



Popular Beliefs in the Celebrations Associated with Saint Demiana as One of the Intangible Cultural Tourism Components in Egypt

The Celebration of St. Demiana in Dakahlia Governorate as a Case Study

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Abstract

The history of Saint Demiana Monastery in Belqas, Dakahlia Governorate, dates back to the Fourth Century AD. The church of St. Demiana was rebuilt and inaugurated on 12th of Bashans (May 20, 744 AD), and her body was buried with the forty virgins. Currently, the monastery includes seven churches. St. Demiana was martyred by the soldiers of Diocletian on 13th of Tuba (January 21), as the Egyptian churches celebrate this occasion on this day every year. The main celebration of the saint's Mawlid is held during the period from May 10-20 (2-12 Bashans), the consecration anniversary of St. Demiana's Church.

The research presents an account of the popular and religious celebrations associated with Saint Demiana, in addition to a detailed picture of such these practices that are in relation to the consecration of St. Demiana's Church at Belqas as a case study.

The main objective of this research is shedding lights on the folks' beliefs and practices of St. Demiana's celebration as intangible cultural heritage resources, along with putting the monastery on the religious cultural tourism map of Egypt. Moreover, the researcher designed a tourist itinerary including the monastery and its celebrations, and other nearby archaeological, cultural and tourist attractions, such as the Church of the Virgin Mary and Martyr Abanoub in Samanoud, Gharbia Governorate, which will contribute greatly to creating a tourism attraction in the center of the Delta region.

Keywords: Popular Beliefs ; Saints Mawlid ; Saint Demiana ; Cultural Heritage Tourism ; Dakahlia Governorate

Introduction

Dakahlia Governorate is one of the governorates of Lower Egypt. It occupies the northeastern part of the Delta region in Egypt, bordered to the north by Damietta Governorate, to the south by Qalyubia Governorate, to the east by Sharkia Governorate, and to the west by the Gharbia and Kafr El-Sheikh governorates. Its capital is the city of Mansoura.¹ It is 3,459 km², and its population was 7,294,502 in 2022.²

The governorate consists of 15 centers and cities, the most important of which are the cities of Al-Kurdi, Nabaruh, and Gamasa, which are characterized by industrial, commercial and service activity.³ The city of Belqas is located on the northwestern side of the governorate (Map No. 1). The city of Belqas is the largest city in Dakahlia. The monastery of St. Demiana is located 12 km north of Belqas.⁴



Figure (1): A Map Showing the Cities of Dakahlia Governorate and the Location of it to the Neighboring Governorates.

(<https://2u.pw/ahhj5m> , <https://2u.pw/dZJgyD> - Accessed on: 20/12/2022, 12:50)

Popular celebrations are considered one of the most important beliefs of folklore in Egypt, so the mawlid celebration has become a well-established tradition dating back to the era of ancient Egyptian civilization, and an extension of the celebrations of the cities and villages of ancient Egypt with their gods and goddesses, that were celebrated every year as the protector those villages and symbol of them.

After the introduction of Christianity then Islam came to Egypt, the Egyptians replaced the ancient gods and goddesses with saints and walis, considering them as symbols for their villages and cities.

¹ رضا محمد هلال(2004). سلسلة المحافظات المصرية – محافظة الدقهلية، مركز الدراسات السياسية والإستراتيجية، مطابع الأهرام التجارية، القاهرة، ص 13.

² <https://2u.pw/bD70k> – Accessed on 12/8/2023, 12:22.

³ <https://2u.pw/bD70k> – Accessed on 12/8/2023, 14:46.

⁴ رضا محمد هلال، المرجع السابق، ص 13، 23.

Most of time, a lot of villages were built around a tomb of a saint or Wali as a source of protection and blessing.¹

Most Egyptian villages and cities have a saint or wali that his/her birthday is celebrated every year. This mawlid is considered the main celebration that most Egyptians wait annually. In many cases, the Christians and Muslims participate in the celebrations of the birth day of the saint or wali of their towns, regardless of their religion. There are many similarities between the rituals and customs of celebrating the mawlid of saints and walis.²

These saints derive their great position they occupy in the hearts of their followers because of what is narrated about their attitudes and their confrontation with injustice during their lives and martyrdom.

Mawlid perform many functions, as they strengthen the belief in the saints and support its continuity through successive generations, and work on the bonding of groups and the meeting of friends. Mawlid are considered occasions for recreation and enjoyment of free time, and an opportunity for the prosperity of commercial and economic activities. Also, the popular celebrations in the Coptic mawlid in Egypt are a large arena for many Forms of folk artistry creativity of the Copts.³

For this reason, this topic was dealt for shedding light on the mawlid of Saint Demiana and its popular and religious manifestations as one of the most important components of the intangible cultural heritage in Egypt that will result in increasing the tourism traffic to Dakahlia Governorate and creating as a tourist attraction in the middle of Delta region.

Research Problem

The hypothesis of the study is represented in the fact that the Monastery of Saint Demiana in Belqas enjoys tourism potentials, the most important of which is the diversity of manifestations of popular beliefs associated with the mawlid of Saint Demiana as one of the intangible cultural heritage tourism resources. Despite, these potentials were not utilized and invested in tourism, and the monastery is not included on the cultural and religious tourism map of Egypt.

Research Importance

¹ Seddik, Raghda Y. & Fouad, Randa A. A., (2020) .The celebration of Mulid Sidi al Iryan (Saint Barsum the Naked) from an intangible Cultural Heritage Perspective, "Journal of Association of Arab universities for Tourism and Hospitality (JAAUTH) vol. 19, No.2, p 55.

داوود مكرم.(2015). الموالد القبطية: دراسة ميدانية في المُعتقدات الشعبية، القاهرة، الهيئة العامة للكتاب، ص 17؛ مراد كامل، حضارة مصر في العصر القبطي، دار العالم العربي، القاهرة، ٢٠١٦، ص ١٩٠؛ أشرف أيوب معوض، الموالد القبطية (مولد الأنبا شنودة نموذجاً)، ط١، مكتبة الإسكندرية، ص 19-20؛ عصام ستاتي، مُقدمة في الفلكلور القبطي، الهيئة العامة لقصور الثقافة، 2010، ص 25-26.

