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Conseil International
des Monuments et des Sites

Report on the Joint World Heritage Centre-ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission to

Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat), Iraq (C 1130)

5 to 9 June 2011

The Ziggurat of Ashur

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- Mr. Qais Rashed, SBAH Chairman
- Ms Faeza Hussein Hussein, Director General of Restorations and Engineering, SBAH
- Mr. Saleh Mohammad Redha Al-Mufti, chef engineer, SBAH
- Mr. Omar Abd- AlRazzaq Mahmoud, Director of Samarra Archaeological Site, SBAH
- Mr. Abd Jaro, Director of Ashur Archaeological Site, SBAH

The Iraqi Prime Ministry

- Mr. Ibrahim Khalil
- Ms. Suhaila Al-Jourani

The City of Samarra

- Mr. Mahmoud Khalaf Ahmad, Mayor of Samarra

I am deeply grateful to Mr. Abd Jaro, Director of Ashur Archaeological Site and his team for their warm hospitality and all the information given during our visit. I also thank Mr. Saleh Mohammad Redha Al-Mufti, the chief engineer of the Ashur project, Mr. Omar Abd-AlRazzaq Mahmoud, and Mr. Mehdi Salih Latef for their presence and guidance during the entire period of my mission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the very short period of the mission, an important number of significant monuments and ruins of the archaeological site of Ashur were inspected according to a priority site visit program prepared in advance with Mr. Abd Mohamed Jaro, Director of Ashur Archaeological Site and SBAH representatives. However, it's important to underline that according to security and logistic problems only one day was devoted to visit Ashur and the mission was very frustrated with not being able to spend more time in order to assess the general conditions of the site, to do a precise examination of monuments and excavated sectors and to discuss with the SBAH representatives all the management and conservation issues. It is hoped that with the improvement of the security situation in Iraq, more time can be dedicated to Ashur in order to collect a maximum amount of information and to undertake a more precise assessment of the site. This report is based on previous documentation and brief field observations made during the site inspection undertaken on 07th of June 2011. It presents a review of context and problems and draw up a preliminary evaluation of the current conditions of the site followed by general recommendations for urgent decisions to be undertaken by the State Party and remedial actions towards resolving urgent threats and conservation problems.

Despite the achievement of some significant progress by installing a local site unit, securing the site and financing some urgent interventions, SBAH need to develop and to prepare a Site Management Plan and a comprehensive conservation program as a priority to guarantee the long term conservation of Ashur archaeological ruins and a sustainable development of the site.

A site office has been established at the main entrance of the site and a staff of twenty-two people has been appointed to it. This staff is mainly composed of archaeologists, administrators, site excavators and guards. The mission was pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm and the commitment of the local staff and their devotion to the site. The Ashur technical staff working under the direction of Mr. Abd Mohamed Jaro is composed mainly by three (3) archaeologists, six (6) site excavators, two (2) administrators and eleven (11) permanent guards who patrol the site as well as antiquities protection police stationed close the archaeological site.

The visit to the offices of the site unit and the consultation of the documentation and archives revealed the existence of a significant number of information and photographic records that reflect the substantial number of activities undertaken in recent years. Despite a lack of skilled resources and experience in the field of management and conservation of earthen architecture (mud brick) archaeological sites, the mission can testify to the willingness and the efforts made by the Ashur site staff to improve the conditions of the archaeological ruins and solve the urgent problems threatening the site. If provided with adequate training, this team can form the core of the future site management unit and can make an important contribution to the effectiveness of the conservation, management and development of the site. To encourage the site staff to do more and to act autonomously, it is recommended that the State Party allows for more power and legal status because the

Sherqat Archaeology Inspectorate has been created at a lower level than is recommended for World heritage Sites. The state party should also provide direct budget needed to coordinate research, conservation, interpretation and management of the site and to start immediately the preparation of the site management plan and the long term conservation program.

To understand the general condition of Ashur a first inspection of the site within its overall environment was carried out in presence of the national, regional and local representatives from SBAH in charge of the project. Due to the very limited time, the discussions engaged on site lead to the conclusion that the assessment visit should better be localized and focused on major problems affecting the site. The causes and effects of the threats affecting the ruins were briefly examined. Special efforts were made to identify the exact source of decay caused by natural conditions (river seepage, rainfall water, rising dump) and also human problems as a result of war, abandon and the recent restoration works.

The results of the site inspection revealed the existence of several factors of degradation which threaten the integrity of the archaeological site. In addition to the potential danger regarding the future construction of the Makhool Dam on the Tigris River some 40 km to the south of Ashur and its negative impact on the Tell, other major threats observed are common to mud brick archaeological sites but some are specific to the natural conditions of the Tell of Ashur. The more pernicious of these erosion factors is the continual undermining work of the Tigris River on the eastern front of the Tell and the Wadi Um-Chababit on the northern one. This erosion phenomenon is the more specific and the safeguarding of Ashur site depends on the faculty of SBAH to mitigate urgently this ongoing treat. The permanent contact of the eastern and northern base of the Tell with the two watercourses (Tigris river and Wadi Um-Chababit), the fluctuation of the river water level that can rise rapidly during the rainy season, and the high concentration of humidity are major combined destructive factors.

