for their protection and conservation.
2. Communicate the meaning of cultural heritage sites to a range of audiences through careful, documented recognition of significance, through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions.
3. Safeguard the tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage sites in their natural and cultural settings and social contexts.
4. Respect the authenticity of cultural heritage sites, by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure, in accurate or inappropriate interpretation.
5. Contribute to the sustainable conservation of cultural heritage sites, through promoting public understanding of, and participation in ongoing conservation efforts, ensuring long-term maintenance of the interpretive infrastructure and regular review of its interpretive contents.
6. Encourage inclusiveness in the interpretation of cultural heritage sites, by facilitating the involvement of stakeholders and associated communities in the development and implementation of interpretive programs.
7. Develop technical and professional guidelines for heritage interpretation and presentation, including technologies, research, and training. Such guidelines must be appropriate and sustainable in their social contexts.

In order to achieve such objectives, several policies should be devised:

- Policies regarding the development of scholarly content for the interpretation taking into consideration the regional context and the associations between the Baptism Site and other sites within the area.
- Policies regarding the documentation of the interpretative paths, and their relationship to the archaeological layer.
- Policies regarding the upgrading of the following interpretative tools of Interpretation.





Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (192):** Part of the Site Interpretation Panels that are made of a local Stone. This one in particular explains the Arch Church (John Paul II Church)



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (193):** Part of the newly added pedestrian pathway (bridge) made out of wood



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (194):** Part of the Site Interpretation Panels that are made of a local Stone. This one in particular explains about the Byzantine and later Churches by the River Jordan.



Source: Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)/ (June 2012)

**Image (195):** Audio Tour (point no. 8)



## Sustainable Tourism & Site Visitation-Related Policies and Objectives

According to the INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM CHARTER (Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance) of 1991, Principle 1 stated that since domestic and international tourism is among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, conservation should provide responsible and well managed opportunities for members of the host community and visitors to experience and understand that community's heritage and culture at first hand. In order to achieve such objectives, the following policies are entertained regarding the Baptism Site:

- Policies regarding the visitor experience within the Site addressing issues of congestion, routing, and feeling.
- Policies regarding promoting the Site as a place of significance to all religions and also as a place of co-existence and tolerance.
- Policies regarding the production of print and other material on the Site
- Policies regarding upgrading of tourist facilities within the Site.
- Policies regarding the involvement of the local community within the planning for tourism within the Site and beyond. According to the INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM CHARTER (Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance) of 1991, Principle 4 states that host communities and indigenous peoples should be involved in planning for conservation and tourism. And principle 5 states that tourism and conservation activities should benefit the host community.



Source: Bana, Michele/ (2006)

**Image (196):** Different images showing visitors and pilgrims by the Jordan River attending a religious service



Source: Bana, Michele/ (2006)

**Image (197):** Visitors to the Site using its various facilities

### Site Management and Staff Capacity Building-Related Policies and Objectives

According to the *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* of 1990, Article 8 of the Charter confirms that high academic standards in many different disciplines are essential in the management of the archaeological heritage. The training of an adequate number of qualified professionals in the relevant fields of expertise should therefore be an important objective for the educational policies in every country. The need to develop expertise in certain highly specialized fields calls for international co-operation. Standards of professional training and professional conduct should be established and maintained. The objective of academic archaeological training should take account of the shift in conservation policies from excavation to in situ preservation. It should also take into account the fact that the study of the history of indigenous peoples is as important in preserving and understanding the archaeological heritage as the study of outstanding monuments and sites. The protection of the archaeological heritage is a process of continuous dynamic development. Time should therefore be made available to professionals working in this field to enable them to update their knowledge. Postgraduate training programs should be developed with special emphasis on the protection and management of the archaeological heritage.

In order to achieve such objectives, the following policies would be entertained:

- Policies regarding the upgrading of the current Organizational Structure for the Baptism Site.

- Policies regarding future capacity building and training in several areas related to heritage management and conservation.
- Policies regarding creating a platform for dialogue between different individuals working within the Site.

## Development of Future Strategies for Management, Site Conservation, and Interpretation

Development of strategies is concerned with the most detailed level of planning, it address resources, time frames, and responsibilities. The main goal at this stage is to translate the policies into workable strategies that are affordable, relate to the context and also flexible. The following strategies for Site management are based on a 5-year plan and are doable within the allocated budgets of the Baptism Site Commission.

## Site Protection Strategies

### Introduction to Site Protection Strategies

Various regulatory and planning mechanisms for Site protection would be put in place. The following is a discussion of the various strategies to achieve the desired protection goals.

## Regulatory & Contractual Instruments of Site Protection

In terms of regulatory protection mechanisms, the various laws, by-laws that were discussed in Part II of the Management Plan. The By-Law of the *Jesus Christ Baptism Site Board* (Number 48 of the year 2001), in addition, to other laws such as Jordan Valley Authority Law and the Cities, Villages, and Buildings Planning Law provide a strong regulatory mechanism of protection for the Site. Many of the threats and challenges facing archaeological and cultural sites can be mitigated through coordination and negotiations at the administrative levels. The following strategies will be incorporated:

- Conducting periodical meetings with the various institutions and governmental bodies to insure that future development of the around the Baptism Site would have no adverse effect on the Site or on its surroundings. These periodical meetings can take place with the Jordan Valley Authority, Jordan Development Zones, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Department of Antiquities, Ministry of Tourism, Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, Ministry of Agriculture, and several other entities as well.
- Activate previous contracts and agreements with the Jordan Valley Authority, especially regarding the nature and scope of activities planned for the “Agricultural Units” that are designated around the Site within its Buffer Zone. This activation should address in details Article 22 of the Jordan Valley Authority Law.
- Create memorandum of agreements between the Baptism Site Commission and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature to address the conducting of future base line surveys for the natural layer within the Site.

### Planning Instruments of Site Protection

One of the most effective mitigation measures concerning the projection of cultural and heritage site is the provision of a Buffer Zone with certain land use regulations around the site. Such a buffer zone, together with its land-use regulations will protect the site from future adverse developments that might have a negative impact on the site and its surroundings. The following are the details of such planning mitigation measure for protection within the Baptism Site.

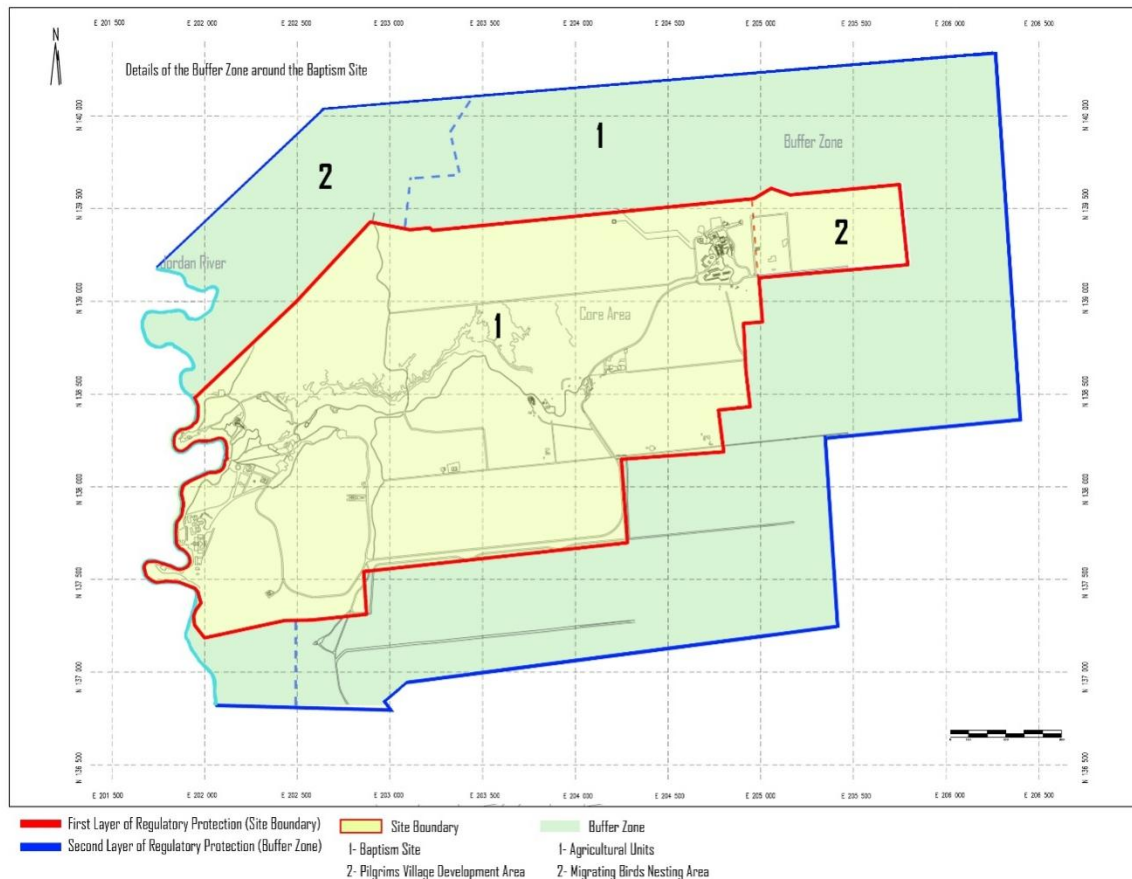
### First & Second Layers of Site Protection: Boundary Definition and the Buffer Zone

One of the aims of the Baptism Site Commission is to revive the property within the old Pilgrimage Trail that includes Mount Nebo, Madaba, Umm Al-Rasas and Mukawer. For that purpose, the Board of Trustees of the site supported the establishment of a buffer zone around the Site to serve as a second layer for protection (with the actual Site boundary serving as the first layer of Protection).

The boundary of the Site protects the significance of the place; the buffer zone, and with its land-use regulations can be considered as a tool to provide a strong level of added protection. The activities within the Buffer Zone should enhance the experience of the visitors and also provide benefits to the local community. Therefore, the Buffer Zone is

also considered as a regulatory tool that enhances the universal value of the Site and benefits the local community.

The details of the Buffer Zone are provided in (Details of the Buffer Zone around the Baptism Site (Map (17))). The Buffer Zone around the Site is mainly composed of extended boundary from all three sides (North, East and South) for approximately 600 meters on each Side. The Jordan River boards the Site from the Western Side forming a natural barrier of protection. The land within the Buffer Zone and according to the Jordan Valley authorities is zoned as agricultural units of 40 donums each (200 x 200) m. The type of activity within these Farm Units is restricted to agricultural cultivation. Building activities are restricted to a minimum and should only be to service the farm land. The other part of the Buffer Zone bordering the River is zoned as a migrating birds' nesting area.



Source: Daher, Rami (TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants)/ (June 2012)

**Map (17):** Details of the buffer zone around the Baptism Site



### Protection of View Perspectives, Silhouettes, and Panoramas

Within this concept of preventive protection, it is important to include the visual relationships to the surrounding landscape. Analysis and documentation, based on scientific research, as well as the conscious perception of visual relationships and view perspectives can therefore become important prerequisites for conservation of World Heritage. Within the Baptism Site, it is very important to protect certain view corridors and view perspectives. They include the view of the Hermit Cells Mountain from Wadi Al-Kharrar (for example).

### Site Conservation-Related Strategies

#### Conservation of the archeological layer

In general, the state of conservation within the Site is good and acceptable; yet, the Site lacks specialized expertise in area of conservation of archaeological heritage and also in specific areas such as material conservation of mosaic floorings. The objective is to arrive at a high-quality conservation of the Site that is based on the most updated theories, practices, and according to the dogma presented in international conventions and charters. The following are the various strategies to be put in place preceded by their related objectives:

-To achieve policies regarding the nature and scope of future investigations, excavations and research. The following strategies should be devised:

1. Insure the hiring of a qualified researcher or an archaeological team to foresee the future work on the Site's excavations.
2. Establish a resource library within the Site with books, journal articles, reports, and other material addressing the Baptism Site in general and other related topics such as conservation of archeological site, or another.
3. Encourage collaboration with well-reputed institutions dealing with research related to archeology and historic research who had worked in more details on the region such as the Council for British Research on the Levant (CBRL) and their British Institute in Amman, The French Institute of the Near East (IFPO), the

German Protestant Institute for History and Archaeology, and the American Centre for Oriental Research (ACOR) to mention a few.

-To achieve policies regarding the continuous documentation of the Site, the following strategies should be devised:

1. Embark on a serious project of documentation that would thrive to document in details the archeological layer of the Site (through the production of measured drawings and other means).
2. Embark on a project that would periodically document the excavations and conservation activities within the Site.

- Policies regarding the future conservation approach and philosophy to be adopted in the Site while conserving its archaeological layers including the conservation of its various mosaic floors and material objects. The following strategies should be devised:

1. Insure the hiring of a qualified conservationists and material conservationist. To work and supervise the conservation works on Site.
2. Organize on Site training (and even if special experts need to be brought in to conduct such trainings) in the area of archaeological site conservation in general but addressing issues related to conservation of the Site's fragile archaeological remains such as pulverization, exfoliation, salt deposits, atmospheric pollution, and plant deposits to mention the most reoccurring problems.
3. Embark on a periodical site consolidation and stabilization project that would address the various problems and challenges that the Baptism Site is facing in terms of conservation of its archeological layers including its various mosaics and material objects.
4. Create links with specialized and well-reputed conservation laboratories and institutions in order to solicit technical help and support in the conservation of the Site such as the Paul Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, and the ICCROM in Rome.