² Seddik, Raghda Y. & Fouad, Randa A. A., (2020) The celebration of Mulid Sidi al Iryan (Saint Barsum the Naked) from an intangible Cultural Heritage Perspective, "Journal of Association of Arab universities for Tourism and Hospitality (JAAUTH) vol. 19, No.2, p 55.

عرفة عبده علي(1995). موالد مصر المحروسة، القاهرة، عين للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية، ص 12-13؛ عصام ستاتي، المرجع السابق، ص 30-31؛ داوود مكرم، المرجع السابق، 49.

³ سعاد عثمان أحمد(1981). النظرية الوظيفية في دراسة التراث الشعبي: دراسة ميدانية لتكريم الأولياء في المجتمع المصري، رسالة ماجستير، جامعة عين شمس، ص 261؛ محمد الجوهري، دراسات في علم الفلكلور، الإسكندرية، دار المعرفة الجامعية، ص 44؛ أشرف أيوب معوض، مرجع سابق، ص 22-23، ص 42؛ مراد كامل، مرجع سابق، 190؛ داوود مكرم، المرجع السابق، ص 21.

1. Shedding light on the different manifestations of the popular beliefs related to the celebrations of Saint Demiana as one of the intangible heritage cultural tourism resources in Egypt.
2. Designing a tourist route or itinerary including the monastery and its annual celebrations with other nearby archaeological, cultural and tourist attractions, such as the Church of the Virgin Mary and the martyr Abanoub in Samanoud, Gharbia Governorate.
3. Inclusion of Saint Demiana's celebrations on Egypt's tourist map and creating a tourist attraction in the center of the Delta region.

Research Methodology

The research is a cultural touristic study. It relies on the historical descriptive approach that depends on the scientific analytical method for all data and information, along with making field studies to Saint Demiana's monastery and participating in the folks' celebrations associated to the saint in Belqas, in addition to having interviews and meetings with the monastery's priests and the visitors in order to reach to the desired results and proposals.

Heritage

UNESCO¹ recognized the importance of heritage, considering it "the legacy of the ancestors that was passed on to us".² Therefore, in 1972 AD, UNESCO signed an international treaty to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage to preserve the heritage of different peoples³, which confirms the importance of heritage in transmitting different messages, meanings, and historical,

¹ It is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, founded in (1945), and it consists of 193 member states. It is currently headquartered in Paris. The two governing bodies of the Organization, consisting of the General Conference and the Executive Board, meet regularly to ensure the smooth functioning of the Organization and to set its priorities and define the objectives of the Secretariat, which is chaired by the Director-General. Its official website is www.unesco.org.

² Chrisstou, Evangelos,(2005). Heritage and Cultural Tourism: A marketing- focused approach, International Cultural Tourism: Management Implications and Cases, Elsevier Butterworth- Heinemann, London, p.4.; Mcmanus, Ruth, "Heritage and Tourism in Ireland- an unholy alliance?", Irish Geography30, No.2, 1997, p. 90.; Phosikham, Thongmala, Heritage Sites As Tourist Attractions: A Case Study of Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Msc. Thesis, Lincoln University, New Zealand, 2010, p.21.; Pothof, Rolf , Urban Heritage Tourism A Case Study Of Dubrovnik, Msc. diss., European Tourism Management, Bournemouth University, UK, 2006, p.6.; Zappel, Heather; Hall,C. Michael, Arts and Heritage Tourism, Special Interest Tourism, Halsted press, London, 1992, p.47.;

إسلام عاصم عبد الكريم بيومي،(2013). دور العمانر الدينية في إثراء سياحة التراث دراسة عن العمانر الدينية الإسلامية في مدينة الإسكندرية من 1882 إلى 1952، رسالة دكتوراه غير منشورة، قسم الإرشاد السياحي، كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة الإسكندرية، ص1؛ دالين ج. تيموثي وستيفن و. بويد، السياحة التراثية، ترجمة عبد الناصر بن عبد الرحمن الزهراني، جامعة الملك سعود، الرياض، 2011، ص2؛ نسرين رفيق اللحام، التخطيط السياحي للمناطق التراثية باستخدام تقنية تقييم الآثار البيئية، دار النيل، القاهرة، 2007، ص31.

³ Schackley, Myra, (1998).World Cultural Heritage Sites, Visitor Management case studies From World Heritage Sites, Oxford, Butterworth- Heinemann , p.2.

إسلام عاصم عبد الكريم بيومي،(2005). المرجع السابق، ص1؛ دالين ج. تيموثي وستيفن و. بويد، المرجع السابق، ص130؛ جمال عليان، الحفاظ على التراث الثقافي: نحو مدرسة عربية للحفاظ على التراث الثقافي وإدارته، المجلس الوطني للثقافة والفنون والآداب، الكويت، ص59.

artistic, aesthetic, political, religious, societal, spiritual, scientific, natural values and facts that contribute to understanding the life of peoples.¹

Thus, it becomes clear that heritage represents the identity of society, which every society must preserve by preserving its heritage. Heritage represents the living memory of the individual and society, and the identity through which peoples can get to know each other.²

It can be concluded that heritage represents one of the means of cultural exchange between peoples and developing of mutual understanding between cultures. Therefore, countries began to pay more attention for preserving their heritage for the present and future generations, and UNESCO considered heritage as a global property. In the same time, heritage tourism has emerged due to the world's awareness of the value and importance of heritage, and many attempts have begun to benefit from and invest in it.³

Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism can be defined as visiting historical sites, monuments, and natural landscapes in a country, with a focus mainly on learning and gaining experience, and getting acquainted with the traditions, customs, religious practices and rituals, and cultural celebrations of the local community in this country. Others also indicate that heritage tourism includes visiting each of the areas that have some tangible legacies and intangible intellectual and emotional legacies represented in the values of the local community, its customs and traditions, etc. Heritage tourism includes two types as follows:

- Natural Heritage Tourism: It can be defined as visiting natural heritage areas such as natural or water reserves of ecological importance, geological and natural formations, picturesque sites of aesthetic value, etc.
- Cultural Heritage Tourism: It is a tourism pattern that aims at identifying the ways of living of local communities that have been developed and passed on through generations. Cultural heritage tourism includes visiting two components of the heritage areas: tangible cultural heritage, which is represented in monuments and archaeological areas, museums, antiquities and other tangible heritage sites; intangible cultural heritage, which is represented in folklore, music, traditions, local customs and religious rites, celebrations, etc.⁴ This applies to the celebrations of the Saint Demiana's monastery in Belqas, on which the research will tackle.