As a consequence, the physical integrity of the Ashur archaeological site has been severely compromised and the eastern and northern portion of the Tell constitutes a permanent danger if any action is envisaged rapidly. This permanent phenomenon is to be taken into consideration and any conservation intervention should give the priority to resolve this problem. A large study should be developed and technical solutions proposed to stop the undermining action of the watercourses and to prevent flooding of the site after the construction of the Makhool Dam.

To address this threat, the SBAH architects and engineers have prepared a technical study which proposes the construction of a retaining wall to reinforce the eastern edge of the Tell and to mitigate the undermining action caused by the water of the river. This emergency project has been funded by the Ministry of Culture (SBAH) (496 million Iraqi dinars) and the implementation works have been granted to the contractor Al Maaen Al Fudhee CO for General Contracting Ltd. The duration of the project is 180 days and the construction materials (stone and backed bricks) were already stored near the site work.

This technical study has been discussed during our site meeting and will be presented in detail by the Iraqi delegation which will take part to the 35th session of the WHC committee programmed from 19th to 29th of June in Paris.
The implementation phase has been undertaken only a few days after the reactive monitoring mission. Additional photographic documentation was received from Mr. Saleh Mohammad Redha Al-Mufti, chief engineer and responsible of the project, showing the progress of the implementation works.

It should be stressed that the Site Management Plan has not yet been prepared. This is crucial to achieve a comprehensive approach to the site conservation and development that guarantees the long-term preservation and sustainability of the site and allows for its economic development.

The conservation plan should explicit the general conservation strategies, physical conservation techniques, protection and stabilization of the Tell against the future construction of the Makhool Dam, international campaign for the salvage excavations and prospection within the area of the Makhool Dam reservoir, preventive conservation program and regular maintenance of fragile mud structures and significant monuments of Ashur archaeological site. In this regard, it's essential that the SBAH should set up national regulations for World Heritage Sites upon which the Ashur site management unit should be reinforced. This issue is of particular importance as the archaeological remains at this site are exceptional, extremely fragile and need to be preserved for future generations.

The regular maintenance of the site, the continued conservation activities are the core of the needs to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property that warranted inscription in the World Heritage List. Deficiencies and lack of implementation of the decisions of the World Heritage Committee and the delay in setting essential conditions for the conservation and management of the property creates an ongoing threatening situation.

The list of general recommendations and priority interventions to be taken immediately, proposed in this report, was discussed and prepared in close collaboration with the State Party to complement the results already achieved by the Iraqi national, regional and local institutions:

1. The major risk at the moment is the construction of a large dam on the Tigris River some 40 km to the south of the ancient city and its impact on archaeological sites constitutes a potential danger. According to information provided by the national authorities, this project has been delayed but not cancelled. It's highly recommended that the State Party should take decisions by anticipating this future danger and by proposing and implementing preventive measures. A feasibility study of the Makhool Dam had been carried out and the final design of the dam and the environmental impact assessment is underway. After the construction of the dam, the site would be flooded for certain periods of the year once the reservoir becomes operational and in any case the archaeological site would suffer from infiltration and seepage of underground water;

2. The State Party should be requested to provide as soon as possible the necessary technical information on the Makhool Dam construction and its environmental impact, as a necessary condition in order to prepare appropriate measures to be developed and implemented for the safeguarding of Ashur and its territory that will be affected by the dam construction.

3. As for other similar operations in this region, as was the case for the construction of dams on the Euphrates River in Syria and Anatolia, an international rescue campaign should be considered to safeguard more than 63 archaeological sites within the water reservoir of the Makhool Dam. These sites represent an important information source for the comprehension and the understanding of the history of Ashur over the past several millennia. The main objective of these international campaigns is to launch a systematic archaeological prospection in the entire perimeter of the reservoir that will be submerged by the water after the construction of the dam and the engagement of salvage excavations and studies.

4. The proposed SBAH project for the construction of a retaining wall to protect the eastern front of the Tell against the river erosion is underway and need to be reviewed by international experts and then validated by UNESCO to prevent any subsequent damage and disorder. This project constitutes for SBAH a real conservation challenge and a unique opportunity to develop international cooperation and expertise. However, it was stressed that the implementation steps of this project should respect international ethics and standards to avoid disturbance to archaeological deposits prior to the monitoring and documentation process.

5. The property requires international assistance to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the management planning and technical expertise for ongoing and future complex conservation project. A wide spectrum of competencies is needed in the field of world heritage site management, conservation, expertise knowledge, capacity building in mud brick archaeological sites. The development of skills in the field of mud brick conservation and construction has already been identified by the State Party as a particular priority for the implementation of the conservation, restoration and stabilization projects;

6. For the sustainability and effectiveness of the conservation and management planning of Ashur Archaeological site it is important that the site unit should be reinforced and the staff members trained as soon as possible, as per requests set forth in the Operational Guidelines;

7. The Sherqat Archaeology Inspectorate has been created at a lower level than is recommended for World heritage Sites. It is recommended that the Ashur Office is given more authority, status and responsibility as possible to implement the Site Management Plan and to permit effective relationships with other administration authorities of the regions and with other stakeholders, which might lead to a reconsideration in its listing status.