## Conservation of the natural Layer

One of the main objectives regarding the conservation of the natural layer within the Site is basically not to alter the character of the Area (e.g., naturalness feeling for Wadi Al-Kharrar) and to maintain the original landscape coverage (e.g. native plants of the reeds, Tamarisk, and Yanbout). The following are the various strategies to be put in place preceded by their related objectives:

- To achieve policies regarding conducting surveys of the natural habitat of the Baptism Site, the following strategies should be devised:

1. Initiate immediately with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature of Jordan a joint project to conduct a base line survey of the natural habitat with the Site.
2. Produce special brochures and pamphlets about the indigenous plant and animal habitat within the Site and distribute within the local community and to visitors of the Site.

- To achieve policies regarding natural conservation of the habitat and flora and fauna diversity within the Site; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Work seriously on declaring the Baptism Site as a nature reserve and as a natural habitat for 2 distinctive plants: the Tamarisk (which also has, in addition to its environmental value, has historic meanings and values), and the Yanbout (natural habitat of bees).
2. Coordinate with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to elicit technical support in terms of nature conservation.

- To achieve policies regarding future planting and irrigation within the Site.

1. Stop and eliminate completely the planning of the Salam tree (*Prosopis*) which prospers at the expensive of the important Tamarisk trees on site. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) had published a special report indicating that the *Prosopis* tree is an invasive tree that takes out the habitat of other trees

2. Continue experimenting with water harvesting. Also implement irrigation techniques that are more environmentally conscious.

### Site Interpretation and Presentation-Related Strategies

Due to the size of the site and to its integrative and integrated whole, the following interpretation strategies would be adopted and implemented within a 5-year plan to achieve a better future management of the site. The main objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the Site and make its significance accessible to the public. The following are the various strategies to be put in place preceded by their related objectives:

- To achieve policies regarding the development of scholarly content for the interpretation taking into consideration the regional context and the associations between the Baptism Site and other sites within the area, the following strategies should be devised:

1. Insure the hiring of a qualified heritage interpretation and presentation expert.
2. Embark on a project to review and upgrade the content and then interpretation material for the Site.

- To achieve policies regarding the documentation of the interpretative paths, and their relationship to the archaeological layer; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Embark on a project that would work to documenting the interpretive paths of various types within the Site and their relationship to the archaeological layer.

- To achieve policies regarding the upgrading of the various interpretative tools once the content had already been developed and upgraded; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Improve and research options for the routing and trails all through the Site.
2. Upgrade the Audio tour based on the development of the new content for the interpretation. This might entail the introduction of more audio points

3. Upgrade the interpretative signage on site in the light of the development of the upgraded interpretation content.
4. Upgrade the current Museum and integrate with it a Visitor Center. The experience within the visitor center has to complement the experience within the Site. More work and attention should be made in the Museum to illustrate (within the content through maps, illustrations, and other types of illustrative material) the link between the Baptism Site and region in terms of history, association, archaeology, and pilgrimage trails.
5. The publication of a comprehensive monograph on the Site; in addition to the publication of a more comprehensive brochure for tourists and visitors that attempts to illustrate the multi layers of significance for the Site.

### **Sustainable Tourism and Site Visitation-Related Strategies**

The nature of the experience of the tourist/pilgrim within the Site is of utmost importance. The specific nature of the Site with its characteristics of naturalness and spirituality demand the provision of a unique experience for tourists and pilgrims alike. The following are the various strategies to be put in place preceded by their related objectives:

- To achieve policies regarding the visitor experience within the Site addressing issues of congestion, routing, and feeling; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Design and experiment with different routing options. Revise bus shuttle and other schedules to avoid congestions during busy seasons.
2. Author and public a conduct of ethics and practices for tourists and visitors that is related to issues of the relationship between the visitor and this Fragile Site.

- To achieve policies regarding promoting the Site as a place of significance to all religions and also as a place of co-existence and tolerance; the following strategies should be devised:



1. Host on the Baptism Site and organize events on the topic of mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims that dwell on the commonalities between the two faiths.

2. Produce print material in the form of brochures about peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians.

- Policies regarding the production of print and other material on the Site; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Work on upgrading the Brochures and other print material that is associated with the Site and the Commission.

- To achieve policies regarding upgrading of tourist facilities within the Site; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Conduct periodical evaluation of the performance of such facilities (e.g., public toilets).

2. Upgrade and enhance maintenance procedures of various facilities on Site such as shaded areas and panoramic lookouts.

- Policies regarding the involvement of the local community within the planning for tourism within the Site and beyond; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Engage the local community more in various daily activities within the Site that is more related to management procedures and also interaction with the Site's history, archaeology, and visitors.

2. Embark on a serious project to document the intangible heritage within the area and reflect that on incorporation of local narrative within the overall interpretation scheme.

### **Site Management and Staff Capacity Building-Related Strategies**

It is extremely important to mention that the Commission enjoys a very high level of independence in terms of Site management approaches and financial independence. This is very different from other archaeological sites of Jordan where revenues (in most cases) do not necessarily filter back to the Site or community. Furthermore, the Site has the full support of H.M. King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein and also of H.R.H. Prince Ghazi

bin Mohammad who is considered the champion for its recognition and protection. Yet, one very important objective is still to upgrade and develop the capacity building programs that would thrive to improve the management of the Site. The following are the various strategies to be put in place preceded by their related objectives:

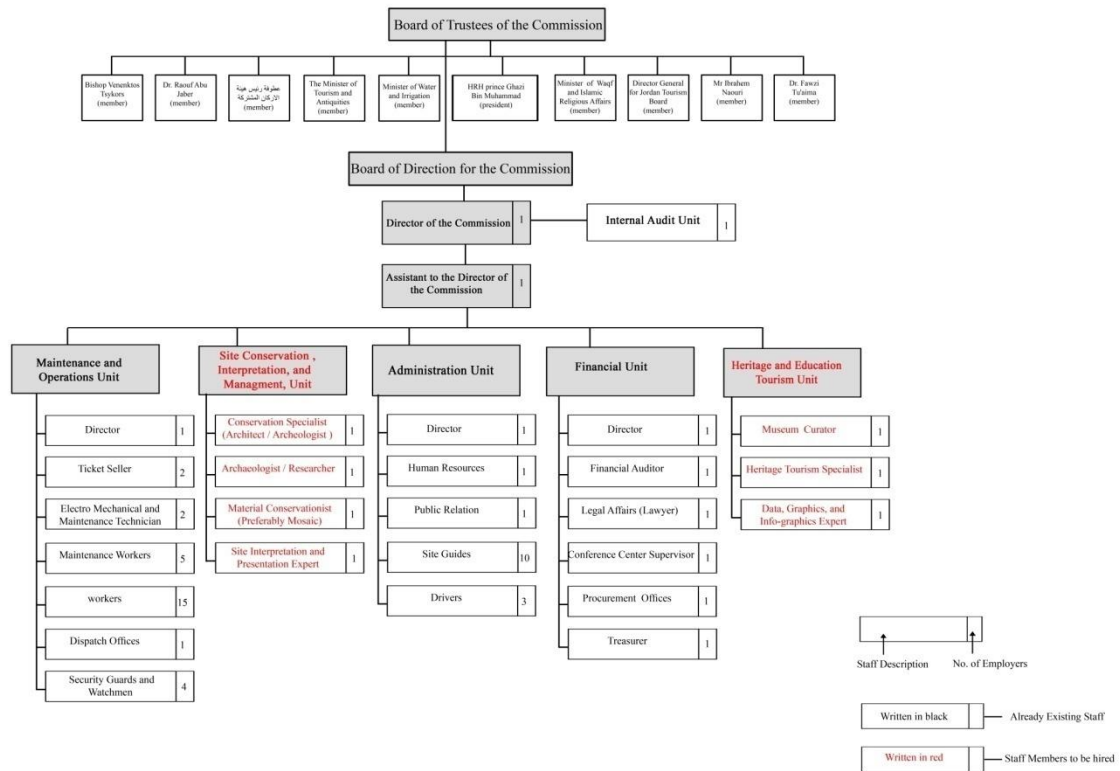
- To achieve policies regarding the upgrading of the current Organizational Structure for the Baptism Site; the following strategies should be devised:

The following two units would be added to the Commission.

1. Site Conservation, Interpretation, and Management Unit: this unit should thrive to hire the following professionals who will be responsible for achieving the strategies that are related to site conservation, material conservation, and interpretation and presentation of the Site to the general public:

- a. A conservation specialist (archaeologist or architect) with ample experience in conservation within archaeological sites.
- b. An archaeological team that would work on the upgrading of future research within the areas of archaeology and history.
- c. A material conservationist with ample experience in the conservation of mosaics and mosaic flooring.
- d. A site interpretation and presentation expert, this person would work on developing the strategies for the future interpretation of the Site.

## Existing and Proposed Organizational Structure for Baptism Site Commission



Source: Mkhjian, Rustom/ (August 2012)- Adapted by Daher, Rami (*TURATH: Architecture & Urban Design Consultants*)

**Figure (11):** Existing & Proposed Organizational Structure for Baptism Site Commission

2. Heritage & Education Tourism Unit: this unit should thrive to hire the following professionals who will be responsible for achieving the strategies that are related to site the promotion of heritage and education tourism within the Site and beyond within the Dead Sea Area and the *Ghor*:

a. A Museum Curator, this person would work closely with the interpretation expert and would work to develop the nature of interpretation, within the Museum in addition to address issues of artifact acquisition, renovation, interpretation, and display.

b. A heritage tourism specialist, this individual would work to promote heritage and education tourism within the Site and within the region; thus linking the Site to other archaeological sites within the Jordan Rift Valley.

c. A data graphics and Info-graphics specialist, this person will work closely with several individuals working on museum curation, interpretation on Site, and publication of material about the Site.

- Policies regarding future capacity building and training in several areas related to heritage management and conservation; the following strategies should be devised:

1. Develop within the Commission a allocate Fund that would support the sending of various members of the Staff at the Baptism Site to attend special courses in related fields of tourism, heritage conservation, and documentation.

- To achieve policies regarding creating a platform for dialogue between different individuals working within the Site; the following strategies should be devised:

1. It is very difficult to think of a strategy that would ensure the open channels of dialogue addressing, for example, technical issue related to the conservation or management of the Site between various staff members working or involved within the Baptism Site; yet one possible strategy is to hold periodical meetings between different staff members involved in, for example, the conservation of the Site (including conservation architect, maintenance technicians, workers) and engage in a discussion about a particular issue pertaining to the conservation of the Site

## Monitoring, Periodical Review & Revision

Once the management plan is ready, the most difficult task is to move into implementation. Therefore, one important step would be to transform the Management Plan into an implementation plan with specific dates, tasks, and details that is doable within a 5-year period. Within this implementation plan, provisions for monitoring and periodical review are incorporated.

At present, monitoring takes place on a daily basis through inspections of various archaeological remains and also facilities on Site by the existing conservation and management staff. For example, the archeological sites are currently inspected on a daily basis by the assistant director with coordination and cooperation with the director of the *Balqa Directorate* of the *Department of Antiquities of Jordan*. An annual program of maintenance is currently implemented in addition to periodical reporting to the director general of the *Department of Antiquities of Jordan*. Furthermore, various tourist facilities within the Site undergo periodical inspection and maintenance. Finally, also the various tour guides operating within the Site are subject to technical training and capacity building in addition to local training for first aid.

The following mechanisms would be suggested to conduct monitoring and periodical review on the Site:

- **Mechanisms for Monitoring and Periodical Review** related to Site Conservation and the Physical Condition of the Archaeological Layer in addition to the state of the natural layer within the Site. Monitoring address each of the elements identified in the assessment part of the Management Plan. For example, monitoring of the state of conservation of the archaeological layer within the Site should address issues related to:

- Salt deposits
- Pulverization.
- Exfoliation.
- Detachment.
- Atmospheric Pollution; and other issues that were assessed during the assessment phase of the Management Plan.



The data inferred from the monitoring of the state of conservation for the Site can be inputted into periodical reports and tables that identify key indicators during the monitoring process. The following suggested table is an example:

Indicator	Periodicity	Location of Record
For example: amount of Salt Deposit	For example: every three months	For example: the North-East Pier of the 4 piers in the Baptismal Pool.

Such mechanisms could be based on:

1. Periodical assessment (visual, other) for the state of conservation of the archaeological layer on site.
2. Periodical testing of samples from the Site to evaluate their physical condition and state of conservation.
3. Periodical inventories for conservation measures on Site.
4. State of the Environment Reporting: conduct thematic surveys concentrating on the number, expansion, extinction, and characterization of different species (fauna and flora) with emphasis on the unique plant and animal habitats of the Site.
5. Periodical documentation of the Site addressing changes to the archaeological layer in terms of conservation and excavations, and also changes to the interpretation paths and methods. This will include the updating of existing measured drawings for the Site.
6. Periodical surveys and documentation of the natural habitat of the Site.

It is important to mention, that the periodicity of the monitoring will be decided by conservation experts on Site. The personnel conducting the monitoring would be associated with the Site Conservation, Interpretation, and Management Unit (a new proposed conservation unit within the organizational structure of the Baptism Site Commission).

- **Mechanisms for Monitoring and Periodical Reporting** related to the Quality of the Visitor Experience on the Site to address issues of congestion, routing, feeling, and other: such mechanisms could be based on:

1. The Participant Observation Method: This approach will monitor and investigate in a non-biased methodology the nature and quality of the tourist experience on Site. This is done by a staff member (or other person) pretending to be a tourist and that follows the visitors around and documenting details of their experience such as routing, problems with congestions, bottle necks, lack of shaded areas, other. This person, and through this participant observation approach will identify the challenges and problems that are faced by the tourists on site.
2. Periodical Visitor Satisfaction Surveys: eliciting tourists and visitors opinion on the level of services and quality of the experience within the Site.