¹ أحمد إبراهيم عطية و عبد الحميد الكفافي، (2003). حماية وصيانة التراث الأثري، دار الفجر للنشر والتوزيع، القاهرة، ص 64-69؛ جمال عليان، المرجع نفسه، ص 57،233.

² جمال عليان، المرجع السابق، ص71.

³ إسلام عاصم عبد الكريم بيومي، مرجع سابق، ص 2.

⁴ محمد سليمان عبد الحميد، (2014). سياحة التراث في مصر وآليات إدراجها على الخريطة السياحية "دراسة بالتطبيق على سانت كاترين بسيناء"، مجلة البحوث السياحية، أكتوبر، ص 92.

Popular Beliefs

They are the beliefs that the people believe in regarding the supernatural world. The search for the origins of popular beliefs is not of major importance, as these beliefs may have emanated from the souls of the people through revelation, vision, or inspiration, or they were originally religious beliefs transformed in the hearts of people to other new forms due to the ancient heritage latent over generations.¹

Popular beliefs are firmly rooted in the hearts of the Egyptians, even before the emergence of monotheistic religions, as evidenced by Herodotus' saying, "The Egyptians were the most religious people. They thought that everything in the world belonged to the gods who are the source of all good. At all times, they can interfere in the affairs of human beings".he pious think that saint T² or wali is a source of salvation, protection, and justice, whether for his region or for his community. As a result, they perform rituals and rituals out of necessity.³

Saints

In Christianity, saint is one of the people of Paradise, and the believer is one of the people of the earth. The Orthodox and the Catholics believe that the believers have the right to ask the saints for their intercession. It is customary for a Christian child to be given the name of a saint at baptism interceding for him throughout his life. In the past, the name of "saint" was given to every Christian, then this designation was restricted to those who met special conditions of a spiritual life, and performed miracles during life or after death. The church has lists of saints, only those who meet these conditions are included.⁴

The rank of "holiness" in the Egyptian Church is limited to martyrs and monks, and the central authority of Christians, represented by the Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch, has the right to ratify the declaration of the new saints.⁵

Mawlid

Mawlid can be defined as a celebration of the birthday of a saint, the day of the martyrdom of a saint, or the anniversary of the inauguration of his church. The duration of the festivities ranges from one to two weeks, and the Mawlid usually ends with a final night called "The Great Night" which is the main night of the celebration.⁶

¹ محمد الجوهري، (1993). الدراسة العلمية للمعتقدات الشعبية، الجزء الثاني من دليل العمل الميداني لجامعي التراث الشعبي، دار المعرفة الجامعية، الإسكندرية، ص 28-29.

² بيبير مونتيه، (1965). الحياة اليومية في مصر في عصر الرعامسة، ترجمة: - عزيز مرقس منصور، دار المصرية للتأليف والترجمة، القاهرة، ص ٣٧١.

³ إبراهيم عبد العليم حنفي، (2013). تحت القبة شيخ، حكايات الأولياء، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة، ص 88.

⁴ Meri, Josef Waleed, (2015). The cult of Saints and Pilgrimage, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar., P 500-503.

⁵ عرفه عبده على، (1995). موالد مصر المحروسة، عين للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية، القاهرة، ص 71.

⁶ فاروق أحمد مصطفى، (1980). دراسات في المجتمع المصري، المواد دراسة للعادات والتقاليد الشعبية في مصر، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، فرع الإسكندرية، ص 6؛ أشرف أيوب معوض، مرجع سابق، ص 20-21؛ أحمد زكي حسن محمد، المناسبات الاجتماعية القبطية في مصر الإسلامية من العصر الفاطمي حتى نهاية العصر المملوكي، رسالة ماجستير، كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة المنيا، 2017، ص 210.

The main purpose of holding a mawlid is to honor a saint or wali. It is celebrated annually in the place where the saint or wali was buried. Mawlid is not only a religious occasion, but also a social occasion for entertainment, listening to music, children's games, swings, and religious and popular dance. Also, it contributes to thriving the commercial and economic activities. The multiplicity of celebrations led to the broad popular participation, the participation of large numbers of visitors and devotees, as well as the diversity of rituals, practices and beliefs during the celebration.¹

Saints Mawlids

The Church believes that Christians do not have mawlids, but feasts for martyrs and saints. The date of these occasions determined depending on the days of the saint's death, his martyrdom, or the finding of part of his body, or building a church in his name, so one saint has more than one feast in the year, during which religious celebrations take place to honor him in all churches that bear his name. As a result, there are many such occasions that are supported by the church, which instills this belief in the conscience of Christian.²

Egypt celebrates 62 mawlids of saints and martyrs every year, such as Saint George, Saint Barsoum El-Erian, and Saint Demiana at Belqas.³

Saint Demiana Celebration

This research deals with the folk's religious celebrations associated with Saint Demiana as a high value cultural heritage recourses. These celebrations are very similar to those of Muslim Walis, due to the big number of such these celebrations and their similarity in the means of celebrating. Therefore, it is very important to set an account of churches and monasteries that hold celebrations for the Saint all over Egypt. They are about forty-two church and a monastery all around the provinces of Egypt. All of these celebrations contains only very simple religious practices and rituals, which are represented in raising prayers in the churches and reading the saint's biography in detail for following her footsteps, except for the great celebration of consecration St. Demiana's church at her monastery in Belqas on May 20, Bashans 12, which includes many cultural, artistic, social, economic and recreational activities⁴, that will be explained in detail in this research, as a case study.