8. The existing new building constructed in 2010 is not adapted to house a multidisciplinary site staff. In this regards it is recommended to expand and to equip this building in order

to accommodate necessary activities pertaining to conservation, research and management.

9. In addition to the existing staff, it is recommended that SBAH integrates a multidisciplinary team (archaeologists, architects, conservators, administrators, masters and workers) dedicated to Samarra Archaeological City. This team should take an active role in the development of the site management plan, including comprehensive conservation and archaeological research programmes. It would subsequently coordinate the implementation of the prescribed actions and would seek to establish effective cooperation with local and international partners and with various local communities.

10. In addition to capacity building, efforts should be made to ensure that existing references and standards for practice at the international level are made available to local and national SBAH professionals to assist them in their overall national planning for World Heritage sites and national heritage;

11. Increase training activities to build local capacities in the field of preventive conservation methods and techniques and preservation of mud brick archaeological sites;

12. It is highly recommended to start the preparation of a comprehensive Site Management Plan which will provide orientation for future implementation of conservation / development activities. It is evident that this document can be meaningful and effective only if it is supported, endorsed and later implemented by all the stakeholders. It is also recommended to start the preparation of a comprehensive conservation plan giving the priority for emergency preventive activities to be implemented immediately;

13. Recognizing that building capacity for management can take time, it is recommended that while the management plan is being developed a comprehensive conservation plan, with priority emergency interventions is formulated. This should include the corrective measures that are needed to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and ensure that conditions of integrity and authenticity continue to be met. The State Party could submit an request for international assistance so that a clear strategy can be drawn up by a multidisciplinary and international group, as was recommended by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session. In addition, grants for capacity building on management and conservation should be explored.

14. Baseline documentation to record state of conservation and interventions is needed. A strong program of research and documentation is required to set a historical and technical database to substantiate interventions and actions to be taken in the future. This should include a general site level condition survey and documentation of each monument within the Samarra Archaeological City including architectural plans. Archaeological cleanings and excavations can be proposed as part of the documentation process. Architectural and topographical survey will include the standing monuments as

well as the excavated zones and ruins. Archaeological, historical, and architectural documentation and archives (both domestic and international) need to be collected. It is also important to better understand the previous SBAH reconstruction and restoration campaigns that have taken place at the site since 1970´s;

15. In parallel to the construction of the protective wall along the east front of the Tell, it is highly recommended to propose and undertake an additional preventive conservation programme to reduce the fast of erosion affecting the Ziggurat, the palaces and temples. This can include site cleaning, removal of spoil heaps, drainage, backfilling, temporary stabilization, wall capping and sacrificial layers to protect the more exposed part of structures. This program can be implemented immediately with very limited intervention on the original fabric;

16. With the improvement of the security situation in Iraq and to anticipate the development of tourism particular attention should also be paid to the preparation of the interpretation plan of the Ashur archaeological site to ensure the understanding of the site's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

17. Considering the continual damage and the poor condition of the site, and taking into consideration the potential threat of the Makhool Dam project mentioned in previous reports, the national and local authorities request the World Heritage Committee to maintain the site of Ashur on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

Inscription history

The ancient city of Ashur is the first capital of the Assyrian empire and the religious centre of Assyria, the core of which is located between Ashur, Nineveh and Erbil. The city of is located on the Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia in a specific geo-ecological zone, at the borderline between rain-fed and irrigation agriculture, at the intersection between nomadic and sedentary subsistence strategies. The city dates back to the 3rd millennium BC and gained its reputation because it was the city of the god Ashur, the national deity of the Assyrians. Ashur played a key role as the centre of political power for the foundation of the Assyrian empire in the Middle Assyrian period (14th-11th BC) and for Assyrian art and craftsmanship, retaining its importance as the main cult site even later. It was also the place where the Assyrian kings were crowned and buried. As one of the few archaeological multi-period sites in Assyria of its kind, remains of the buildings and their furnishing have been extensively excavated. The architectural and artistic record is accompanied by a large corpus of cuneiform texts which attest a leading role of Ashur in religion and scholarship, especially during the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods. The city was destroyed by the Babylonians, but revived during the Parthian period in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

Criteria and World Heritage values

Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) (Iraq) was listed as a World Heritage site in 2003 under the Criteria (iii) and (iv). The site of Ashur was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2003 simultaneously with its inscription on the World Heritage List.

Criterion iii: During its history of three millennia, the most important step at Ashur was certainly the establishment of the Assyrian civilization. The strong tradition in the material, religious and intellectual culture of Assyria remains connected to the site and its region. As to the space use and urban layout, most significant is the concentration of public buildings at the periphery of the city, the development of the specific Assyrian temple ground-plan and of the palatial architecture, its decoration, monumental art and furnishing. These elements became the standards for the other urban and provincial centres during the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, that is, for a time span of more than seven centuries. At Ashur, the early steps towards a systematic shaping of Assyrian cities could be observed for the first time within the limits of an extremely restricted space and a grown urban system, this in contrast to all the later Assyrian capitals. The tight and complex cultural identity is expressed by the fact that the land, the god and the city bore the same name: Ashur. It is clear that, already during pre-Assyrian periods, the site played an important role in the land of Subartu, since it was a desired place for foreign control over the region during the Akkad and Ur III periods (last quarter of the 3rd millennium BC).

