

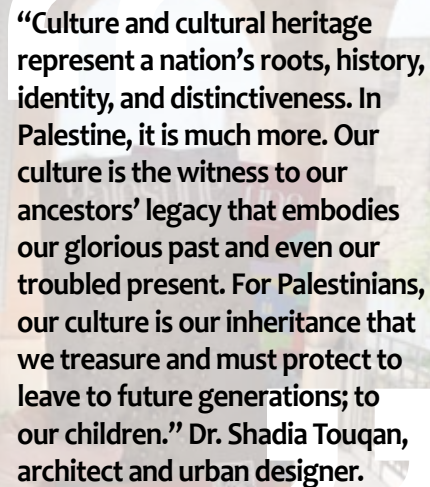


Celebrating Palestinian Knowledge, Heritage, and People



By Shatha Safi

Palestine is a place of multiple layers, stories, narratives, and histories. The protection and development of its cultural heritage is gaining increasing importance because we must not only protect Palestinian identity from the threats associated with ongoing colonization, occupation, and fragmentation but also ask ourselves what future this place can expect and how its people identify with such prospects. Cultural heritage is not only about the past, stones, and techniques but rather about narrative, know-how, connections, resources, and practices. Since 1991, RIWAQ's dream has been the documentation, protection, and development of cultural heritage in Palestine. Alongside RIWAQ, Taawon, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, and the Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation (CCHP) have been keen on preserving heritage buildings and historic centers as pillars of socioeconomic development. The protection of heritage in Palestine stands as a national duty and starts with awareness raising and community engagement, inviting the public to lead the process, on one hand, and advocate for tools, legal protection mechanisms, and official buy-in, on the other.



“Culture and cultural heritage represent a nation’s roots, history, identity, and distinctiveness. In Palestine, it is much more. Our culture is the witness to our ancestors’ legacy that embodies our glorious past and even our troubled present. For Palestinians, our culture is our inheritance that we treasure and must protect to leave to future generations; to our children.” Dr. Shadia Touqan, architect and urban designer.

Cultural heritage stands not only as a witness to the past but also as a vital tool to generate jobs for Palestinians through the restoration process and through operating the restored buildings and centers. In addition, when preserved, restored, and well interpreted, cultural heritage sites provide the infrastructure for tourism, empowering local identity and practices that include folkloric

Testimonies

I just wanted to say thank you to you and your team for a wonderful issue on Palestinian poetry and poets. I binge-read, if you will, the issue over the weekend, and I feel so inspired and energized ... just what I needed. I cannot thank you and the *TWiP* team enough!

*Hasheemah Afaneh
Al-Quds, Palestine*

TWiP Celebrates **300** Issues



dances such as *dabke*, theater and music performances, local cuisine, storytelling, and more. The process of protection and regeneration of cultural heritage serves to instill in the younger generations a knowledge and love of this asset.

Mainstreaming cultural heritage is crucial not only in order to raise awareness and interest in cultural heritage but also to emphasize a sense of ownership of its heritage among the public. This can be expressed by learning about heritage, getting involved in its preservation, and uncovering its values. Eventually, such engagement and efforts will lead to more active community involvement in the processes of heritage protection and development.

Researching, producing, and transferring knowledge about cultural heritage and the efforts made to preserve it are key elements in RIWAQ's work. Sharing this aim and process, TWiP has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge about cultural heritage. It is always enjoyable to find the magazine in restaurants, coffee shops, institutions, and online! Grab your copy and read it.

This Week in Palestine (TWiP) creatively stands at the forefront in such endeavors because it contributes to awareness-raising efforts regarding cultural heritage by providing a platform for readers, visitors, tourists, and the general public. Many articles have enabled *TWiP* readers to learn more about various concerns regarding cultural heritage. In many of *TWiP*'s issues, heritage organizations, practitioners, and activities were given space to document and share their work and experiences. *TWiP* has covered a variety of topics on cultural heritage, such as mapping, documentation, restoration projects, the interventions of cultural heritage organizations, legislation and protection mechanisms, narratives, and many others. Many actors have shared their perspectives and experiences, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the UNESCO office in Ramallah, the UNDP, and others. *TWiP* offers inclusive, accessible material that covers a wide spectrum of topics and sites, including monumental and holy places such as the old cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus, Gaza, and Bethlehem, as well as many other locations in rural Palestine. Furthermore, *TWiP* has featured articles about historical Palestine and touched on the geography beyond the colonial borders and limits, such as Haifa, Yaffa, Akka, and more.

TWiP has successfully provided an inclusive platform where NGOs, individuals, and governmental and international organizations can share articles. The magazine thus contributes to advocacy for cultural heritage protection and promotes its preservation and development as a national project. Spreading the word about the emerging sector of cultural heritage protection contributes to bringing more actors, attention, and resources to the process.

Over the past 299 issues of *This Week in Palestine*, a handy, beautifully designed Palestinian magazine, layers upon layers of articles, visuals, and maps have focused on cultural heritage. This focus has created a generous database of articles written by practitioners and researchers that opens new windows and links for knowledge exchange. This database constitutes a series of articles and contributions that have stimulated further research and exploration.

The "Where to Go" section takes the reader to historic places by offering an overview that encourages mobility and exploration and has introduced *TWiP* readers to many historical centers. Buildings and natural sites have been presented for broad audiences to tour and explore. The combination of historical and architectural value with social and community practices has brought more attention to the sites and increased the offerings to tourists and their guides. The magazine has also provided space for youth and emerging initiatives in heritage protection, documentation, and community mobilization, enabling them to promote their work and increasing their exposure among partners and supporters in the field.

TWiP surely leaves readers with curiosity to learn more, visit, and engage at their own pace and in their own ways. Providing links and naming people, organizations, and initiatives fosters new possibilities. As we celebrate 300 issues of *This Week in Palestine*, it's worth mentioning that the magazine itself is a monthly celebration of Palestinian knowledge, heritage, and people.

Shatha Safi is an architect who currently serves as the director of Riwaq. She joined Riwaq in 2008 after receiving a BSc in architectural engineering from Birzeit University and an MA in world heritage and cultural projects for development from ITILO, Turin, Italy. She has been leading and working on several projects, including the rehabilitation projects of Beit Iksa, Hajjah, Birzeit, and Qalandia. She is interested in the cultural landscape and community involvement.

SCAN
TO SHARE



Testimonies

BIG VOTE of DEEP APPRECIATION.

This issue makes me proud to be a Palestinian, waiting for the day that our people will be free and independent, leaving a bigger mark on the Arab world and indeed the whole world.

Warm congratulations and all good wishes.

*Rizek and Alice Abushar
California, USA*