Saint Demiana's Mawlids in Belqas

Celebrating the birth of St. Demiana's mawlid in Belqas, Dakahlia Governorate, is celebrated twice a year; The first time is on the thirteenth of tuba (January 21), on the anniversary of the martyrdom of saint Demiana, the second time is on the twelfth of Bashans (May 20) of each year, on the anniversary of the consecration of her church. The main celebration takes place during the period

¹ Abdelnour, Samia,(2007). Egyptian Customs and Festivals, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, p.71-72.;

فاروق أحمد مصطفى، المرجع السابق، ص 3-9.
² نيكولاس بيخمان،(2009). الموالد والتصوف في مصر، ترجمة: ر عوف مسعد، المركز القومي للترجمة، القاهرة ، ص 34-35؛ داوود مكرم، مرجع سابق، ص 54؛

Wiens, Claudia Y.(2003). Coptic life in Egypt, The American University in Cairo Press, p.33.

³ عرفة عبده عرفة،(1995) موالد مصر المحروسة بين الماضي والحاضر، عين شمس لدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية، القاهرة.

⁴ A field visit to the monastery and an interview with Dioscorus Shehata, (2022). Deputy Archdiocese of Saint Demiana Monastery on 19/5/2022.; (<https://cutt.us/hVj7c> – Accessed on: 12/4/2022, 22:15).

from May 10-20 (2-12 Bashans). The monastery receives large numbers of participants in honoring the saint religiously and popularly. This period is known popularly as “Mawlid Setna Demiana”.¹

Saint Demiana Monastery

Biography of Saint Demiana

St. Demiana was born in the third century AD. Her father, Mark, was governor of the city of Zaafarana in the Sisban Valley. His daughter, Demiana, refused marriage and devoted herself to praise and sanctification. Mark built a luxurious palace outside the city for his daughter and forty virgins of her friends who did not stop praying and fasting. During the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, her father became the governor of al-Farama. Then he was martyred because of his adherence to Christianity. Later, Diocletian sent a prince to Demiana in the city of Zaafarana asking her to leave Christianity but she refused strongly. With her adherence to Christianity, they tortured her with the most severe types of torment. She was killed with the forty virgins by Diocletian's soldiers on 13th of Tuba (January 21).²

History of the Monastery

The history of the monastery is divided into three main phases;

In the fourth century, Mark, Saint Demiana's father, built a palace outside the city of Zaafarana for his daughter to worship in with the forty virgins. After Saint Demiana's martyrdom with the forty virgins, their bodies were buried in the place where they worshiped. Later, Empress Helena³, the mother of King Constantine, built a cemetery for saint Demiana and the forty virgins and surmounted it with a church. This church was consecrated in the time of Alexandros, Pope XIX (313-326 A.D.) on 12th of Bashans who ordained as a new bishop for Al-Defrana and Al-Brollos.

¹ فاروق مصطفى، مرجع سابق، ص 6؛ مراد كامل، مرجع سابق، ص 189-190؛ أشرف أيوب معوض، مرجع سابق، ص 21-22، ص 39؛ عصام ستاتي، مرجع سابق، ص 26-27؛ عائشة شكر، موالد الأولياء والقديسين، (2022). دراسة فلكورية في الشخصية المصرية، الهيئة العامة لقصور الثقافة، القاهرة، 2022، ص 56؛

² أمير نصر، (1980). القديسة دميانة الشهيدة عصرها- حياتها- ديرها، المطبعة التجارية الحديثة، القاهرة، ص 25-56؛ سيرة الشهيدة دميانة، مطابع المعهد القبطي بالظاهر، مكتبة المحبة، القاهرة، د.ت، ص 7-35؛

Debbane· M. Nicolas,(2006). *Le Mouled de Sitti Dimiana*· Tome V III, Bulletin de la societe Sultanieh de geographie, Imprimerie de IFAO, Le Caire, 1914· pp.79-84.; Delahaye, Gilbert- Robert, *Des apparitions au couvent de Sainte Damienne rapportees par Johann Michael Vansleb*, volume LX, Etudes Coptes, ed.par A. Boud' hors J. Gascou et D. Vaillancourt, Paris, p.112.

³ Saint Helena (247-327 AD) was born in the city of al-Ruha to Christian parents around the year 247 AD. She married Constantine, king of Byzantium, in 270 AD. She is the mother of Constantine, who was the first of the Roman emperors to become a Christian, and allowed Christianity to spread in the West. Helena participated with her son Constantine in building church buildings in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Her discovery of the Holy Cross caused a movement to revive Jerusalem and encouraged tourism to it. She became a living example of the Christian empress who contributes to making the Roman Empire Christian. Also, she devoted many endowments to churches, monasteries and the poor. Then, she died in 327 AD at the age of eighty.

(القس يسطس (القس)، (2001). المسيحية في الأرض المقدسة، الخمسة قرون الأولى، القاهرة، 2010، ص 336-338).

- In the sixth century AD, during the reign of Anba Youhanna, Bishop of Burullus, the church was destroyed and uninhabited.¹

- In 744 AD, Prince Hassan bin Atahia, the governor of Egypt, the church was rebuilt with one dome and the bodies of the martyrs were buried in it, and Patriarch Khaal (46) also inaugurated it on 12th of Bashans.²

Description of the Current Monastery

The Coptic monastery is a group of religious buildings for worship, including churches and cells. The monastery also has walls, fortresses, mills, a library, a water well and an apiary. Also, it contains a Baptistry and a cemetery for the monks.³

The Monastery of St. Demiana occupies an area of two acres approximately, about 12 kilometers away from the city of Belqas. It is surrounded by a large wall with a main gate leading to a wide open courtyard that includes seven churches, namely; The main (great) church on the south side, the church of St. Mar George Al-Muzahem on the western side, the ancient church of al-Sitt Demiana that is known as the Appearance Dome Church of because Copts believe that St. Demiana appears in the form of a great light above the dome on her annual feast (Mawlid al-sit Demiana), dating back to 1974. Also, the monastery includes other four churches; the ancient Church of the Virgin, The Church of the Tomb or al-Manama that contains the body of Saint Demiana and her forty companions, the Hanging Church which dates back to 1871, and the Church of Anba Anthony that locates south of the Church of the Tomb and west of the Hanging Church.