Criterion iv: The excavated remains of the public and residential buildings of Ashur provide an outstanding record of the evolution of building practice from the Sumerian and Akkadian period through the Assyrian empire, as well as including the short revival during the Parthian period. Ashur has an outstanding density of excavated architectural remains from different parts of the Assyrian periods without comparison. The ensemble of public buildings (temples, palaces, city walls) finds its counterpart in several areas of domestic architecture. As for the religious architecture, the presence of three *ziggurats* erected of mud bricks and two double temples should be mentioned as well the temple of the national god Ashur. Of them, the impressive ziggurat of the god Ashur is still standing today and is a visible landmark. Whereas these buildings embody the Assyrian architectural tradition, the temple of Ishtar alone features a different building tradition (bent axis), which has its origin possibly in the area southeast of Assyria. At two places a sequence of royal palaces was observed, one of them saved later as burial place for Assyrian kings.

Outstanding Universal Value

The site of the ancient city of Ashur (Assur, modern Qal'at Sherqat) is located 390 km north of Baghdad. The settlement was founded on the western bank of river Tigris, on uneven bedrock; within its walls it covers the area of about 65 ha. The excavated remains consist of numerous superimposed stratigraphic levels of archaeological deposits. The earliest of them date to the Sumerian Early Dynastic period of the early 3rd millennium BCE. After the Akkadian and Ur III periods, which are present at some points, follow the Old, Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods, the later one ending at the mid-first millennium BCE. Finally,

Hellenistic remains and those of the Arab Hatrian kings are attested. Structurally, the city of Ashur was divided into two parts: the old city (Akkadian *libbi-ali,* the heart of the city), which is the northern and largest part of Ashur, and the new city (Akk. *alu-ishshu)*, a smaller southern projection in the city, which was constructed around the middle of the second millennium BC.

The major features of the city which are presently visible on-site consist of architectural remains some of them have been partly restored: the *ziggurat* and the great temple of the god Ashur, the Tabira Gate, the double-temple of Anu and Adad (with the remains of two smaller *ziggurats),* the temple of Ishtar, the Old Palace with its royal tombs and several living quarters in many parts of the city and the Inner City Wall. Some parts of the Parthian palace are visible at the border between old and new city. The double-temple of Sin and Shamash has almost disappeared. The same is valid for the Assyrian New Year's festival building *(bit akitu),* which is located outside the walls of the city. Living quarters with indoor-burials and a palace area in the northern centre of the city are being excavated. The city was surrounded by a double wall with several gates (the new city just by a single wall) and a big moat. The majority of the buildings of the city were built with sun-dried mud-bricks with foundation of quarry stones or dressed stone, depending on the period. Artistic objects and parts of architectural remains of the city are at present on display in the major museums of the world, in the Louvre, the British Museum, the Pergamon Museum in Berlin and the Metropolitan Museum in New York, as well as in other museums. The surface of the site is partly covered by the excavation debris from several generations of archaeological excavations.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity appear to have been met. After abandonment of the site at the end of the Parthian period (2nd century CE), and, contrary to many other sites in the region, there was no further occupation. Therefore, the authenticity of the remains is high. The site inspection reveals the existing of minimal intrusion. As mentioned in the nomination file, only two modern structures within the core zone were observed: the ruined Ottoman military barracks located at the north-eastern edge of the site built in the 19th and 20th centuries, where a site museum was located until 1991 and the building of the German expedition at the eastern edge of the Tell.

According to site inspection, the methods, techniques and materials used during the previous restoration works dating from the 1980s seem to be of acceptable quality using traditional materials and techniques but are now ineffective to protect the original structures because of the lack of regular maintenance. However, some others are of poor quality and particularly for partial reconstruction of the Old Palace, Tabira Gate, the temple of Ishtar, parts of the Parthian palace and a section of the city wall. The reconstruction has been based on the excavated evidence but international standards and ethics for conservation of archaeological remains have not been respected. The authenticity and integrity of certain reconstructed monuments have been partially altered.

The boundaries of the core and buffer zones appear to be both realistic and adequate. The State Party protected the site from intrusions, farming or urban development, under the Archaeological Law. The principal risk to the property is related to the construction of the Makhool Dam and the continuing collapse of the Tell as a result of the Tigris River and the Wadi Um-Chababit erosion.

Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau

Initial deliberations of the site took place at the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2003. Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger simultaneously with its inscription on the World Heritage List. When the property was nominated before the conflict, a large dam project threatened the site, which would have been partially flooded by a reservoir. While the dam project has been suspended by the current administration, the Committee considered that its possible future construction, as well as the present lack of adequate protection, justified the inscription of the site on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The Committee requested the international community, the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies to continue their efforts in assisting the responsible Iraqi authorities in the protection of the natural and cultural heritage in the country. The Committee also requested the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to develop a draft statement of the desired state of conservation for the property based on its Outstanding Universal Value and Recommended the State Party, should the situation allow it, to establish an on-site management unit and to initiate the preparation of a Conservation and management Plan for the property and decided to retain Ashur on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

At the 34th session[1], the World Heritage Committee Recalling Decision adopted at its 31st, 32nd and 33rd sessions, and commended the State party for its efforts to protect the eastern part of the property from rising waters of the Tigris River and recommended that the works be undertaken as soon as possible. The World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to carry out necessary maintenance and conservation activities to avoid further damage and encouraged the State party, should the situation allow, to implement the corrective measures previously identified:

a) Relocation or cancellation of the dam project;
b) Protective measures against seepage;
c) Preparation and implementation of a conservation and management plan;
d) Protection and consolidation of fragile mud brick structures.