Data management for such period reporting and monitoring is very important. Such periodical tables, review reports, and surveys should be electronically filed in order to be able to make comparisons and evaluations in the future.

## Annexes

### Annex I: Bibliography (Documentation of Resources)

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## **Annex II: Photographic Record and Images Documentation Tables**

### **Documentation**

Photographs, slides, image inventory and authorization table and other audiovisual materials

Mr Akram Sa'ud Harahsheh  
Counsellor  
Permanent Delegation of the Hashemite  
Kingdom of Jordan to UNESCO  
Maison de l'UNESCO  
Bureaux MS6.48/49  
1, rue Miollis  
75732 PARIS Cedex 15

Our Ref. GB/MA 1446

Charenton-le-Pont, 22 December 2014

World Heritage List 2015

**Baptism Site "Bethany Beyond the Jordan" (Al-Maghtas) (Jordan)**  
**- Additional information II**

Dear Sir,

ICOMOS is currently assessing the nomination of Baptism Site "Bethany Beyond the Jordan" (Al-Maghtas) for World Heritage Listing and we thank you for the additional information you provided on 3 November 2014.

As part of the evaluation process, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel has now reviewed this nomination including the additional information received and has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

1. Could the State Party consider modifying the boundaries to exclude the areas foreseen for construction of churches, pilgrimage village and administration building from the property and integrate these into the buffer zone, and to subsequently establish a construction moratorium for the property?
2. Could the State Party consider augmenting the management planning documents to include strategic plans and implementation guidance for maintenance, visitor management and disaster response and provide a timetable for this?
3. Could the State Party further detail the monitoring procedures and outline how these will be integrated in the annual maintenance plans?

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation process.

We would be grateful if you could provide ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre with the above information by **28 February 2015 at the latest**.

We thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RD', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Regina Durighello  
Director  
World Heritage Programme

Copy to            The Baptism Site Commission  
                         UNESCO World Heritage Centre



**Additional Information II**  
**As required by ICOMOS on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2014 (Ref. GB/MA 1446)**

**1. Modifying the boundaries**

The state party of Jordan has positively responded to the requirement of ICOMOS and modified the boundaries of the property of the Baptism Site, by excluding the areas foreseen for construction of pilgrimage village, the modern churches and administration buildings from the area of the property and added them to the buffer zone area.

Hence, the total area of the property has been reduced to 294.155 hectares instead of 533.7 hectares.

And the area of the buffer zone has been increased to 957.178 hectares instead of 773.20 hectares.

The State Party feels that this modification has added to the strength of the Outstanding Universal Value, the integrity and authenticity of the site and its wholeness.

Please find attached the soft and hard copies of the modified boundaries as have been finalized by the Baptism Site Commission (Annex 3).

**2. Implementation Guidance for Maintenance**

- Regular site monitoring and maintenance will ensure that the OUV of the site, its authenticity and its integrity remain intact and are properly conveyed to the local, tourist and scientific communities. Tourism flows will also be closely monitored to reduce their impact on the site.
- Site monitoring and maintenance will be coordinated by the Baptism Site Commission (BSC) and the Department of Antiquities (DoA) for all that concerns the archaeological remains. The BSC will periodically seek the advice of concerned agencies to monitor the state of conservation of the site.
- Conservation and maintenance of archaeological structures and site facilities will occur on a regular basis based on an annual action plan to be incorporated as part of the management plan. Guidelines and protocols for site monitoring and management will be developed by the BSC in close collaboration with the DoA. Monitoring and needed interventions will occur according to the same plan, at least once every year.
- Regular inspections are basic in the planned maintenance. They ensure continuing serviceability and economy of labor and materials. Inspections will be carried out using standard forms to assist comparison with previous inspections.
- Specific short and mid-term objectives (listed in the attached Annex 1) have been developed concerning the maintenance of archaeological sites and tourism facilities, and have been

incorporated as part of the management plan. On a yearly basis, more identified actions will be implemented and included in the BSC plan with accurate budget allocation.

### 3. Visitor management

a) Tourists are monitored by the BSC staff throughout the opening hours of the site, and the number of staff available on site will be revised based on effective needs. A security and surveillance electronic system is also available within the site to integrate tourists’ monitoring, in addition to the availability of personnel accompanying every group of visitors to the site.

Four major types of visitors could be defined as follows:

1. **Groups arriving through tour operators (planned tours):** upon arrival to the site, they get their service charges settled by their official guide, and start their tour.
2. **Families, individuals, and small groups of people arriving by car:** every half an hour there is a shuttle bus provided by BSC to move the visitors from the visitor center to the site, accompanied by BSC guide.
3. **Students from universities and schools:** these groups are accompanied by specialist BSC staff. These groups get special discount (50%) for educational motives.
4. **VIPs:** all types of VIPs are received at the VIP lounge. After a brief about the site, they are accompanied either by the director/ assistant director of BSC.
  - a) Carrying capacities of the site are controlled by pre-designed schedule for the visits which limits the number of visitors. Moreover, dispersions of the attractions help in distributing the visitors, to different components of the site, without having pressures on proper component.
  - b) Well-designed simple trails lead visitors to each attraction within the site, taking into consideration the preservation of the wilderness of John the Baptist. These trails help enrich visitors' experience through increasing knowledge of the site.
  - c) Promotional and educational materials are distributed to the visitors in seven international languages. Furthermore, interpretational panels (in 7 languages) are available at the most important attractions.
  - d) Continuous survey and assessment is carried out annually to evaluate the impact of the visitors on the site, as well as their satisfaction. Additionally, a detailed monthly report gets to the management analyzing the following:
    - Daily visitors’ numbers and their nationalities
    - Daily revenues

- e) These monthly reports are integrated into statistical charts that enable the management to control the visitation and monitor the carrying capacity. Hence, such statistics are reliable indicators to define high and low seasons. At the same time, an annual comparative analysis is carried out to enable policy makers to manage future impacts.

#### **4. Disaster Response**

The BSC prefers the proactive and preparedness measures in responding to the Disaster rather than the reactive measures. Those measures include the following implementations:

1. One of the main foreseen risks to the site is the flooding of the Jordan River during heavy raining seasons. Proactively, there have been constructed dikes of a mixture of compacted earth and rocks around the borders to stand against the flow of the flood into the low components of the site which are located along the river. That implementation could stand and resist that kind of risk very efficiently as noted in the flood of February 2003.
2. As for the risk of fire that may cause any risk to the forest around and within the site the following measures have been taken:
  - a) Warning and Preventive instructions are dispersed everywhere within the site that prohibit any kind of fire such as smoking or any sort of fire.
  - b) Fire distinguishers of all sizes and brands are distributed all over the site and at every corner in a way that may ensure the efficiency of fighting any sort fire.
  - c) The BSC staffs have been trained by the main official Civil Defense Department. They are always ready to respond instantly in the case of any risk.
  - d) Water pipes and hoses and water outlets are dispersed all over the site.
  - e) Fire Sensors are distributed everywhere in the administrative buildings. They are linked with an efficient system which controls the locations.
  - f) The BSC are aware and following international studies relevant to risk reduction techniques.
  - g) The BSC are in good and continuous coordination and cooperation with the Civil Defense Department within the area in terms of that issue.

#### **5. Action Timetable (Annual Maintenance plans)**

The actions are set out under the same headings as the objectives. These actions are implemented by Baptism Site Commission (BSC), Department of Antiquities (DoA), and Madaba Mosaic Institute (MIMAR). There will be other partners involved in implementation in the future. Some of the actions are already being carried out. The actions have all been given a timescale as a guideline for when they should be carried out. These are:

- a. Short term, up to 1 to 2 years ( i.e. immediate action needed)
- b. Medium term, up to 3 years
- c. Long term, up to 5 years or more
- d. Ongoing, continuous work

The effectiveness of the implementation of the plan will be addressed by:

- Extensive reassessment of the plan after 2 years;
- Production of annual reports on the site;
- Periodic reporting;
- Monitoring the progress of actions in Action Program;
- Assessment of the effectiveness of each action to achieve objectives;
- Undertaking temporary reviews, as required;
- Coordination and cooperation with national and international stakeholders.

As these steps are taken, relevant sections of the plan may need to be updated accordingly and re-issued in the plan. Public consultation may be undertaken to inform relevant stakeholders of new issues, if they arise.

## 6. Monitoring

In response to ICOMOS observation number three regarding “**Further detail the monitoring procedures and outline how these will be integrated in the annual maintenance plans**”, we have already provided the monitoring methodology and indicators in our response to ICOMOS letter (reference GB/MA 1446 dated 7 October 2014). However, we have drawn out a chart (Annex 1) defining the relations between the strategies and action plans with monitoring indicators that will be measured annually to insure the adaptation of plans. Monitoring procedures are integrated in the annual maintenance plans as shown in annexes 1 and 2 (attached).

The outcomes from reviewing the annual reports will be taken into consideration while preparing the maintenance plans. Analyzing monitoring results and having the proper intervention will mitigate the negative impacts on the site.

## 7. Annexes

### Annex 1: Action Timetable for Implementation and Monitoring activities

Axis	Strategic Objective		Key Action	Responsibility	Frequency	Notes
Maintenance	Planning and coordination		Develop midterm objectives and short term actions	Baptism Site Commission (BSC)	Annually	
			Coordinate monitoring of heritage property components	BSC & Department of Antiquities (DoA)	Annually	
			Coordinate maintenance of infrastructures	BSC	Annually	
	Guidelines, protocols and urgent actions		Establish monitoring guidelines and protocols	BSC & DoA	Every 3 years	
			Develop monitoring/maintenance forms	BSC & DoA	Annually	
			Ensure regular monitoring of archaeological structures	BSC & DoA	Annually	
	Consolidation and Restoration	All Archaeological Sites	General maintenance works	<b>BSC &amp; DoA:</b> Archaeological team circulate at all sites as required through monitoring	Ongoing Basis	
		Elijah's Hill	Maintenance of mosaic floors	<b>BSC &amp; DoA</b> in cooperation with Madaba Institute ( <b>MIMAR</b> )	Ongoing Basis	
			Plastering Maintenance as required	<b>BSC &amp; DoA</b> in cooperation with Madaba Institute ( <b>MIMAR</b> )	Ongoing Basis	
		Pilgrims' Station	General foundation preservation	<b>BSC :</b> Trained workers	Ongoing Basis	Trained workforce is from the local community
		Large Pool	General preservation and floor cleaning	<b>BSC :</b> Trained workers	Ongoing Basis	
		John the Baptist Church Area	Remains of all 5 churches preserved and maintained	<b>BSC :</b> Trained workers	Ongoing Basis	
		Hermit Cells	General Check	<b>BSC :</b> Trained workers	Ongoing Basis	
		Protection Shelters	General Maintenance	<b>BSC :</b> Trained workers	Ongoing Basis	
		Tourist Facilities	General Maintenance	<b>BSC :</b> Trained workers	Ongoing Basis	



Baptism Site “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas)/ Additional Information II  
February 2015

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Axis	Strategic Objective	Key Action	Responsibility	Frequency	Notes
Visitor Management	Monitoring & Activities	Monitor hospitality services and tourist facilities	BSC	Weekly	
		Monitor tourists	BSC	Daily	
		Assign permanent guard at the main building during opening hours, increase guard numbers, establish shifts	BSC	Daily	
	Religious Events	Organize Epiphany celebrations	BSC	Annually	
	ICT systems upgrade	Install alarm system	BSC	Annually	already installed in Administration offices
		Control monitoring Cameras	BSC	Daily	
	Visitor information	Install signage	BSC	Annually	
		Provide BSC's Tour guide services	BSC	Daily	
		Prepare promotional material	BSC	Annually	
	Assessment	Conduct tourism impact assessment	BSC	Annually	
		Conduct visitor surveys	BSC	Annually	
	Customer service	Provide tourists facilities ( toilets, trails, shelters...etc.)	BSC	Daily	
		Control the access & parking facilities	BSC	Daily	
Disaster Response	Planning and coordination	Develop security and crises management plan	BSC & Security agencies	more 5 years	Already Done
	Training	Disaster Management Training and Public Awareness headed by the Director General of BSC	BSC & the Civil defense	Ongoing Basis	First stage is already done.
	Control System	Provide trained rangers for evacuation	BSC	Ongoing Basis	Partly Done
		Provide Exit trails	BSC	Ongoing Basis	

Baptism Site “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas)/ Additional Information II  
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**Annex 2:** Archaeological Sites Preservation and Maintenance Progress Chart 2015

Site	Job Description	Months												Notes
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
All Archaeological Sites	General maintenance works	---	---	-----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	Archaeological team circulate at all sites as required through monitoring
Elijah’s Hill	Maintenance of mosaic floors					---	---	---	---					In cooperation with Madaba mosaic College
	Plastering Maintenance as required			---	---									Trained restoration personnel
Pilgrims’ Station	General foundation preservation									---				Trained workers
Large Pool	General preservation and floor cleaning										---			Trained workers
John the Baptist Church Area	Remains of all 5 churches preserved and maintained	---	---			---	---	---				---	---	Trained restoration personnel
Hermit Cells	General Check								---					Trained workers
Protection Shelters	General Maintenance											---	---	Trained workers

Notes: -Trained workforce is from the local community.