In addition to the seven churches, there is a convent for nuns surrounded by an internal wall, and the archdiocese building to the right of the main gate. On the eastern side, there are several rooms dedicated to receiving visitors, the library and halls for movie screenings. A three-storeys building was attached to the main (great) church building, the ground floor included the baptistry building, as well as a cemetery for the bishops, the second floor is a computer center for linguistic analysis of the Bible, and the third floor is a library belonging to the diocese.⁴

¹ الأنبا فيليس (مطران الدقهلية)، مطرائية الدقهلية بين الماضي والحاضر، مطرائية الدقهلية ودير مارجرس بميت دمسيس وبلاد الشرقية، المنصورة، ص 59-61.

² اللجنة الجمعية للطقوس، (2013). السنكسار، ط2، ج2، امبريال بعابدين، القاهرة، ص220.

³ جلال أحمد أبو بكر، (2011). الفنون القبطية، مكتبة الأنجلو المصرية، القاهرة، ص 36-40.

⁴ الأنبا فيليس، مرجع سابق، ص 61-62؛ عائشة شكر، مرجع سابق، ص 54-55.

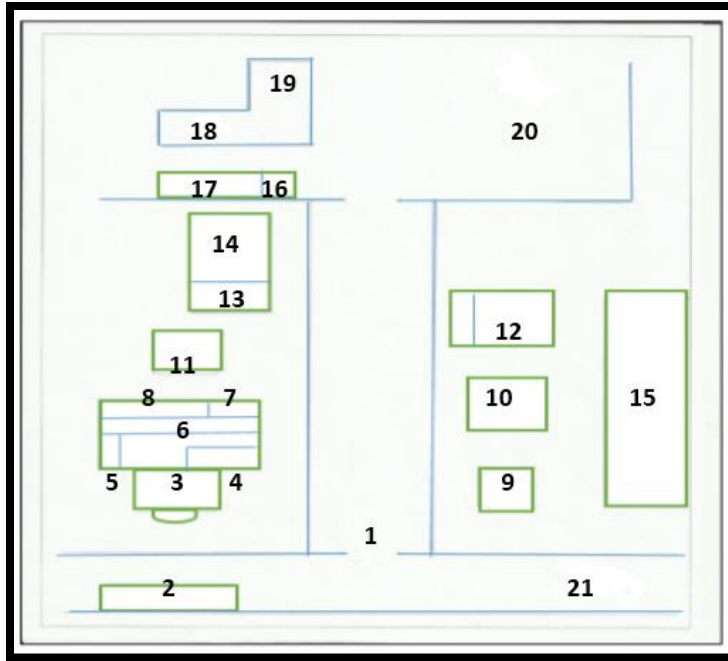


Figure (2): A Map Showing the Parts of Saint Demiana Monastery at Belqas.

(Designed by the Researcher)

1. The Main Entrance to the Monastery.
2. Guesthouses and Accommodation Buildings.
3. The Great Church of Saint Demiana.
4. The New Baptistery Building.
5. The Bishops' Tomb.
6. A Computer Center.
7. The library.
8. The Church of Mark the Governor.
9. The new Archdiocese Building.
10. The new The Consecrated Women's Building.
11. The Archaeological Church of Martyr George.
12. The New House of Retreat above the Ancient Cells.
13. The Church of the Tomb.
14. The Archaeological Church of Saint Demiana.
15. Toilets, Sales Outlets, Cafeterias and a Kitchen.
16. The Second Archaeological Church.
17. The Third Archaeological Church (currently Anba Anthony).
18. The Nuns' Cells Building and the Nuns' Art Gallery.
19. The Nuns' Work Building.
20. Monastery Farms and Apiaries.
21. The Area of the Annual Celebration (Mawlid) of Saint Demiana.



Figure (3): An External View of Saint Demiana Monastery at Belqas

It Shows the Wall and the Entrance to the Monastery Between the Two Minarets, the Great Church, and the Archdiocese Building.

Quoted from: (Monastery of the chaste Martyr Saint Demiana (churches, buildings of the monastery and handicrafts), photographed by the nuns of the monastery, published video on 3/10/2020).

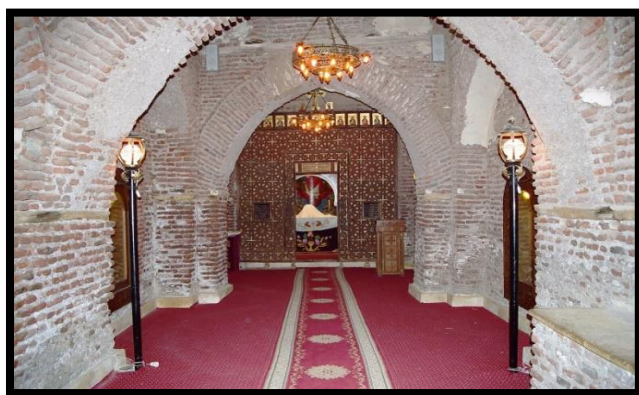


Figure (4): The Nave of Saint Demiana's Ancient Church.

Quoted from: (Monastery of the chaste Martyr Saint Demiana (churches, buildings of the monastery and handicrafts), photographed by the nuns of the monastery, published video on 3/10/2020).



Figure (5): Saint Anthony Church (the Second and Third Ancient Churches).

نقلاً من: (ميرى مجدى أنور، الآثار المرتبطة برحلة العائلة المقدسة فى مصر بما تحويه من أبقونات وجداريات دراسة حضارية أثرية سياحية، رسالة دكتوراه غير منشورة، كلية السياحة والفنادق، قسم الارشاد السياحى، جامعة الإسكندرية، 2011، شكل134).

The Popular Beliefs of Saint Demiana's Celebrations

The popular belief is based on the fact that the saint responds only those who truly believe in him and celebrate him and burn his candles.¹

Preparations of celebrating the mawlid of St. Demiana in Belqas start from the beginning of May. Christians pitch tents around the monastery and stay there for ten days (Fig. 6), while others prefer to reside in buildings belong to the monastery.

Swings and markets are set up for selling clothes, chickpeas, sweets, children's toys, medals, icons of saints and Christian symbols. Also, some shops are set up for preparing and selling different kinds of drinks and foods. (Fig. 7). Moreover, making 'washm' or tattoos is one of the most popular

¹ محمد غنيم، و سوزان يوسف، (2007). المعتقدات والأداء التلقائي في موالد الأولياء والقديسين، الجزء الثانى، موالد القديسين، المركز القومي للمسرح والموسيقى والفنون الشعبية، وزارة الثقافة، القاهرة، ص 133.

practices in the celebration (Fig. 8), where celebrants can choose a specific symbol, sign, picture, or word to be made on their bodies¹.