The Committee also encouraged the State Party to submit an international Assistance request for the conservation of the property and reiterated its request to the State Party to develop in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a proposal for the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, and to finalize the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011, as well as to provide a detailed map of the boundaries of the property. It Called upon the international community to assist, in every way possible, the State party in the protection of this property and Also requested the State Party, should the conditions allow it, to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to Ashur to assess the state of conservation of the property; and decided to retain Ashur on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

[1] See WHC-31 COM 7A.17; 32 COM 7A.16; 33 COM 7A.16; 34 COM 7A.18

Justification of the mission (terms of reference, programme and composition of mission team provided in Annex)

In conformity with the Decisions of the WH Committee 34 COM 7A.18 and 34 COM 7A.19 (attached) adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), concerning the state of conservation of Ashur and Samarra, inscribed on the World Heritage List respectively in2003 and 2007 and on the List of World Heritage in Danger the same years, and taking into consideration the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the Committee requested the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to visit the property to assess the state of conservation of the two sites and assist the State Party with technical guidance to address the following issues:

1. Visit the properties and meet with relevant local and national authorities, to discuss and review:

    a) the current situation and the overall state of conservation of the properties;

    b) the implementation of the decisions of the World Heritage Committee;

2. Assist the State Party in revising and detailing the corrective measures to be carried out in order to remove the properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger and define an approximate timeframe to this end;

3. Assist the State Party in drafting a proposal for the "Desired state of conservation for the removal of the properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger";

4. Assist the State Party in revising the draft proposal for the "Statement of Outstanding Value" for the site of Ashur.

5. Prepare a comprehensive report according to the established format, including recommendations and an executive summary, by 30 June 2011, as well as the verbal report to be provided to the State Party and further reviewed by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (Paris, 19-29 June 2011).

2. National policy for the preservation and management of the world heritage property

PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

Any updated maps to review the boundaries and the buffer zone were submitted to the mission and given the very limited time of the visit and the constraints related to the extended site, we have not been able to examine on the ground this issue. Thus, it is recommended to complete this section during the subsequent missions.

Ownership

The area of the ancient city of Ashur has been the property of the State of Iraq since 1935. In the past, the site was protected under the Law of Antiquities of 1937, and its further amendments. Currently, the site and its buffer zone are protected under the recently revised Law of Antiquities and Heritage, no. 55, dated October 2002.

Conservation

The rapid development of the city of Ashur was accompanied by the construction of monumental architectures well rooted in the Syro-Mesopotamian building tradition. The greatness of the Ziggurat and palaces, the temples and residences, the double city wall, all these features confer a unique an exceptional character to the city.

A great amount of monuments and buildings belonging to different historical periods form the Tell of Ashur. This accumulation of vestiges of successive occupation phases covers a surface spreading over more than 65 ha. While extensive excavations brought to light valuable monuments from different historical phases other sectors are still unexcavated and have not revealed all their secrets. New discoveries on-site and off-site by the exploration and the development of archaeological studies on other sites within the large territory of Ashur will undoubtedly enrich the precious heritage of this site and will require immediate measures to be taken to allow their long-term conservation.

The site has been abandoned for nearly two millennia, major incursions having come only from archaeological excavations. In 1903-1914, the German expedition carried out extensive excavations particularly in the northern section of the site and on the defense walls. However, the lack of any policy of conservation and the absence of protective measures and maintenance works during and after the excavations works has caused a fast and brutal degradation of the ruins. No sector within this vast site has been correctly protected, and the ruins have been abandoned and exposed for decades to the effects of natural erosion factors. Today, many ruins have disappeared and others are in very poor state of conservation. In the late 1980s, there were maintenance and restoration works for some monuments and archaeological remains as the Ziggurat, the Old Palace, the Tabira Gate, the double temple of Anu and Adad, the Temple of Sin, the Temple of Ishtar and some private houses. The techniques and materials used for the restoration of these valuable monuments are of poor quality because of the absence of regular maintenance and monitoring. The lack of documentation, all previous conservation and restoration works need to be studied and evaluated as a part of the conservation history of the site.

The maintenance work on the Tabira Gate has been completed in 2010 by the Ashur site staff. The quality of the conservation techniques and materials are acceptable but need to be upgraded in the future. The use of the bituminous separation at the passage way of the door is not adapted for the conservation of a mud brick archaeological site. Taking into consideration the fact that the important factor of erosion in Ashur is linked to the rising damp due to capillary action of the earthen material, the use of techniques and materials which aims to stop the transfer of moisture from the water table (waterproofing materials) is contrary to the rules and practices of conservation of earthen architecture and mud brick archaeological sites. Moreover, the bituminous layer which has been used to cover the ground of the passageway of the gate obstructs the possibility of evaporation of underground water and constitutes an aggravating factor of erosion. In fact, the walls remain the only passage to the ground moisture which rises by capillarity action and evaporates in surface of walls by depositing the salts that it contains.

