



Message from the Editor

Just as Israel begins to open its (and Palestine's) borders to tourists after a year and a half, the omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 is causing governments to close borders worldwide – and dashing all hopes locally of much-needed income from tourists and pilgrims during this Christmas season. Given that occupation-related access restrictions have affected Palestinians for decades, albeit not to the extent experienced since March 2020, Palestinians have been forced to become resourceful and resilient in the face of adversity. Thus, the pandemic has given increased impetus to efforts to develop virtual and digital tools and projects that aim to augment and increase interest among potential tourists and pilgrims rather than replace the real-life experience. As TWiP is proud to be a reliable source of information on Palestine, this issue presents some of these efforts and the stories behind them, also allowing visitors and readers to experience artifacts and sites interactively through 3-D technology.

TWiP wishes to thank NET Tours for carrying the Bronze Sponsorship of this issue. Our gratitude goes as well to UN-Habitat, UNESCO National Office for Palestine, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who chose TWiP as a platform to promote their projects. A word of special thanks goes also to our authors: Hani Abu-Dayyeh, president of NET Tours; Dr. Anna Khdaïr, researcher and advocacy officer at Al-Haq human rights organization; Emad Hamdan, general director of the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee; UNESCO; Amjad Taweel, project manager at UN-Habitat; H.E. Issa Jamil Kassissieh, the Ambassador of Palestine to the Holy See and the Sovereign Order of Malta; Professor Qustandi Shomali who teaches Arabic literature at Bethlehem University; Fattoum Abu Ghosh and Yara Istanbuli, production officer and language specialist, respectively, at ICRC Jerusalem; activist Mayss Al Alami, digital communications manager at the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD) and its digital brand, Rabet; Dr. Hamdan Taha, an independent researcher and former deputy minister of tourism and antiquities; Baseem Mayala, creative director and concept developer at InterTech; George Khadder, who currently provides consulting services to develop sustainable tourism in Bethlehem; and Eyad Al Araj, a co-founder of Jerusalem High-Tech Foundry.

Our Personality of the Month is Sam Hussein, the Historical Personality of the Month is Yousef Effendi al Khalidi, and the Book of the Month is *Power Born of Dreams* by Mohammad Sabaaneh. Be inspired by Where to Go to visit the Old Hebron Museum and Ahlan Palestine Postcard to experience sunrise above the Dead Sea. TWiP Kitchen presents a holiday recipe for rice stuffing with chestnuts. If you are in Palestine, enjoy the numerous events offered during the holiday season.

Our entire team at TWiP wishes a Merry Christmas to all who are celebrating and a healthy, prosperous, and happy new year to everyone!

Sincerely,

Tina Basem