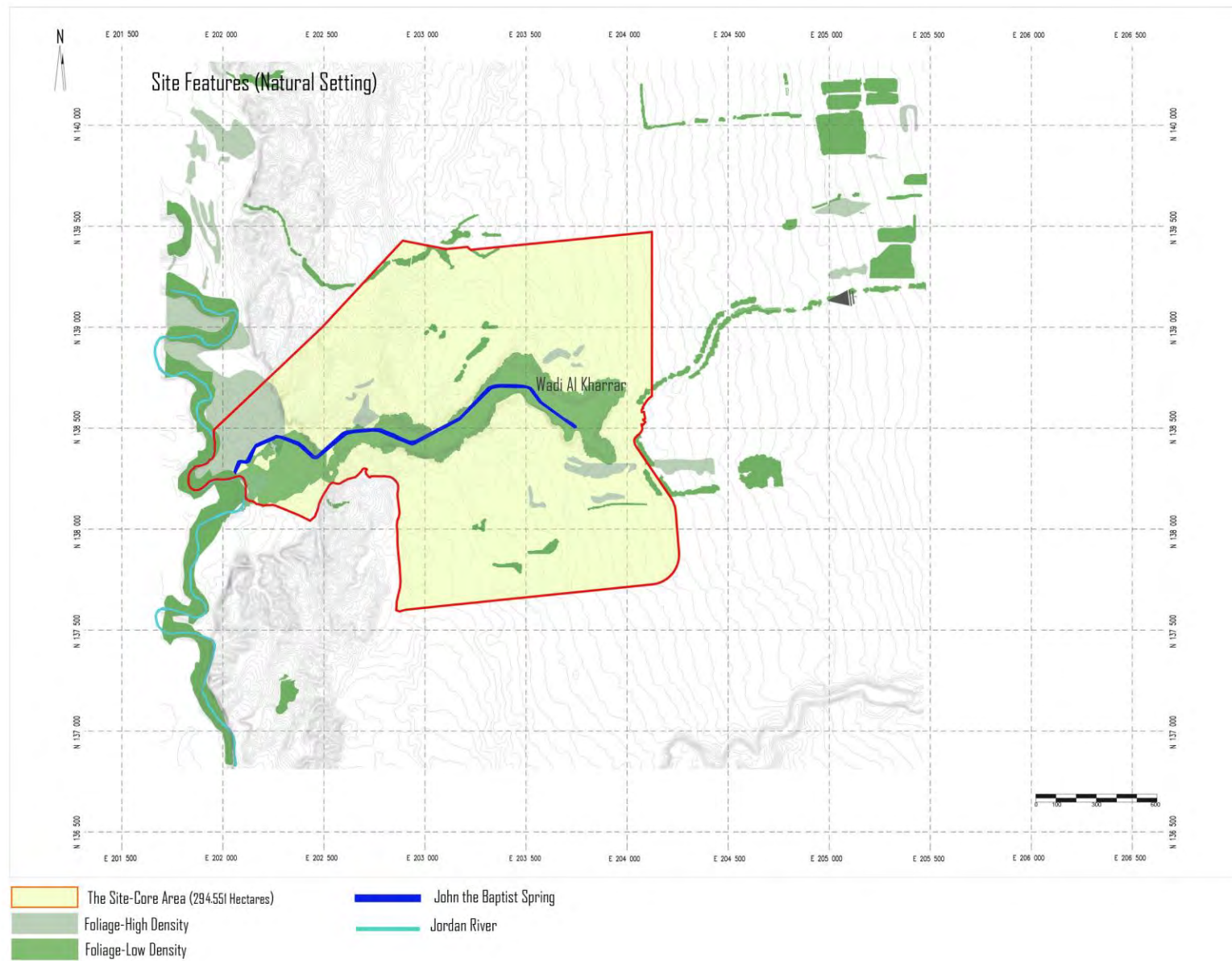
- Schedule might vary slightly and is flexible.







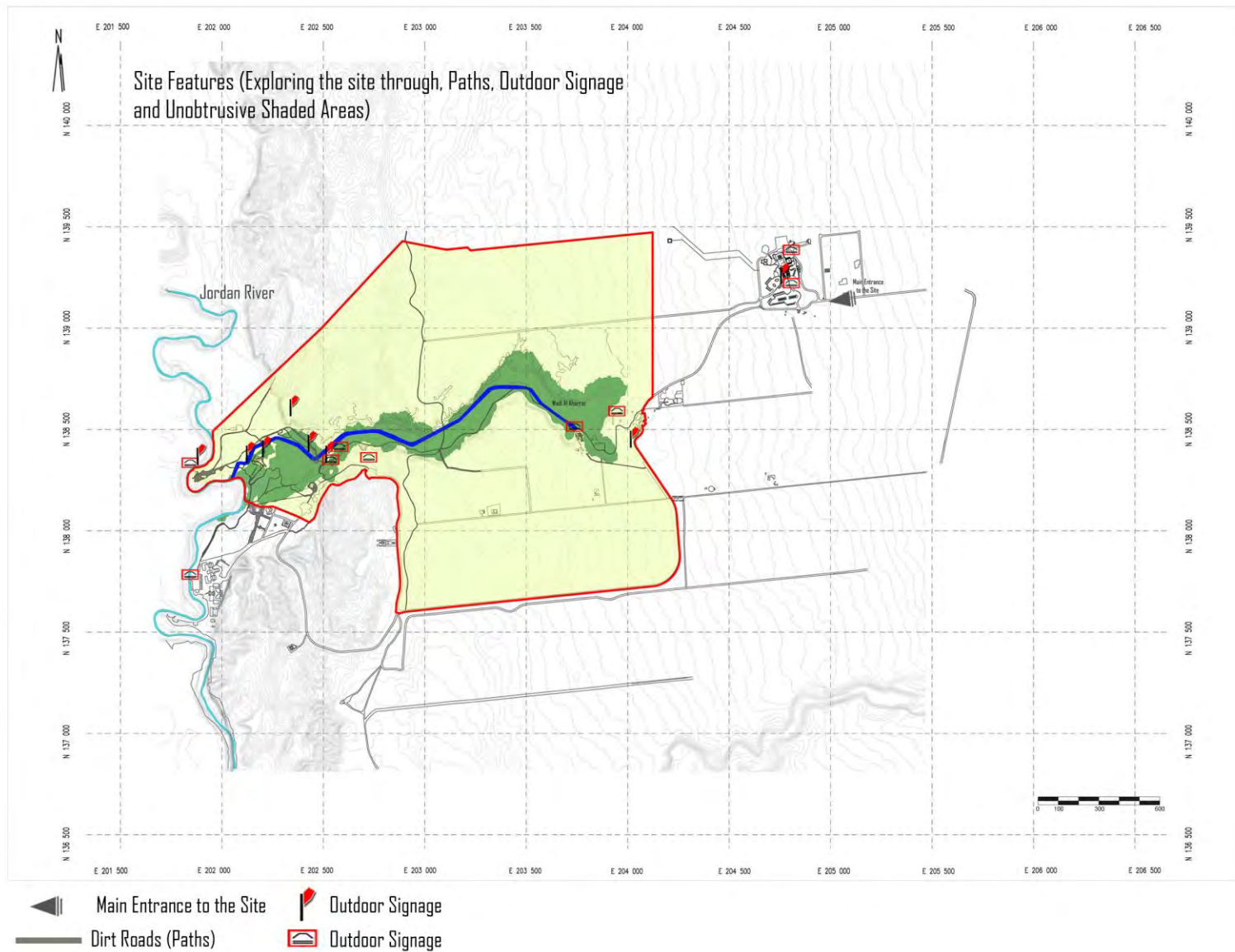
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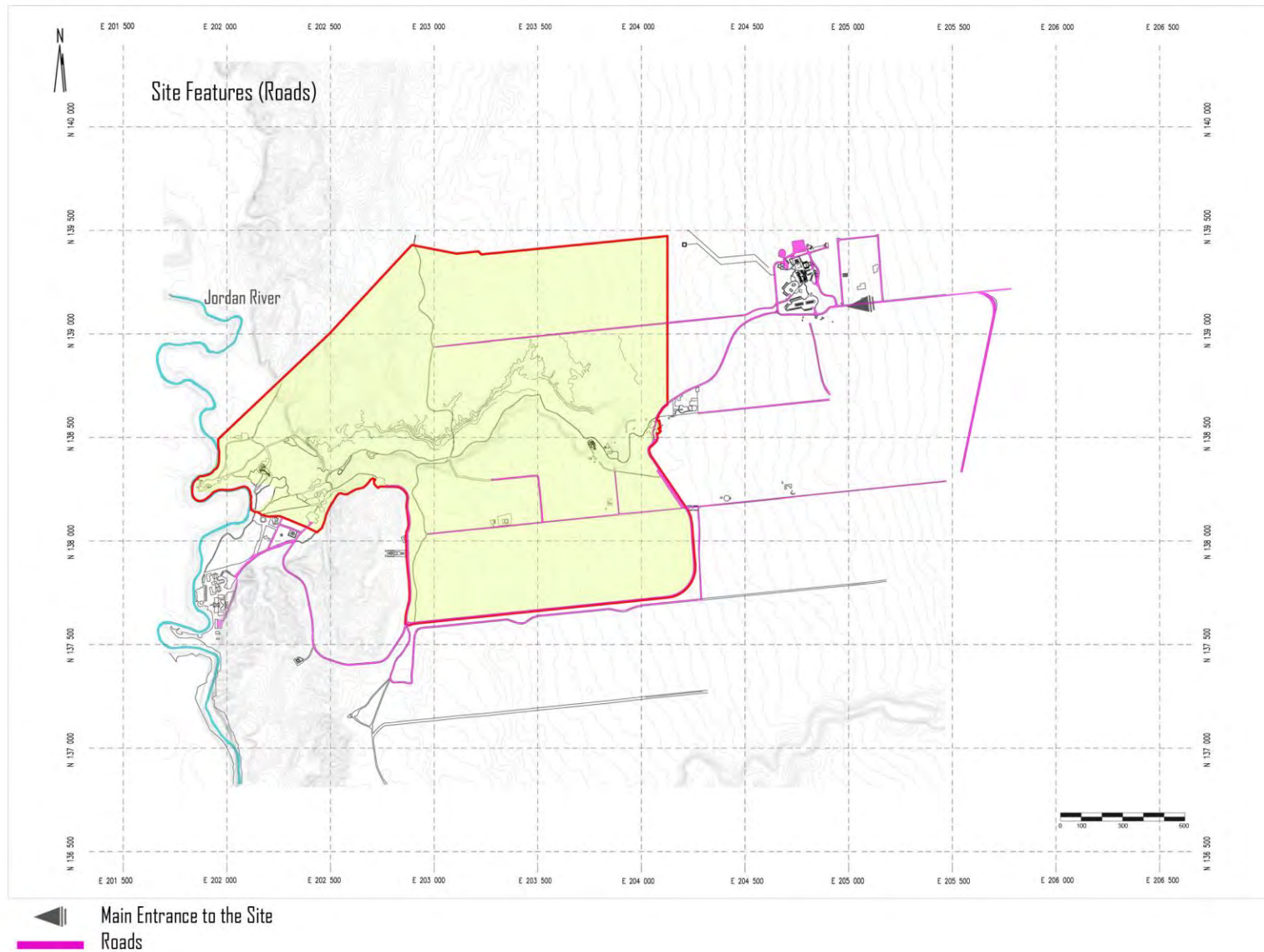




