

Tourism and the Natural and Built Environments in Gadara

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Abstract: Although tourism is often promoted as a harmless endeavour, it appears that the environmental impacts associated with it, regardless of severity, are inevitable. Using sources such as informal interviews, participant observation, literature, and data from government entities, this research set out to determine the environmental impacts of tourism on the heritage site of Gadara in northwest Jordan. The findings of this research revealed that the negatives of tourism on the natural and built environment outweigh the benefits at Gadara. Environmentally, while tourism in Gadara encouraged the conservation of the ancient tangible heritage, this research uncovered other harmful environmental consequences that occurred due to practices by officials and both domestic and Arab visitors including, but not limited to, leaving garbage and non-biodegradable trash, vandalism, traffic congestion, noise, and construction activities. This article will serve as a springboard for stakeholders to recognize the opportunities and threats tourism poses to the conservation of heritage and the environment.

Keywords: *environmental impact, tourism, cultural heritage, degradation, Gadara, Jordan*

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