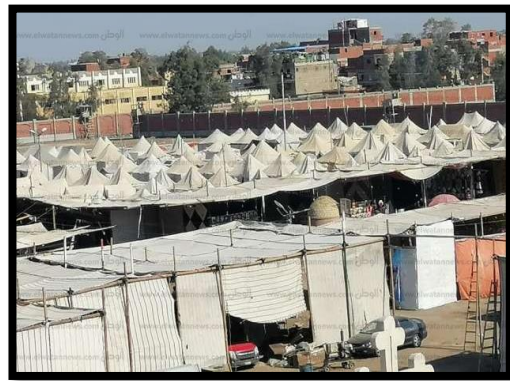


Figure (6): The Tents Around the Monastery During Saint Demiana’s Celebration.

Quoted from: (Monastery of the chaste Martyr Saint Demiana (churches, buildings of the monastery and handicrafts), photographed by the nuns of the monastery, published video on 3/10/2020).



¹ A field visit to the monastery and an interview with Dioscorus Shehata, Deputy Archdiocese of Saint Demiana Monastery on 19/5/2022.



Figure (7): The Vendors of Chickpeas, Different Kinds of Sweets, Children's Toys, Clothes and Icons in Saint Demiana's Celebration.

(By the Researcher)

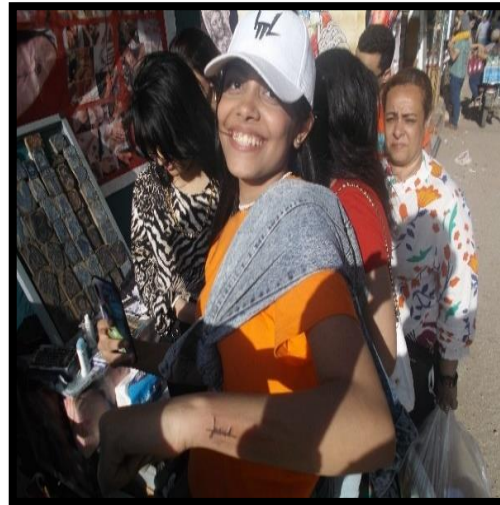


Figure (8): Making Tatoos.

(By the Researcher)

The celebrants of St. Demiana's celebration are from different social classes and age stages including the elderly, the middle-aged, the youth and children as well. There are large numbers of Muslims visit the monastery and participate in the several manifestations of the celebration that entirely assure the real unity of the popular beliefs, in addition to the official visits and participation of senior officials of Dakahlia governorate in this folks' occasion.(Fig. 9) ¹

¹ A field visit to the monastery and an interview with Dioscorus Shehata, Deputy Archdiocese of Saint Demiana Monastery on 18/5/2023.



Figure (9): Dr. Ayman Gomaa, Governor of Dakahlia Participates in the Official Celebration of the Consecration of Saint Demiana Church in Al-Barari on May 18, 2023.

(<https://2u.pw/NGn5WCu> - Accessed on 9/8/2023, 23:10)

There are many reasons and motives of participation in this celebration. Some celebrants participate for the purpose of healing and treatment, to solve problems, or to fulfill a wish. Most of them burn candles and place vows, and some of them perform a special prayer in front of the icons of Saint Demiana, or write their wishes on papers wrapped neatly and place them under the icons or on the tomb of Saint Demiana. The content of these wishes is a request to solve some problems, Treat of diseases, or some marriage issues¹ (Fig. 10).



Figure (10): The Tomb of Saint Demiana and the Forty Virgins.

(By the Researcher on May 17, 2023)

Masses are held every morning during the celebration period from 10 to 20 of May every year. Visitors go every day to pray in the church and recite the Holy Mysteries. Also, the celebrants visit Manama Church in order to pray, ask for forgiveness and blessing of St. Demiana.

It is worth noting that participation in the Mawlid is for many purposes, the most important of which is receiving blessings, desire for treatment, recovery from some diseases, having children,

¹ نيكولاس بيخمان، مرجع سابق، ص 109.

completion of financial deals, or the desire for social relations. Mawlid is an opportunity for entertainment, fun, and social life that cannot be provided in this way through camps.¹

A lot of vows are made by visitors to the monastery on this occasion. These vows include sacrifices, sacks of flour and grain, or sums of money. (Fig. 11)



Figure (11): Offering Vows during the Celebration in form of Grain Sacks.

(By the Researcher)

There are also many children who are baptized during the celebration. This occasion is celebrated with family and friends in a procession accompanied by music and religious songs related to St. Demiana.² (Fig. 12)



Figure (12): Celebrations of the Baptism of a Girl during Saint Demiana's Mawlid.

(By the Researcher)

¹ فاروق أحمد مصطفى، مرجع سابق، ص 207؛ أشرف أيوب معوض، مرجع سابق، ص -23، 42؛ داوود مكرم، مرجع سابق، 49.
² مركز الدراسات السياسية والإستراتيجية، تقرير الحالة الدينية، العدد الثاني، الأهرام، القاهرة، ص 336؛ نيكولاس بيخمان، مرجع سابق، ص 109.

The icon procession is one of the basic practices and manifestations of this celebration. The Processions is headed by the icon of Saint Demiana accompanied by the reciting of religious hymns in all streets around the monastery of Saint Demiana reaching the entrance of it. This icon acquires its importance of being an extraordinary image of Saint Demiana because it has a special ritual and ideological character. Before placing it in the church, the inaugural prayer is prayed over it. The icon is anointed with chrism oil and carried by a group of deacons, led by the Archbishop, and a group of deacons in their uniforms, carrying crosses and church musical instruments, and reciting hymns in a big procession. During this procession, thousands of people scramble to receive the blessings of Saint Demiana¹. Therefore, there are groups of volunteers (Al-Kashafa) affiliated with the monastery surrounding the icon, the bishop, and the deacons. (Fig. 13).

Figure (13): The Icon Procession on the Closing Night of the Celebration, 19/5/2023.