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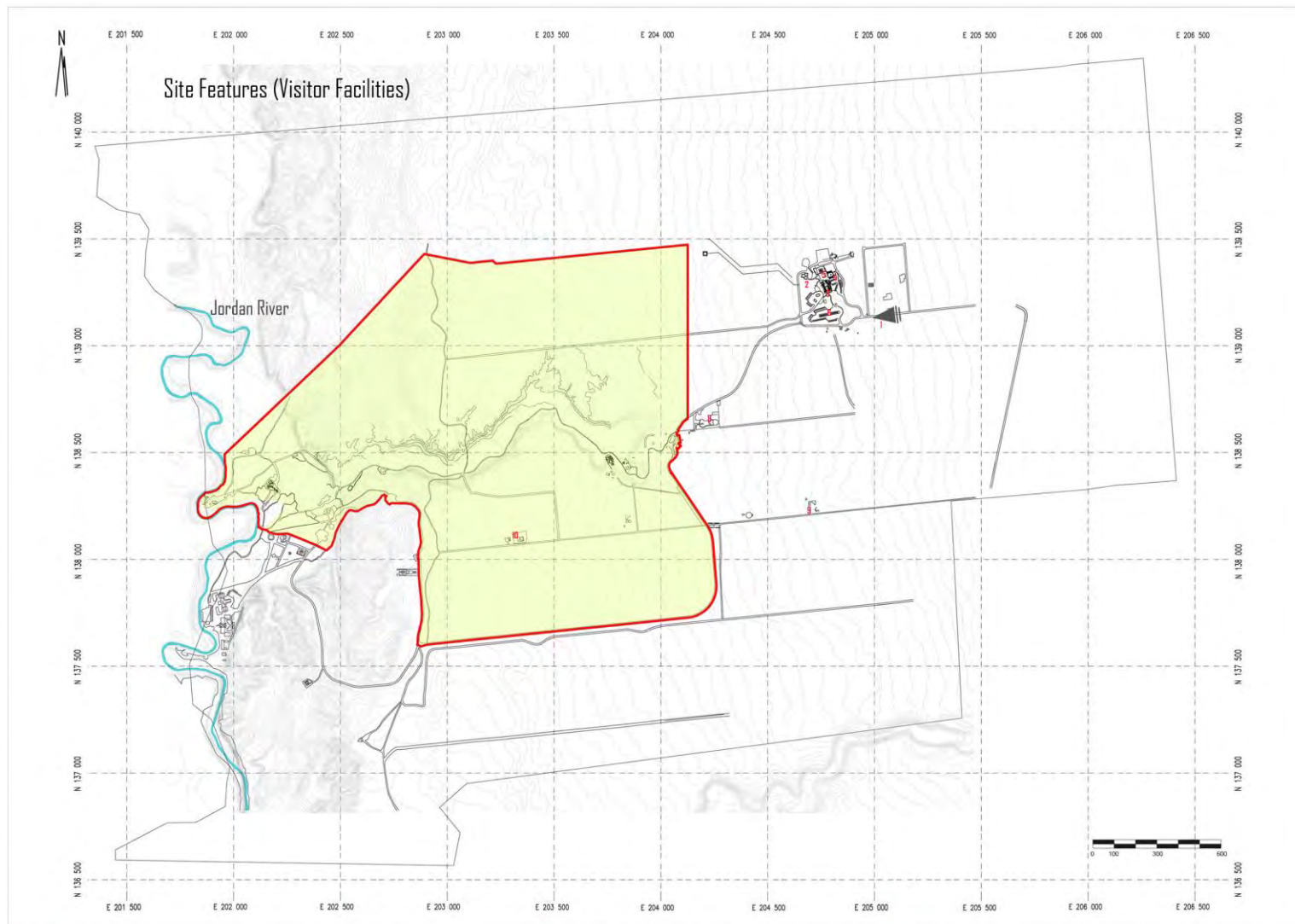
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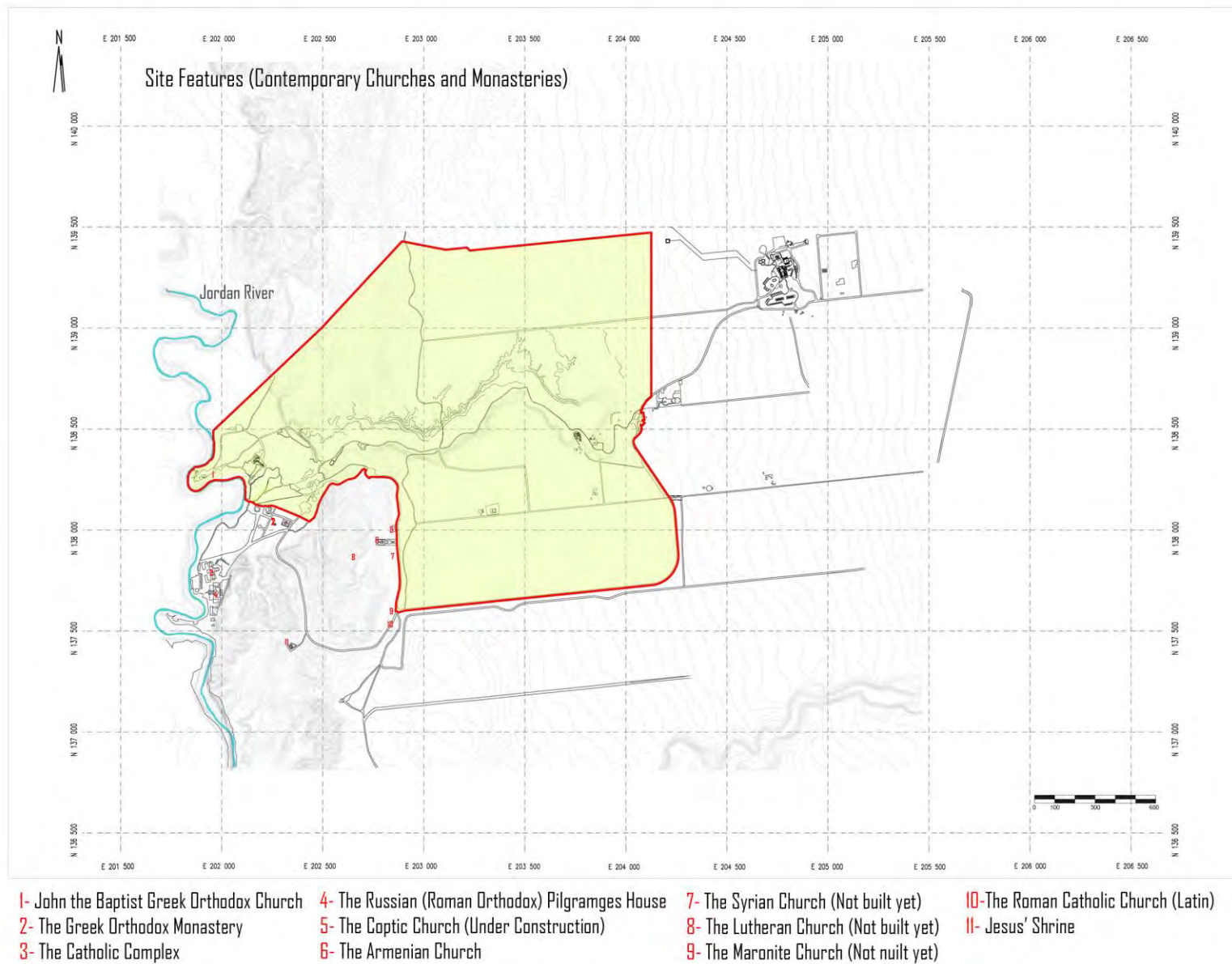
## February 2015



- |  |                       |  |                        |
|--|-----------------------|--|------------------------|
| 1- Entrance Gate                         | 4- Restaurant         | 7- Waste Water Treatment Plant                 | 10- Desalination Plant |
| 2- VIP lounge and Administrative Offices | 5- Management Offices | 8- Convention Centre and Museum                |                        |
| 3- Shopping Centre                       | 6- WC                 | 9- Department of Antiquity and Research Centre |                        |