According to the site observation, the major part of the excavated sectors have been restored or partially reconstructed according to archaeological evidences. The quality of the conservation works implemented during the 1980s restoration campaigns ranges from poor to acceptable depending of the materials and techniques used. It does not seem that any of these previous restoration projects had been carried out according to a scientific basis. Any preliminary studies and experimentations have been developed before the implementation of the restoration works and the conservation ethics and international standards have not been respected. The authenticity of these monuments has been to some extent altered by the reconstruction method and the irreversibility of restoration techniques. It's highly recommend that it would be necessary to carry out corrective measures and remedial interventions, particularly at the restored sectors of the site.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

- In 1847, first investigations of the site by H. Layard.
- In 1853 the site was prospected by Rassam and then by V. Place.
- From 1903 to 1914 a systematic excavations were undertaken by W. Andrea from the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft.
- Since 1945, some archaeological campaigns were undertaken by the Iraqi General Department of antiquities.
- From 1988 to 1989, one mission organized by the Free University of Berlin was undertaken under the direction of R. Dittmann.
- From 1989 to 1990, the University of Munich under the direction of B. Hrouda.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES

Management structure

Establishment of a local management unit on the site:

The headquarters of the Inspectorate of Antiquities of the Sharqat district have been installed outside the core zone near the main entrance at the west part of the site outside the archaeological zone. This building need to be enlarged to house the entire multidisciplinary staff including a department of excavation and archaeology, a department of conservation, a site laboratory, a storage place for equipment and tools. The requested extension, to allow the development of various activities related to conservation and management, must contain:

- an administration office,
- a site laboratory,
- an office for architects;
- an office for archaeologists,
- a space for archives and documentation,
- a small museum for the storage and the restoration of archaeological material and artifacts,
- a meeting room,
- a guest house to host and accommodate local and international researchers teams and archaeological expeditions;
- a storeroom for tools and equipment
- a storage area for restoration and construction materials.

Staffing: The current local site staff is composed by:

- One (1) inspector of Sharqat site (archaeologist)
- Two (2) Archaeologists
- Two (2) administrators
- Six (6) site excavators
- Eleven (11) Guards

Factors affecting the property

- The construction of the Makhool Dam and the expected flooding of the site within the reservoir perimeter remains the major risk for the long term conservation of Ashur site;
- Lack of general strategy for remedial and urgent interventions to prevent the risk of flooding and to mitigate the ongoing undermining action of the Tigris river on the eastern front of the Tell and Wadi Um-Chababit on the northern one;
- Ongoing erosion of fragile and exposed mud brick structures due to weathering and natural factors;
- Poor site conditions and lack of site drainage;
- Lack of a preventive conservation program and maintenance works;

- Lack of a multidisciplinary site management unit to ensure coordination between management and conservation activities as excavation and research, preventive conservation and maintenance, documentation and monitoring, presentation and development of the property;
- Lack of skilled site staff;
- Lack of a comprehensive management plan in place to ensure conservation and development of the site;
- Lack of a comprehensive conservation plan;
- Lack of documentation and monitoring activities;

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF ASHUR SITE

To understand the general condition of Ashur a first inspection of the site within its overall environment was carried out on 7th of June 2011 in presence of the national, regional and local representatives from SBAH in charge of the project. Due to the very limited time, the discussions engaged on site lead to the conclusion that the assessment visit should better be localized and focused on major problems affecting the site. The causes and effects of the threats affecting the ruins were briefly examined. Special efforts were made to identify the exact source of decay caused by natural conditions (river seepage, rainfall water, rising dump) and also human problems as a result of war, abandon and the recent restoration works.

The main objective of this first site inspection was to draw up a list of major threats which endanger the stability and physical integrity of the site. The results of this first inspection will serve as a base for the preparation of urgent intervention and the elaboration of a comprehensive conservation plan. Techniques and methods to reduce the impact of the major threats were discussed and some ideas proposed. Finally, a list of urgent works to be implemented was established (see below). This list will cover different pathologies of erosion which represent the most dangerous problems observed on the site.

The site inspection of Ashur revealed the existence of several erosion factors as following:

1. Makhool Dam: The potential danger regarding the future construction of the Makhool Dam on the Tigris River some 40 km to the south of Ashur and its negative impact on the Tell which would have been partially flooded. According to our meetings with national authorities (SBAH) this project has been delayed but not cancelled. A feasibility study had been carried out and the final design of the dam and the environmental impact assessment is underway. After the construction of the dam, the site would be flooded for certain periods of the year once the reservoir becomes operational and in any case the archaeological site would suffer from infiltration and seepage of underground water.