(By the Researcher)



it is believed that Mrs. Demiana appears over the dome of her tomb on the last night of the celebration (al-lila al-kebera) in the form of a dove. She also appears on the feast of her martyrdom on the 13th of Tuba (January 21) in the form of a dove or a halo of light, which is called the phenomenon of the transfiguration of St. Demiana. The celebrants spend this night waiting for the

¹ A field visit to the monastery and an interview with Dioscorus Shehata, Deputy Archdiocese of Saint Demiana Monastery on 19/5/2022.

appearance of the saint. They also write their desires and wishes on papers bearing their names and throw them on the tomb of the saint. After that, they burn candles in front of the icons of the saint for receiving blessing.¹

Tourism Employment of the Celebration

The Monastery of St. Demiana is one of the archaeological sites registered as Coptic antiquities by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities by Ministerial Resolution No. (338) of 1996. There are many visits to the monastery due to its great spiritual and religious value. Despite, the monastery is not included on the religious-cultural tourism map of Egypt.²

The main reason is the lack of a tourist map that includes this monastery and its varied celebrations as one of the cultural, heritage and religious tourism destinations and links it to some nearby tourist destinations such as the Church of the Virgin Mary and the martyr Abanoub in Samanoud, which is one of the main stations of the Holy Family's journey in Egypt. This church is only about 38.7 km² from Saint Demiana Monastery and takes about 40 minutes by bus. The development works of this site was accomplished on October 26, 2020.

Although there are no statistics related to the number of visitors to the monastery and the nationalities that visit the monastery throughout the year, Anba Dioscorus Shehata mentioned that the monastery receives annually about 250,000 visitors of different nationalities.³

The celebration of St. Demiana and its different popular rituals, practices and beliefs that take place every year can be invested as intangible cultural heritage tourism product, and also included in the map of religious cultural heritage tourism of Egypt which resulted in giving more competitive value to Egypt as a very unique cultural tourism destination.⁴ (Fig. 14)

¹ نيكولاس بيخمان، المرجع السابق، ص 36.

² سوزان السعيد، (2018). الموروث الشعبي رؤية تأويلية، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة، ص ١٥٠.

³ A field visit to the monastery and an interview with Dioscorus Shehata, Deputy Archdiocese of Saint Demiana Monastery on 19/5/2022.

⁴ Huh, Jun,(2003). Tourist satisfaction with cultural heritage sites: The Virginia Historic Triangle, Master of Science, Blacksburg, Virginia, p. 7.

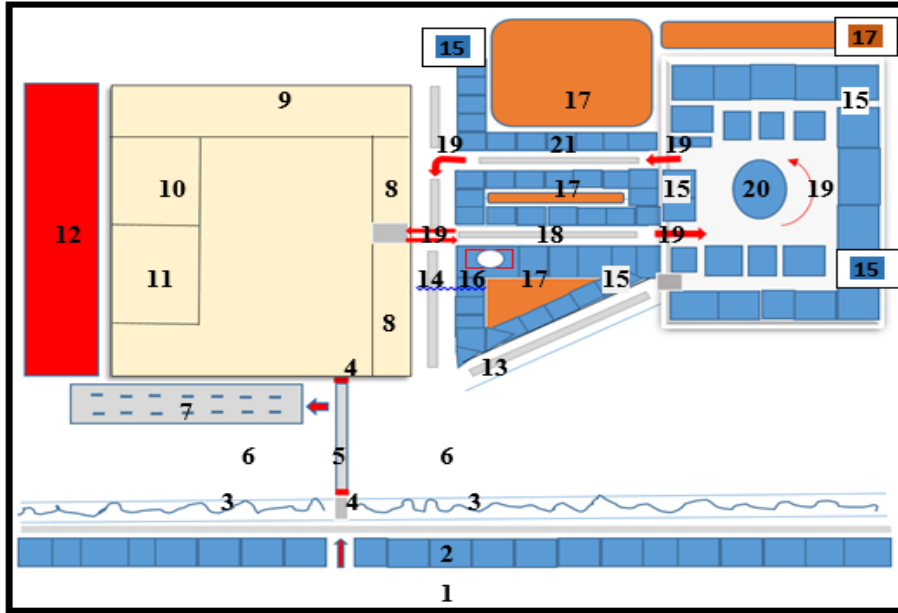


Figure (14): A Map of the Celebration Area.

(By the Researcher)

1. The Village of Al-Set Demiana.
2. Shops, Stores and Cafeterias Looking over the Celebrations Area.
3. Canal.
4. Security Gates.
5. The Way Leading to the Monastery and the Celebration Area (1.100 km).
6. Agricultural Land.
7. The Park.
8. The Hospitality Building.
9. The New Building of Monastery.
10. The Ancient Palace.
11. The New Church.
12. The Sacred Red Land.
13. Al –Magzar Al-Aly Street.
14. The Street Separating between the Monastery buildings and the Main Celebration Area.
15. Shops and Stores.
16. Café and Cinema.
17. The Celebrants' Tents.
18. Al-Souq or Al- Zafa Street.
19. The Daily Icon Procession Route on the Area of Celebration.
20. The Main Square of the Cultural, Economic and Entertainment Area.
21. Al-Set Street.

In order to maximize the tourism, effect the tangible and intangible value of the monastery and the its celebrations, tourism planning is required for this important archaeological site,

with coordination between all entities and institutions in relation to the tourism sector, and maximizing the economic and social benefit of the activities related to the monastery.¹

The importance of cultural heritage tourism is due to the fact that when the tourism activity planned and managed in a scientific way, it will contribute to increasing the tourist flow and then increasing income and creating new job opportunities.²

The researcher designed a tourist itinerary for Saint Demiana Monastery (Fig. 15) to be linked with the Church of the Virgin Mary and Martyr Abanoub in Samanoud in Gharbia Governorate, in preparation for distributing it to the foreign tourism committee affiliated to the Travel Agents Association. Then, it will be implemented with local and foreign delegations.³

