

The archaeological and historical heritage of Palestine is under a constant and everyday heavier threat, due to the political situation, the widespread building activities, including looting and bulldozing of sites, tombs, and monuments in general.

For this reason, Rome "La Sapienza" Expedition to Palestine, in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (MOTA-DACH) of the Palestinian National Authority, started a project aimed at creating a **comprehensive databank of the archaeological and historic-cultural sites in the Palestinian Territories**

: the

Project PADIS,

Palestine Archaeological Databank & Information System

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AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The Project PADIS is jointly undertaken by Rome "La Sapienza" Expedition to Palestine and the Palestinian Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (MOTA-DACH), and it is devoted to the **registration** and **steady monitoring** of the archaeological and historical-cultural sites in the Jericho Oasis and in the West Bank.

It has been activated with the main aim to ensure a **complete safeguard** of all sites and monuments against the strong modern urban development and political fragmentation of the territory; from the other hand, it intends to preserve the scientific information in a very complex political context, and to offer a valid

scientific tool

to scholars, technicians and institutions operating in the area, for the sites monitoring, archaeological investigation and cultural valorization.

THE DATABANK

The PADIS on-line databank offers a **coherent organization of archaeological and topographical data**, GIS-referenced, including geolocation, satellite images, and topographic maps. It provides also full scientific information on archaeological sites and monuments with

updated bibliographic references

, precise toponymic identifications, and data on the state of preservation of each site, to be updated by the staff working in the field in order to constantly monitor these

cultural-historical-archaeological deposits.

Data collected in the databank are arranged both through geographical areas, alphabetical lists, type of monuments, and archaeological and historical periods, and they are accessible in different ways by means of simple ("Search for a Site") and advanced search forms (for periods, areas, monuments or any key-word).

The project foresees the direct involvement of archaeologists, technicians and personnel of local authorities, which directly online, by assigning passwords to access the system, will be able to enter and continuously update the data collected during the upgrading of the research.

PADIS I/JERICHO OASIS

The Project PADIS has achieved its first result with the publication of the catalogue of the historical-cultural and archaeological sites of the Jericho Oasis. The catalogue of sites has been entrusted to both the on-line databank (in the PADIS website), and the volume *Archaeological Heritage in the Jericho Oasis. A systematic catalogue of archaeological sites for the sake of their protection and cultural valorisation*

- ROSAPAT 07, where in addition to a series of essays that illustrate the main archaeological evidences and historical events of the Oasis, the catalogue of the 103 sites and monuments of the Jericho area is published with maps, aerial photos and bibliographic references. The catalogue offers a precise identification of toponyms and a preliminary documentation of each site aimed at protecting and enhancing a World Heritage which deserves the highest consideration.

Among the archaeological and historical places included in the PADIS I/Jericho Oasis, in addition to the worldwide known ancient evidences of Tell es-Sultan, the following sites have to be mentioned: the winter palaces of King Herod at Tulul Abu el-'Alayiq, and the aqueducts that from the springs of the Wadi Qelt and 'Ain el-Auja fed these complexes; the monastery of the Mount of Temptations, and the several Byzantine monuments (churches, monasteries and hermitages); the two ancient synagogues of 'Ain Duk and Shahwan; and the amazing Palace of the Umayyad Caliph Hisham at Khirbet el-Mafjar, with its large baths decorated with beautiful mosaics.