# Baptism Site “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas)/ Additional Information II

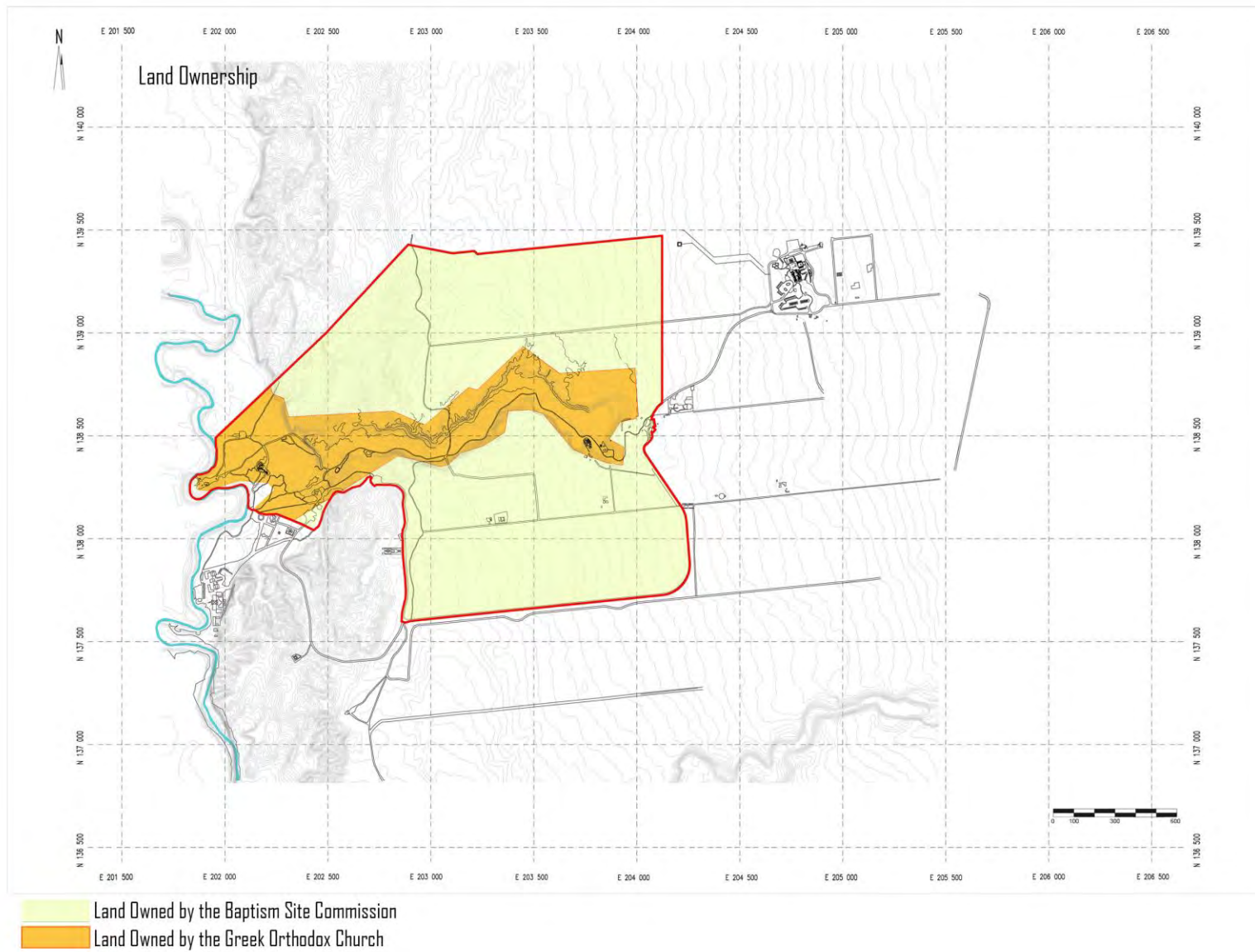
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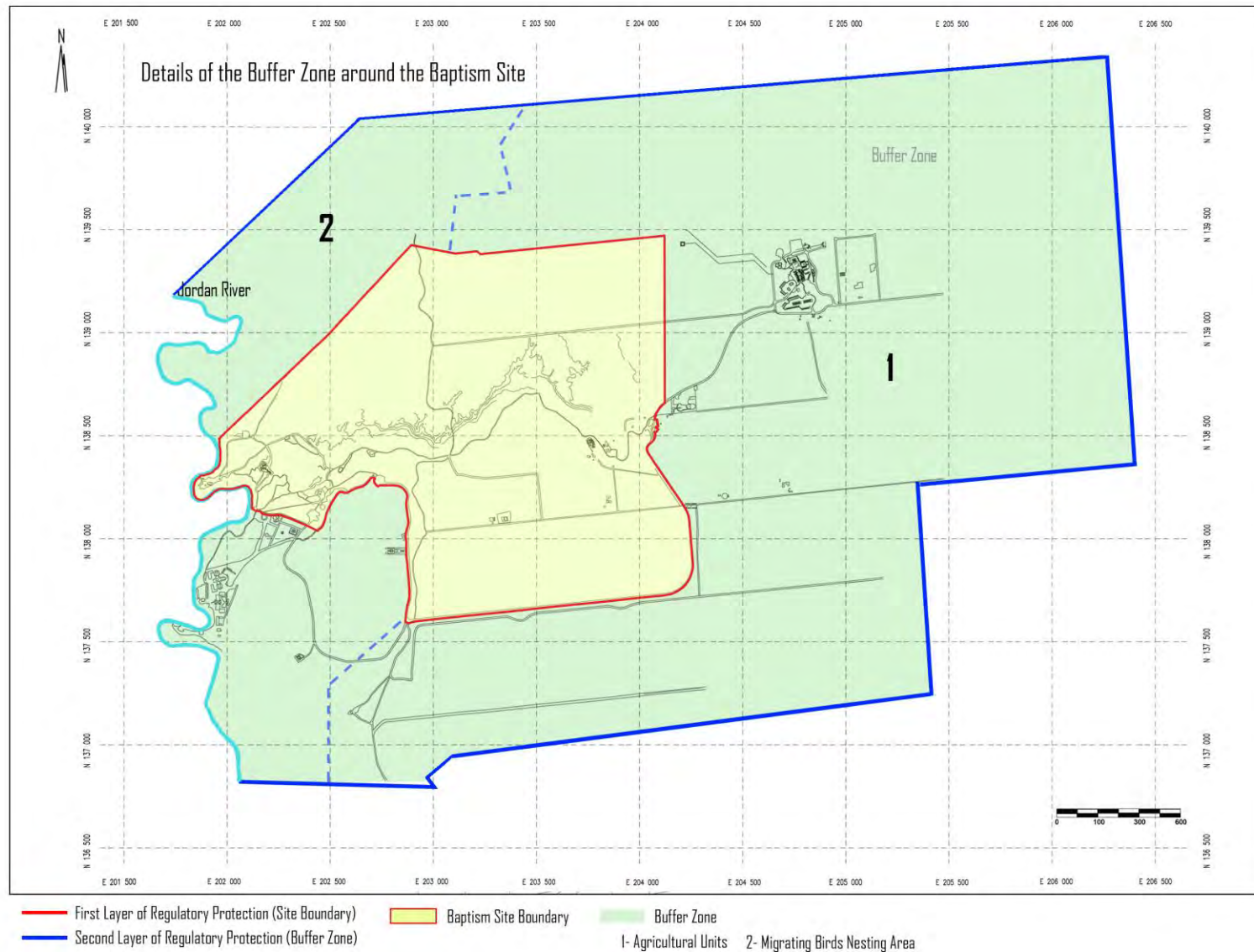
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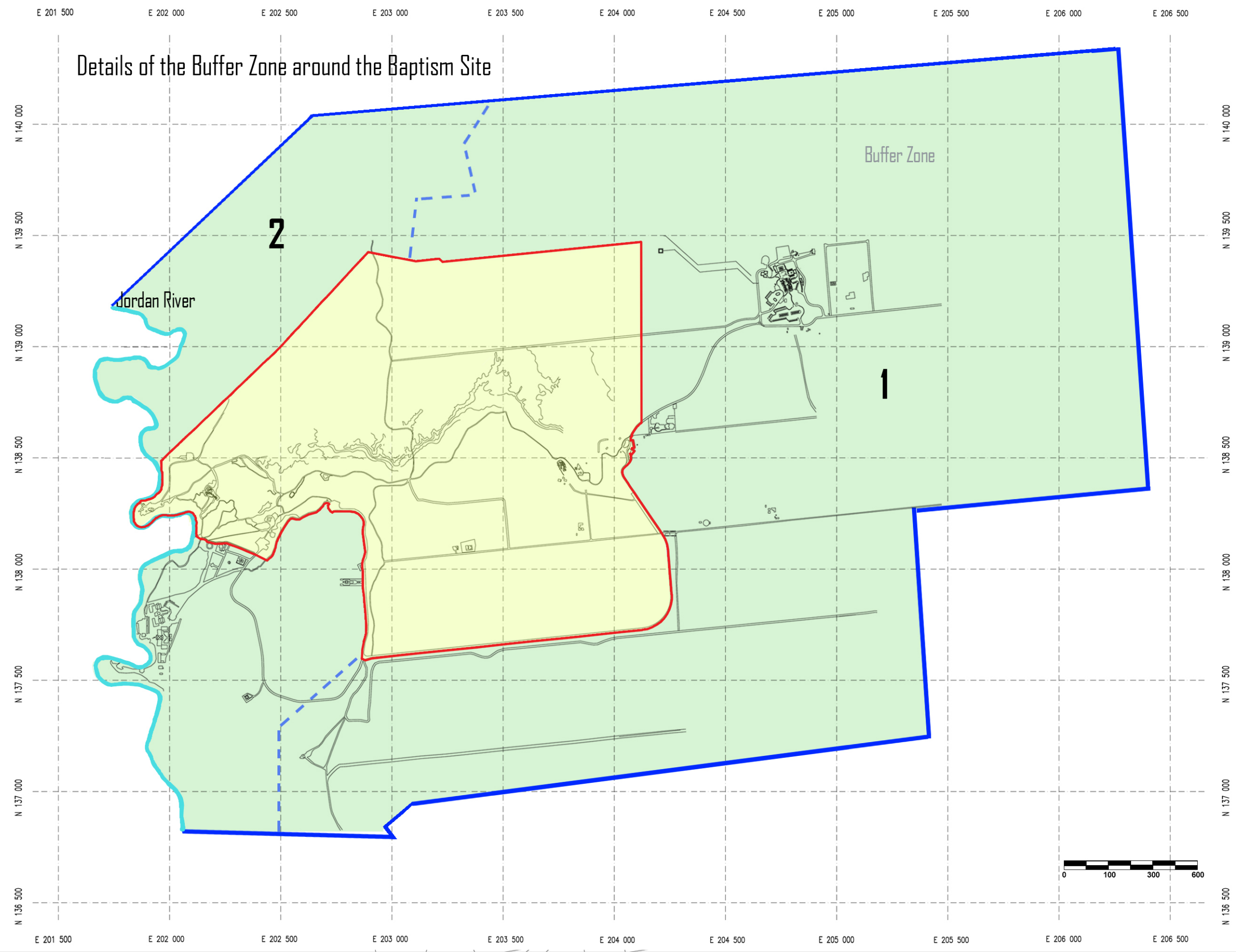
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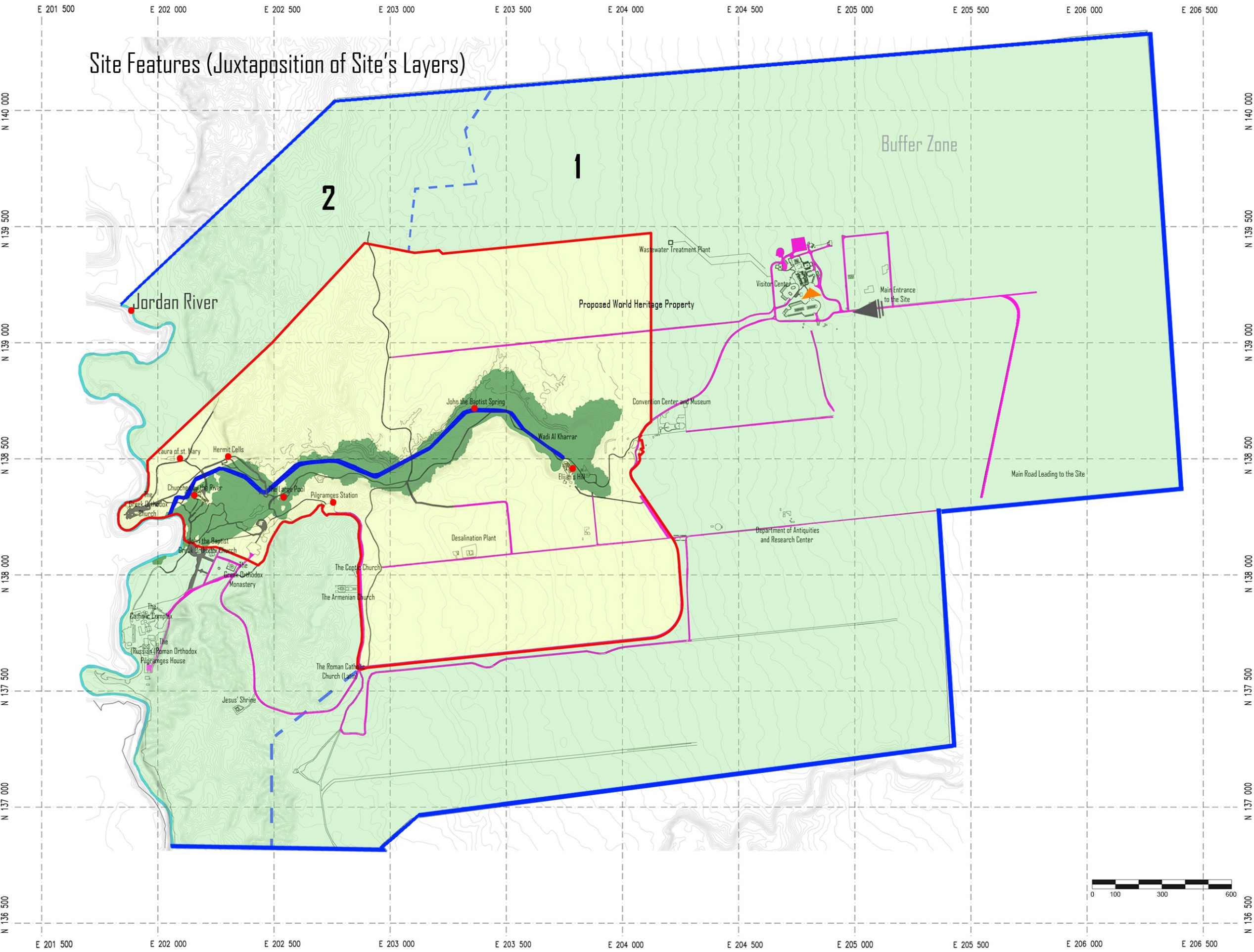
# Details of the Buffer Zone around the Baptism Site









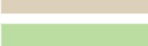


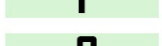


- First Layer of Regulatory Protection (Site Boundary)
- Baptism Site Boundary
- Buffer Zone
- Second Layer of Regulatory Protection (Buffer Zone)
- 1- Agricultural Units
- 2- Migrating Birds Nesting Area

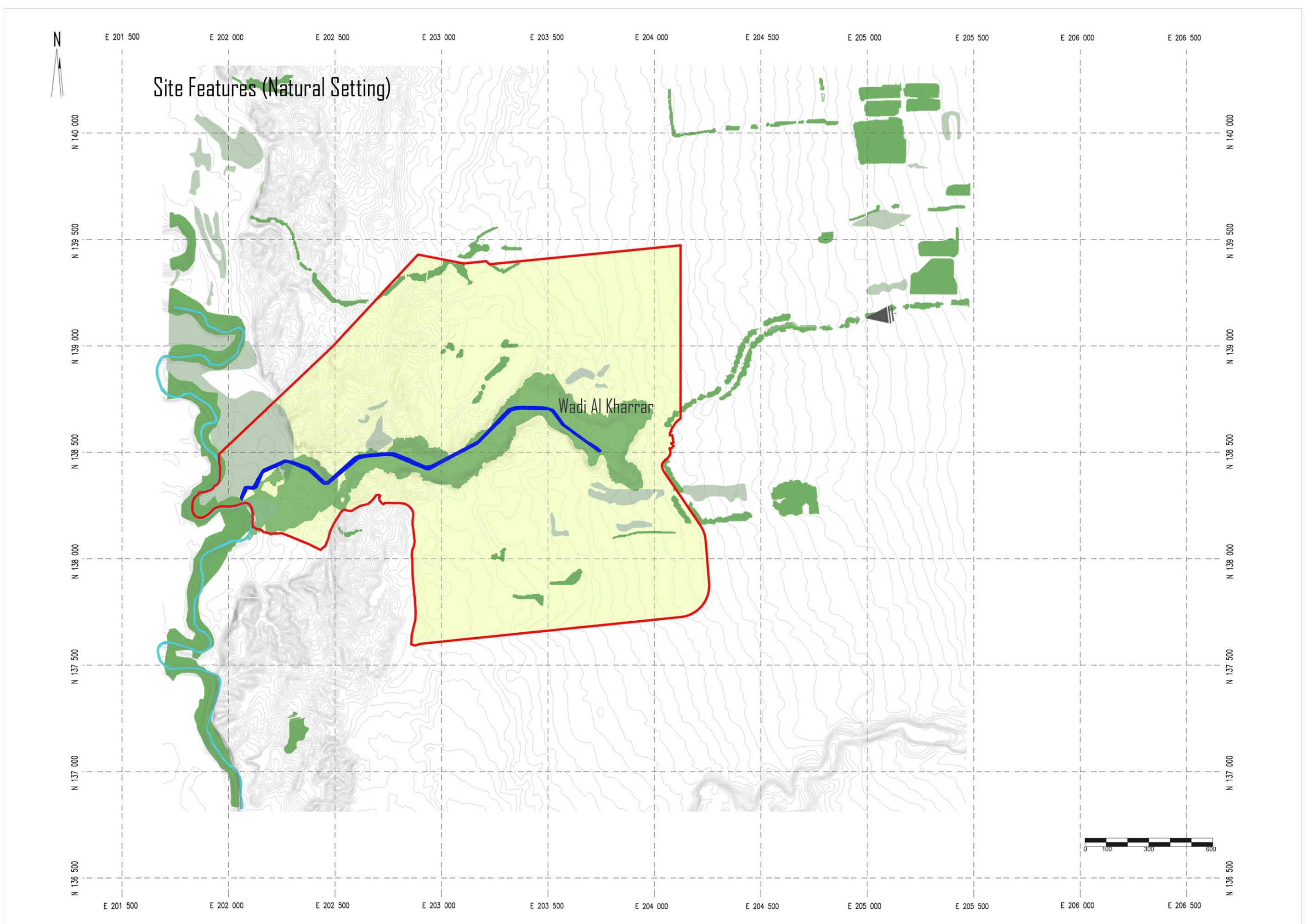


Site Features (Juxtaposition of Site's Layers)



- |   |  |  |                    |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|--------------------|---|--|---|--|
|  | Proposed World Heritage Property (294.155 Hectares)    |  | Main Roads         |  | John the Baptist Spring                |  | Visitor Center                             |
|  | Buffer Zone (957.1775 Hectares)                        |  | Dirt Roads (Paths) |  | Main Historical & Archaeological Sites |  | Buffer Zone (Agricultural Units)           |
|  | Wadi Al Kharrar(Main Cultural and Archaeological Zone) |  | Jordan River       |  | Main Entrance to the Site              |  | Buffer Zone (Migrating Birds Nesting Area) |