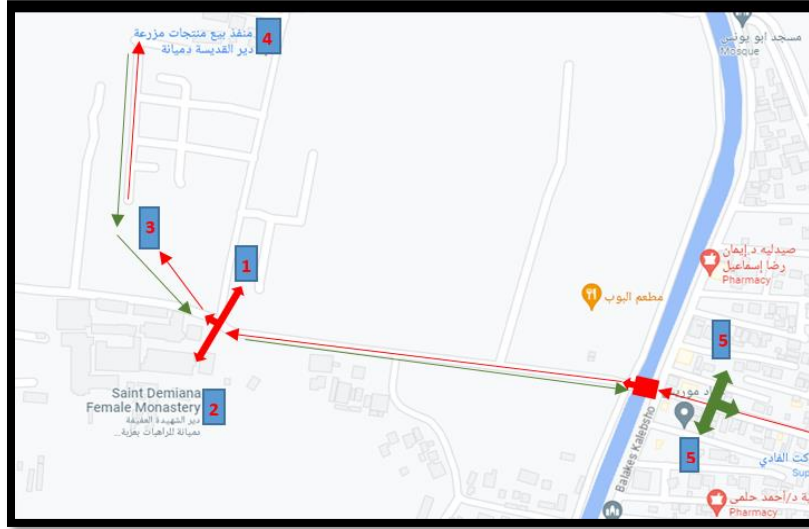


Figure (15): A Map Showing the Itinerary of Visiting Belqas Including;

(<https://2u.pw/Rqw11t> – Accessed on 4/6/2023, 18:40)

1. Visitor Center as an Arrival Point.
2. A Tour inside the Monastery.
3. Participation in the Different Manifestation of St. Demiana's Celebrations.
4. The Monastery Farm Products Outlet.
5. Visiting the Workshops and Exhibitions of Traditional Crafts Products Belqas Khamis Village.

¹ محمد حسن النقاش، (2013). تخطيط المواقع السياحية، المكتب الجامعي الحديث، الإسكندرية، ص 30-31.

² معهد التخطيط القومي، (2019). سياحة التراث الثقافي المستدامة مع التطبيق على القاهرة التاريخية، سلسلة قضايا التخطيط والتنمية، العدد (302)، القاهرة، ص 26.

³ يعمل الباحث كعضو فني بمكتب السيدة نائب السيد وزير السياحة والآثار لشئون السياحة.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. St. Demiana's great status among the Copts that appear clearly through the great folks' popular and religious celebrations, along with the large number of churches dedicated to her in Egypt, which number forty-two.
2. The Monastery of Saint Demiana is visited by large numbers of Copts throughout the year, whether from inside or outside Egypt, due to the sanctity of the monastery and the great status of Saint Demiana, in addition to the participation of large numbers of Muslims in the celebrations of the Monastery that are held annually.
3. The celebration of Saint Demiana's mawlid and the accompanying popular beliefs and manifestations are an important source for the study and documentation of the intangible cultural heritage.
4. The necessity of recording and documentation the different popular beliefs and manifestations of saint Demiana's celebrations as one of the legacies of Egyptian folk culture in accordance with the UNESCO agreement in 2003.
5. The real need to put the Monastery of St. Demiana among the priorities of tourism planning in the Delta region, due to its religious, economic, cultural and recreational importance.
6. The importance of adopting the concerned authorities, such as Dakahlia Governorate and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the tourism itinerary that was designed by the researcher for visiting the monastery and linking it to the nearby archaeological, tourist and cultural attractions, such as the Church of the Virgin Mary and the martyr Abanoub in Samanoud, Gharbia Governorate.
7. Activating the role of the Regional Authority for Tourism Promotion in Dakahlia Governorate, through cooperation with all concerned entities for putting the Monastery of Saint Demiana and its related celebrations on the map of Egyptian tourism.
8. Preparing a tourist guide about the Monastery of St. Demiana and the popular beliefs related to the mawlid in multiple languages, in addition to developing a plan for maximizing the tourism impact of the popular beliefs and several manifestations of St. Demiana's celebrations as one of cultural heritage tourism products.
9. Paying more attention to the infrastructure in the Belqas region, which includes the electricity, drainage and communication networks, in addition to the roads leading to the monastery, and providing them with the tourist guiding signs in several foreign languages.

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D. Field Visits and Interviews:

- A field visit to the monastery and an interview with Dioscorus Shehata, Deputy Archdiocese of Saint Demiana Monastery on 18/5/2023 and 19/5/2022.

المعتقدات الشعبية بالاحتفالات المرتبطة بالقديسة دميانة كأحد مقومات السياحة الثقافية اللامادية بمصر مولد القديسة دميانة بمحافظة الدقهلية نموذجاً

المستخلص

يرجع تاريخ دير القديسة دميانة بمنطقة بلقاس بمحافظة الدقهلية إلى القرن الرابع الميلادي. وقد تم إعادة بناء كنيسة القديسة دميانة وتدشينها في الثاني عشر من شهر بشنس (20 مايو عام 744م)، ودُفن بها جسدها مع الأربعين عذراء، ويضم الدير حالياً سبعة كنائس. إستشهدت القديسة دميانة على يد جنود دقلديانوس في الثالث عشر من شهر طوبة (21 يناير)، حيث تحتفل الكنائس المصرية بهذه الذكرى في هذا اليوم من كل عام. ويكون الإحتفال الرئيسي بمولد القديسة خلال الفترة من 10 – 20 مايو (2-12 بشنس) ذكرى تدشين كنيستها.

يُقدم البحث حصر للاحتفالات الشعبية والدينية المرتبطة بالقديسة دميانة بالإضافة إلى صورة تفصيلية عن الممارسات الدينية والشعبية المرتبطة بالاحتفال بمولد القديسة ببلقاس كدراسة حالة، حيث يهدف البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على المولد وما يشهده من احتفالات وطقوس ومعتقدات شعبية كأحد مقومات التراث الثقافي الغير مادي بمصر، كما يهدف البحث إلى وضع الدير على خريطة السياحة الثقافية الدينية لمصر، وتصميم مسار سياحي يربط بين الدير وإحتفالاته والمعالم الأثرية والثقافية والسياحية الأخرى القريبة مثل كنيسة السيدة العذراء والشهيد أبانوب بمنطقة سمونود بمحافظة الغربية، مما يسهم بشكل كبير في خلق نقطة جذب سياحي بوسط الدلتا.

الكلمات الدالة: المعتقدات الشعبية ; القديسين المولد ; القديسة دميانة ; سياحة التراث الثقافي ; محافظة الدقهلية