

Palästina-Reise : Von Beersheba über Jerusalem zum Heiligtum der Kraniche

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Initiator des Reiseprojekts ist Thomas Staubli, Herausgeber des arabisch-englischen ethnographischen Werks über die Sitten und das Alltagsleben der Palästinenser, insbesondere vor der Nakba. Die GSP hat zur Verwirklichung des Werks finanziell beigetragen, und der Pastor der lutherischen Weihnachtskirche in Bethlehem, Mitri Raheb, würdigt es mit einer heissen Empfehlung.

Der Palästina-Reisende trifft dieses Erbe auch heute noch an.

Die Reise ist aber nicht in erster Linie ethnographisch ausgerichtet. Wir besuchen heilige Orte, welche uns an den Anfang der Schöpfungsgeschichte führen (Abraham), und welche im Laufe der Zeit bald von Juden, bald von Christen, bald von Muslimen betreut wurden. Die Archäologie, verbunden mit theologischen Auslegungen, wird uns Zugang zu Mediationen geben, welche weit über den politischen Überlegungen stehen.

Den ethnographischen Aspekt deckt der Besuch des *Murad Castle Museum for Palestinian Heritage* in al-Khader (Bethlehem) ab.

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Murad Castle Museum for Palestinian Heritage

The Murad Castle Museum for Archaeology and Palestinian Heritage – also named Solomon Pools Museum – is located across Solomon's Pools in al-Khader, a suburb of Bethlehem governed by the Palestinian National Authority. Those who expect to find a wealth of antiquities will be disappointed – you can see those in the shape of the above mentioned pools right across the street. (By the way, the name "Solomon's Pools" is a misnomer, since they were created around 900 years after Solomon's time by the Hasmoneans or Herod the Great, as part of a complex water system supplying water to Jerusalem and the Temple.)

However, those of you interested in the Palestinian culture will hit a goldmine. Over a period of several decades curator Ishaq Al-Hroub himself collected the many and diverse artifacts shown in the museum. He travelled the region as a pedlar and bought and sold goods. Most of the items on display are typical tools and items used by local craftsmen and fellahin (peasants or farmers). Of particular value are the traditional costumes and headdresses of women. One can also notice the cultural diversity of the population. Christian necklaces are displayed alongside Muslim necklaces whose differences can easily escape the untrained eye. This leads us to the most important part of the exhibit: Ishaq Al-Hroub. During his guidance through the museum (in excellent English), Mr. Al-Hroub explains the items, tells their stories, and often gives a hands-on display of their use, in order to turn those inanimate objects into a living story. His combination of profound knowledge with his enthusiasm so captivated us that we totally lost track of the time. It was well worth it!

The entrance fee to both the Solomon Pools and the Museum is 10 Shekel. If you visit Bethlehem and like to learn more about the local culture and history, take some time to visit this little jewel of a museum.