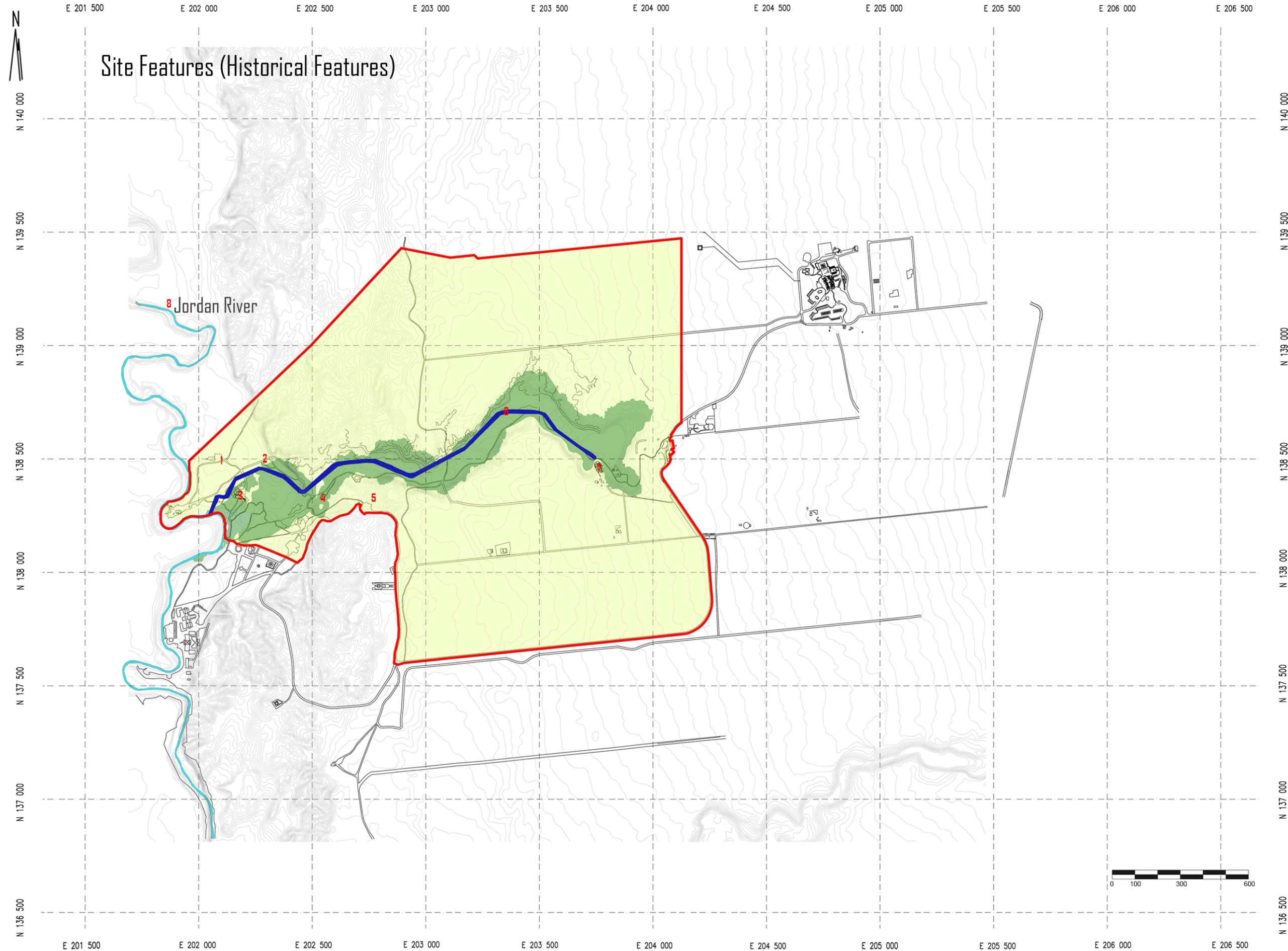




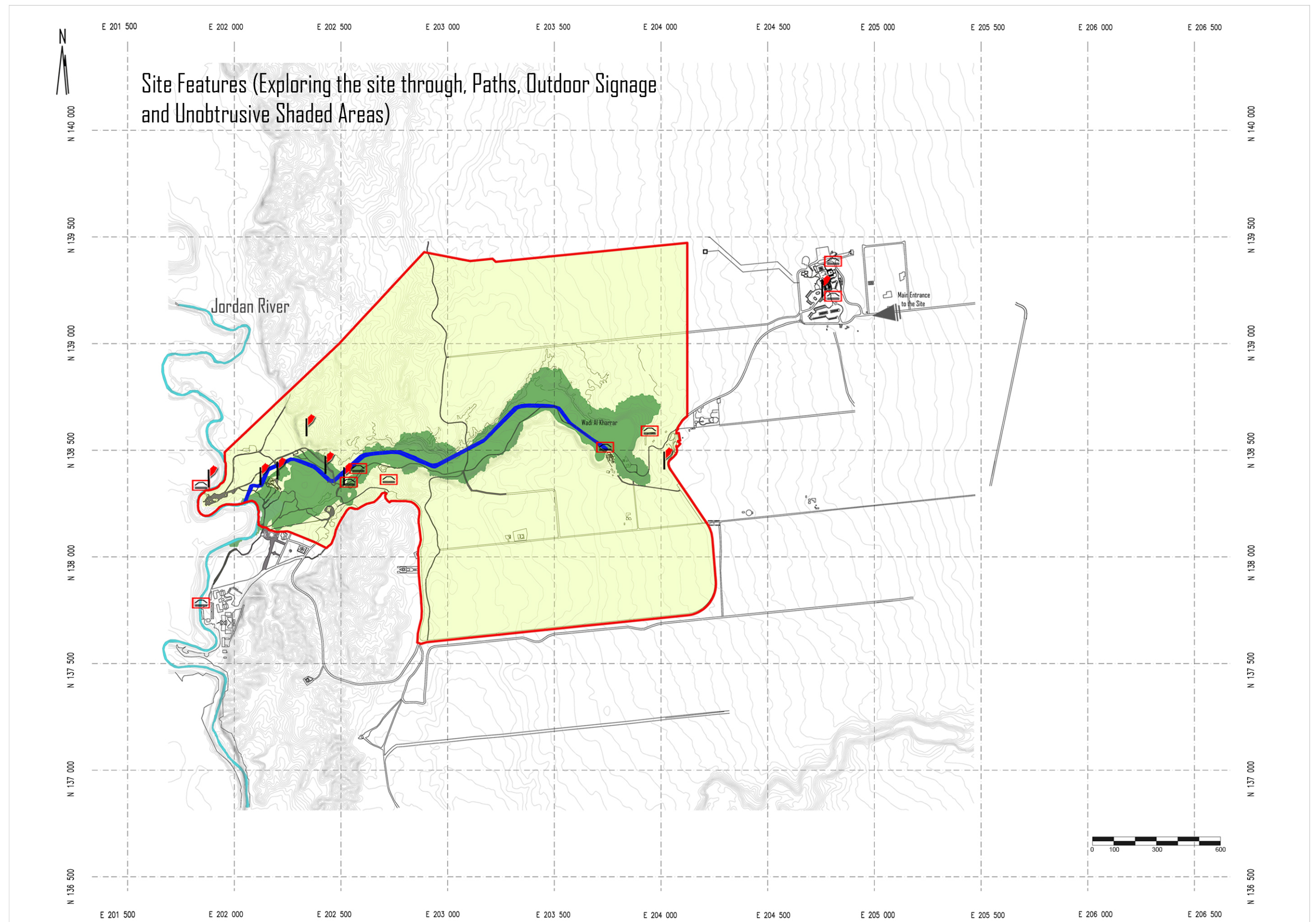
- The Site-Core Area (294.551 Hectares)
- Foliage-High Density
- Foliage-Low Density

- John the Baptist Spring
- Jordan River



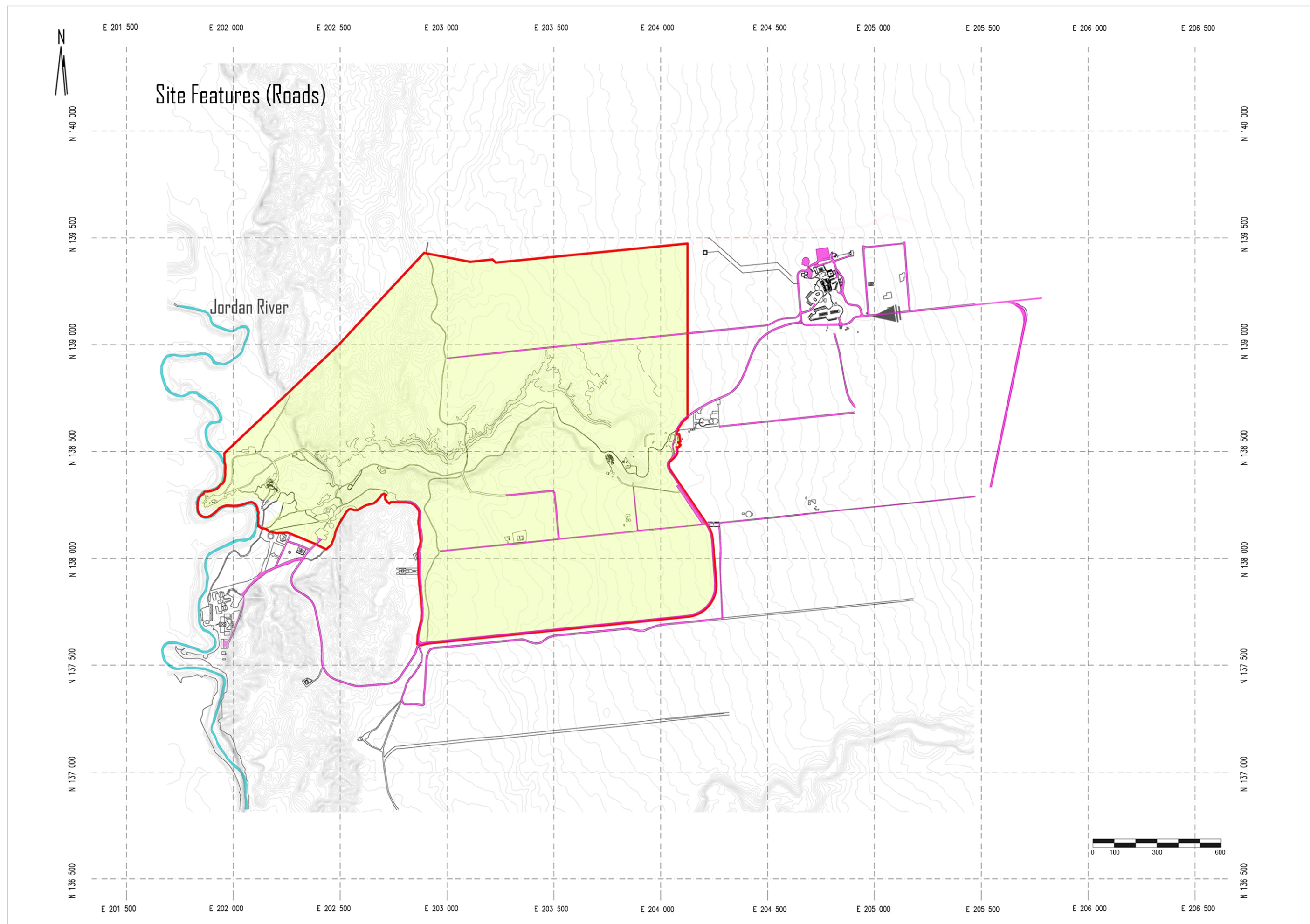






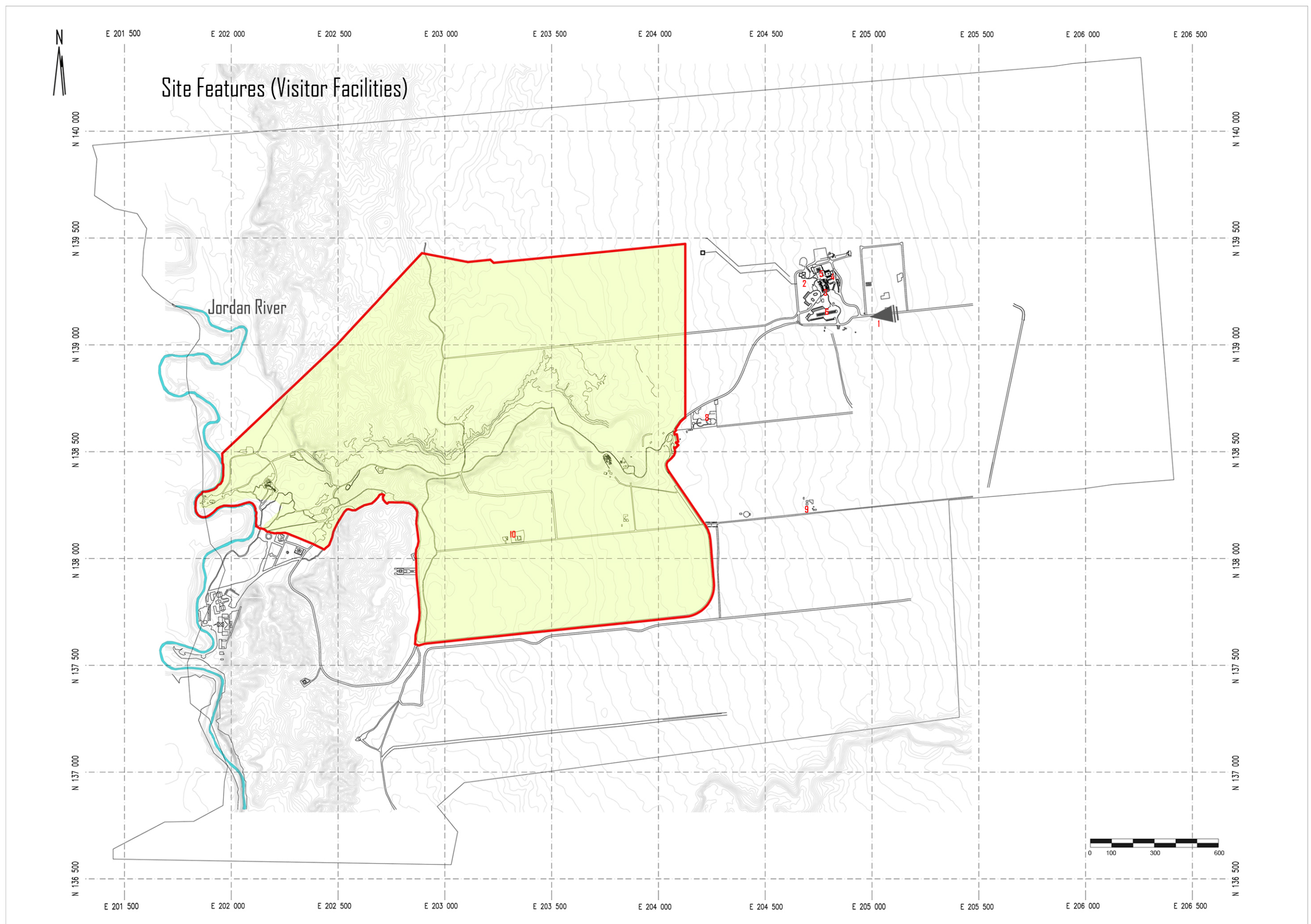
- Main Entrance to the Site
- Dirt Roads (Paths)
- Outdoor Signage
- Outdoor Signage