2. The Tigris River erosion: One of the more pernicious erosion factors is the continual undermining work of the Tigris River on the eastern front of the Tell and the Wadi Um-Chababit on the northern one. This erosion phenomenon is the more specific and the safeguarding of Ashur site depends on the faculty of SBAH to mitigate urgently this ongoing treat. The permanent contact of the eastern and northern base of the Tell with the two watercourses (Tigris River and Wadi Um-Chababit), the fluctuation of the river water level that can rise rapidly during the rainy season, and the high concentration of humidity are major combined destructive factors that lead to structural problems. The parts exposed to excessive humidity are the more fragile and this ongoing factor causes vulnerability of the archaeological deposit of the Tell and leads to desegregation. Structural cracks which lead to successive collapse of the upper part of the Tell could be observed during the mission.

The speed of the river waters within the meander of the right branch (west) of the river which enters the eastern edge of the site creates areas of turbulence and tear off the layer of the gravel sediments which form the bas of the Tell. Without support and without stable foundations, the superposed archaeological layers formed on a considerable height can be sheared and collapse under the effect of their own weight. It should also be noted that the composition of these layers are almost exclusively earthen materials of poor quality and very friable upon contact with water. The geological map of the region indicates that the materials in the area are mostly composed of sedimentary type, silty gravelly gypsiferous soils with high permeability (to know the exact soil composition of the Tell layers some soil analyses are required).

As a consequence, the physical integrity of the Ashur archaeological site has been severely compromised and the eastern and northern portion of the Tell constitutes a permanent danger if any action is envisaged rapidly. This permanent phenomenon is to be taken into consideration and any conservation intervention should give the priority to resolve this problem. A large study should be developed and technical solutions proposed to stop the undermining action of the watercourses and to prevent flooding of the site after the construction of the Makhool Dam.

To address this threat, the SBAH architects and engineers have prepared a technical study which proposes the construction of a retaining wall to reinforce the eastern edge of the Tell and to mitigate seepage and the undermining action caused by the water of the river. This technical study was presented by the members of the SBAH team and has been discussed during the site meeting. This emergency project has been funded by the Ministry of Culture (SBAH) and the implementation works have been granted to a local contractor (Al Maaen Al Fudhee CO for General Contracting Ltd). The duration of the project is 180 days and the construction materials (stone and backed bricks) were already stored near the site work. The implementation phase has been undertaken only a few days after our departure.

The proposed study needs to be reviewed and fine-tuned and the mission highly recommends to avoid any protective solution without a full documentation and study of the existing historical dam "al-Musanat" still conserved at the eastern part of the Tell while at some places the base of the ancient protective wall, in contact with the river, was

submerged by the water and can be observed during the dry season. This Assyrian techniques used to protect the city against exceptional floods of the river is a living example on how to prevent this king of threat. Along the right bank, the evidence of a protective wall "al-Musanat" composed by a massive stone masonry wall reinforced by a backed brick masonry wall with buttresses need to be documented and studied by archaeologist and the new maintaining wall to be inspired by the ancient know how and the updating of historical and traditional skills in this field.

3. The mud brick ruins of the visited sectors of the site:

The sectors visited on the site are located in the northern part of the Tell. The mission was able to inspect and to dress a preliminary assessment of the ruins still visible and in particular: the Tabira Gate, the Old Palace with its royal tombs, the sector of the temples and the Ziggurat. All these monuments were built with mud brick and are now in very poor conditions. The major part of the mud brick structures in Ashur are affected by the following decay processes:

- Lack of regular maintenance;
- Poor site drainage;
- Lack of monitoring and documentation;
- Bad conservation conditions of the monuments already restored: poor quality of materials and techniques (Tabira Gate, Old Palace, Temple of Nabu, Royal tombs, the City Wall...);
- Decay of the wall base due to combined action of humidity and salts (undercut);
- Decay of the ground surfaces due to water stagnation and surface erosion (erosion of the ground, gullies, and plant growth);
- Direct weathering of the surface and top of walls due to wind and rains.

Based on the preliminary site inspection three mean categories of common erosion to mud brick structures were identified:

- Decay of the wall base due to humidity and salts,
- Poor site drainage;
- Direct weathering of the surface and top of walls due to rains and wind;

- **Decay of the wall base due to humidity and salts:** The intense rising damp and the humidity exchange between the soil and the surface of the walls in contact with the atmosphere combined to the salts crystallization are the frequent factors of erosion of the mud brick archeological structures. This phenomenon was observed everywhere on the major lower parts of the walls "undercut" at the evaporation zone. The salts dehydration is an active process that causes vulnerability of the mud brick masonry and leads to desegregation.

- **Poor site drainage and lack of site maintenance:** The most destructive processes for mud brick archaeological structures come often from the surrounding area of the ruins (extrinsic factors). Problematic topography of the site, spoil heaps, uncontrolled flow of

rain water, ground humidity, vegetation, human in-adapted interventions are all pernicious factors of erosion. The artificial topography of the site as a result of archaeological digging is an aggravating factor of erosion and increases surface runoff because the lack of sufficient drainage. To the north and south of the site the topography slopes downward towards the river and the escarpment presents severe gullies and deep depressions caused by the water flowing. The surface runoff caused by the flow of water during the wet season constitutes a danger to the ruins and played an active role in the process of site erosion. The runoff that occurs on the surface of the Tell along the south-north slopes causes superficial erosion and formation of deep channels and gullies. This more commonly factor occurs where rainfall intensities are high and the soil infiltration capacity is reduced because of high concentration of soil humidity. During the rainfall season, the residual humidity will cause the soil to be saturated rapidly. Zones of water stagnation can be observed at the lower parts of the site and gully erosion occurs when the power of runoff is strong enough that it cuts deep channels and large amounts of material can be transported in a small time period. Without any preventive precautions aimed at improving the conditions of the site and the lack of effective drainage, the northern and the eastern edges of the site are more exposed to rainfall erosion.