Main Entrance to the Site  
Roads





1- Entrance Gate

2- VIP lounge and Administrative Offices

3- Shopping Centre

4- Restaurant

5- Management Offices

6- WC

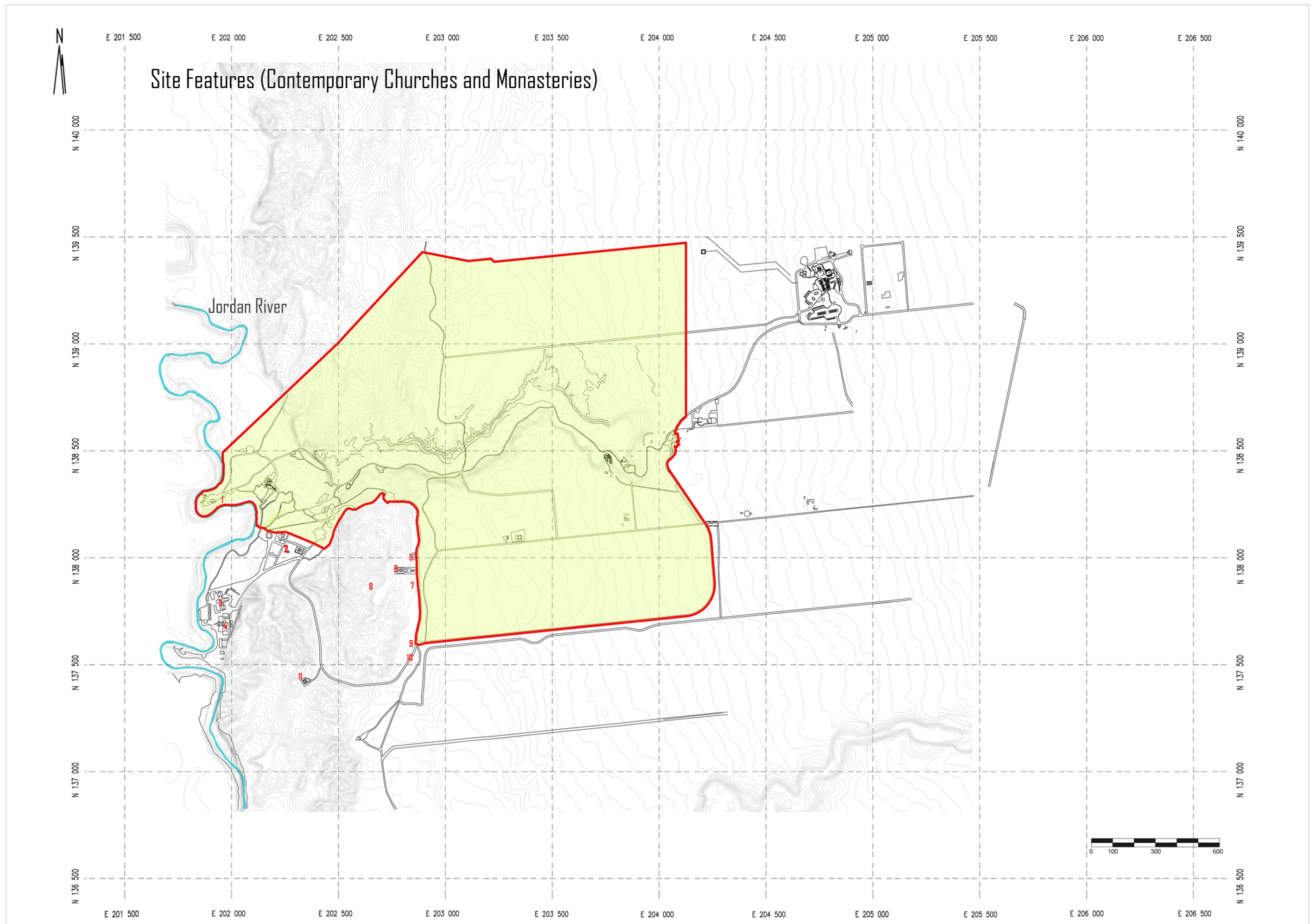
7- Waste Water Treatment Plant

8- Convention Centre and Museum

9- Department of Antiquity and Research Centre

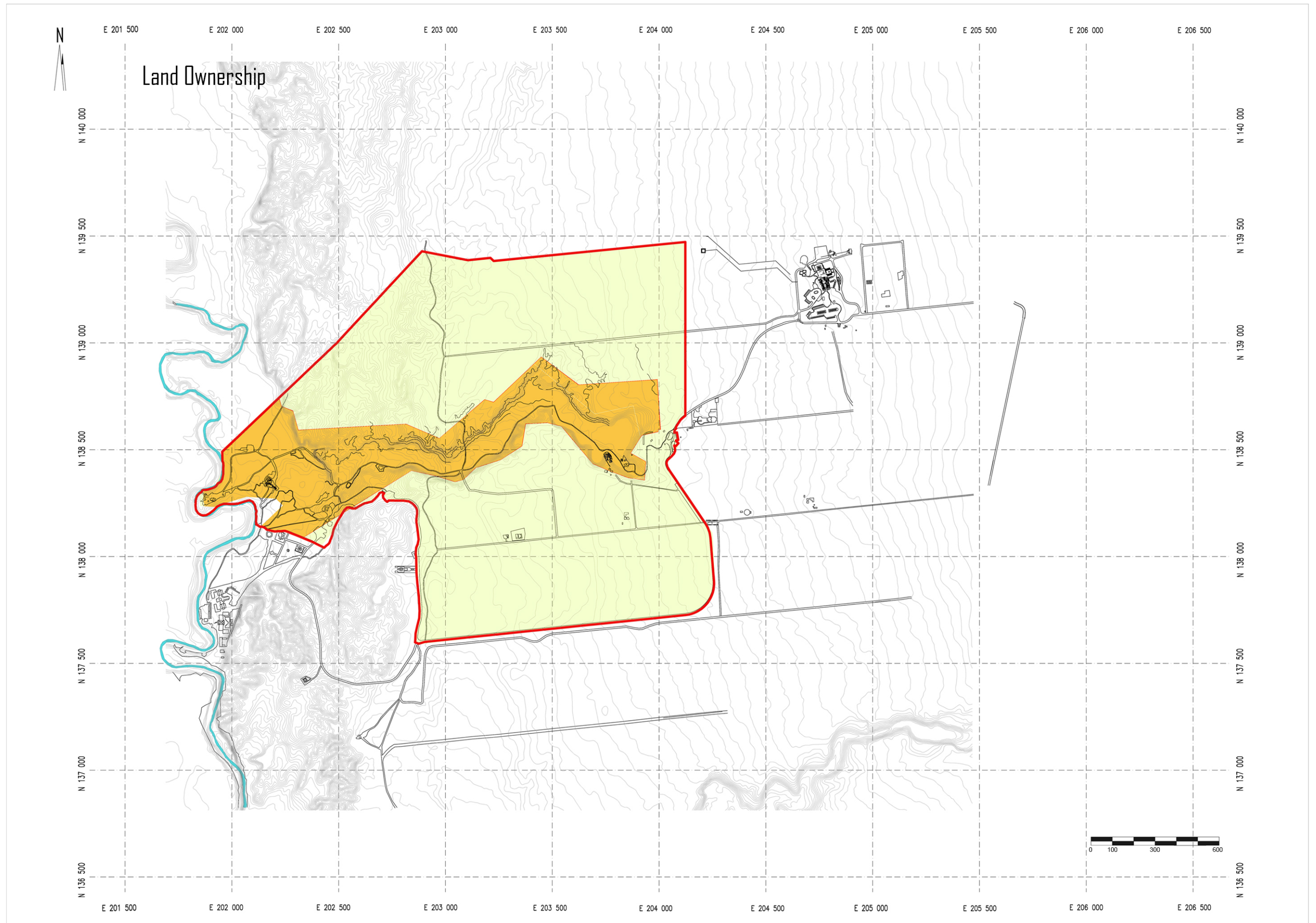
10- Desalination Plant

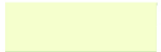



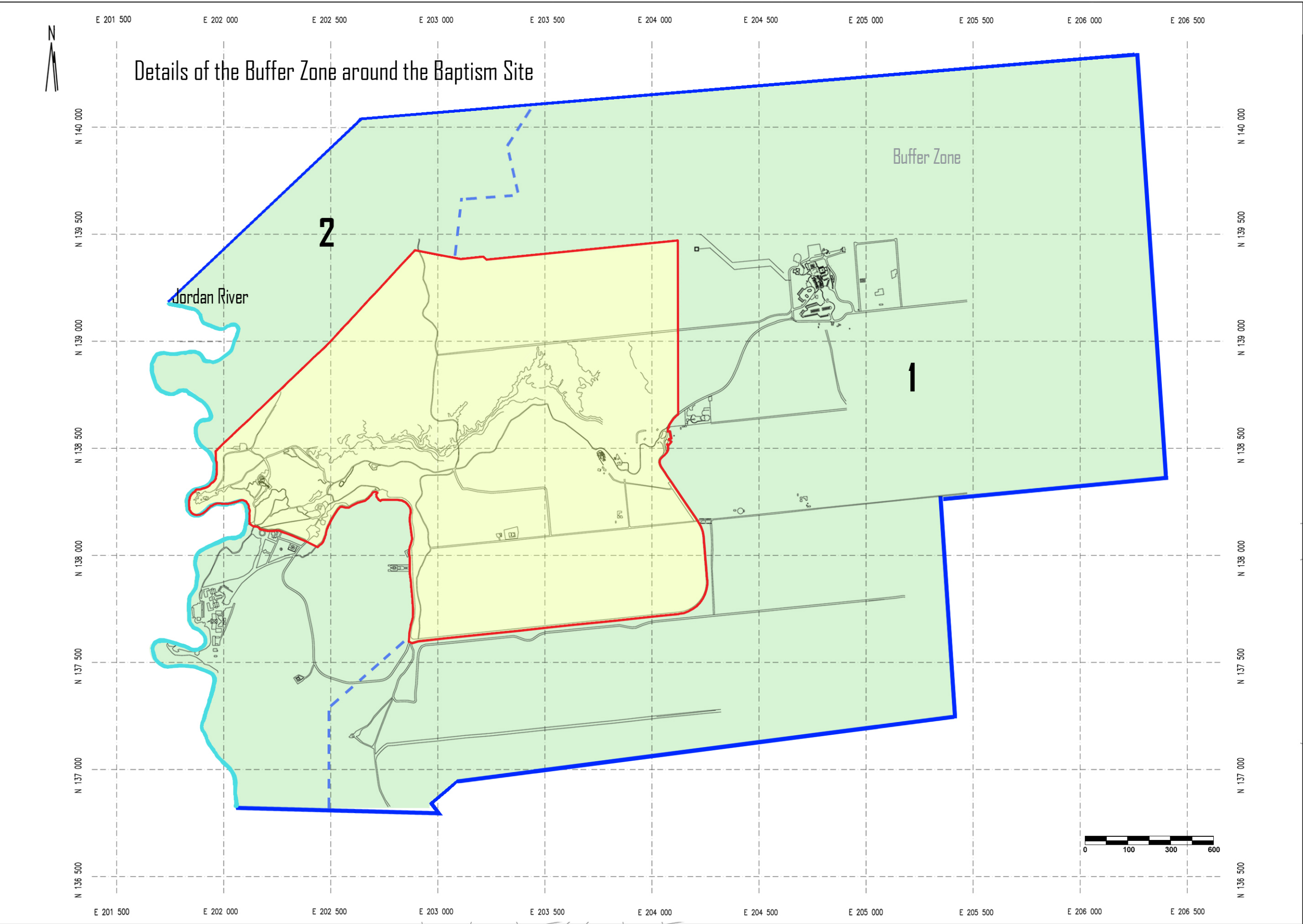


- |   |  |  |                                       |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1- John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church | 4- The Russian (Roman Orthodox) Pilgramges House | 7- The Syrian Church (Not built yet)   | 10- The Roman Catholic Church (Latin) |
| 2- The Greek Orthodox Monastery           | 5- The Coptic Church (Under Construction)        | 8- The Lutheran Church (Not built yet) | 11- Jesus' Shrine                     |
| 3- The Catholic Complex                   | 6- The Armenian Church                           | 9- The Maronite Church (Not built yet) |                                       |





-  Land Owned by the Baptism Site Commission
-  Land Owned by the Greek Orthodox Church



- First Layer of Regulatory Protection (Site Boundary)
- Second Layer of Regulatory Protection (Buffer Zone)
- Baptism Site Boundary
- Buffer Zone
- 1- Agricultural Units    2- Migrating Birds Nesting Area