- **Direct weathering of the structures**: Rain fall water combined to wind causes also another type of erosion by mechanical action. "Splash" erosion is the result of mechanical collision of raindrops with the fragile mud brick walls and soil surface. Without an adequate protection, the erosion of the upper part exposed to atmospheric factors causes vulnerability to the exposed mud brick structure. The Ziggurat is an example of the slow but continual degradation due to weathering.

Priority corrective measures for the visited sectors of the site

Urgent action and corrective measures need to be undertaken to protect Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and/or authenticity for which Ashur was inscribed on the World Heritage List. As a result of the first inspection of the visited sectors a list of actions to be implemented immediately was proposed. This will includes preventive conservation activities for the protection of the Ziggurat, the Old Palace and its Royal Tombs, and the sector of the temples. No conservation work should be permitted prior to the completion of documentation.

- The Ziggurat:

- An urgent intervention on the northern limit of the ziggurat is necessary in order to stop the progression of the severe gullies and deep depressions caused by the water flowing. These deep ravines undermine the base of the ziggurat and constitute an imminent danger;
- Treatment of the surrounding environment of the Ziggurat to Improve the drainage system in order to protect the base and the foundation of the mud brick massif against rain water stagnation, surface runoff, water funneling, infiltration, and concentration of moisture;

- The deep trench “sondage” excavated in the massif of the Ziggurat, which penetrate the west facade of this monument, constitutes a real threat to the stability of this structure. This trench should be backfilled by mud brick masonry or reinforced temporarily in order to avoid structural problems.
- Preventive measures need to be implemented to protect the top and the surface of the Ziggurat against weathering and rainfall erosion by installing capping and sacrificial mud layers;
- A regular maintenance activities need to be prepared and implemented after the rainy season.

The Old Palace, the Royal Tombs and the sector of Temples

In parallel with the preparation of the conservation plan for these sectors, a preventive conservation program should be implemented to protect temporarily the fragile mud brick structures and to mitigate the rate of degradation of the ruins. This program can be limited to the following activities:

- Archaeological cleaning and removal of debris and spoil heaps;
- Removal of vegetation;
- Backfilling of gullies and deep depressions caused by runoff;
- Improvement of the site drainage;
- Treatment of the undercut at the wall base to mitigate the effects of the combined action of rising damp (humidity) and salts;
- Intervention on the upper part of walls by installing protective capping and sacrificial plaster to reduce the rate of rainfall erosion;
- Treatment and protection of the wall surfaces;

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As main conclusions of this first assessment mission in Ashur the mission notes the very fruitful and positive discussions with relevant representatives from SBAH, members of the local management unit, and numerous of archaeologists and professionals involved in the protection and conservation of the site. Despite their enthusiasm and their commitment, it appears, through the discussions initiated during the site visit, an evident lack of resources and an urgent need to address the multiple problems that threaten the integrity of the archaeological site of Ashur. There is a great need for building and strengthening the professional capacities in conservation of earthen architecture archaeological sites and site management.

The major risk at the moment is the construction of a large dam on the Tigris River and its impact on the archaeological site of Ashur. Consequently, the State Party should take decisions by anticipating this future danger and by proposing and implementing preventive measures. The state Party should provide as soon as possible the necessary technical information on the Makhool Dam construction and its environmental impact, as a necessary condition in order to prepare appropriate measures to be developed and implemented for the safeguarding of Ashur and its territory that will be affected by the dam construction.

It's also recommended that the State Party should prepare a rescue operation in the area to be flooded by inviting scientists and archaeologists on an international level supported by UNESCO for carrying out sites and landscape prospection and salvage excavations.

The underway implementation works for the construction of the retaining wall to protect the eastern front of the Tell against the river erosion need to be monitored and the State Party should prepare and submit regular information and reports presenting the progress of the work.

To ensure a high level and a sustainable conservation of the site, it appears very necessary to give the priority for small-scale conservation activities in a perspective to reinforce step by step local capacities and to create some references and examples of how to conserve earthen architecture archaeological sites.

For the sustainability and effectiveness of the conservation and management planning of Ashur Archaeological site it is important that the site unit should be reinforced and the staff members trained as soon as possible. To start immediately with the preparation of the Site Management and comprehensive plan, the State party can request international assistance to guide the implementation of these fundamental steps indispensable for the long-term conservation and development of Ashur Archaeological site. The development of such strategies will require a wider range of expertise and competences than the State party possess currently.

Urgent action and corrective measures need to be undertaken to protect Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and/or authenticity for which the archaeological site of Ashur was

inscribed on the World Heritage List. As a result of the site inspection a list of actions to be implemented immediately was proposed (page 21-22).

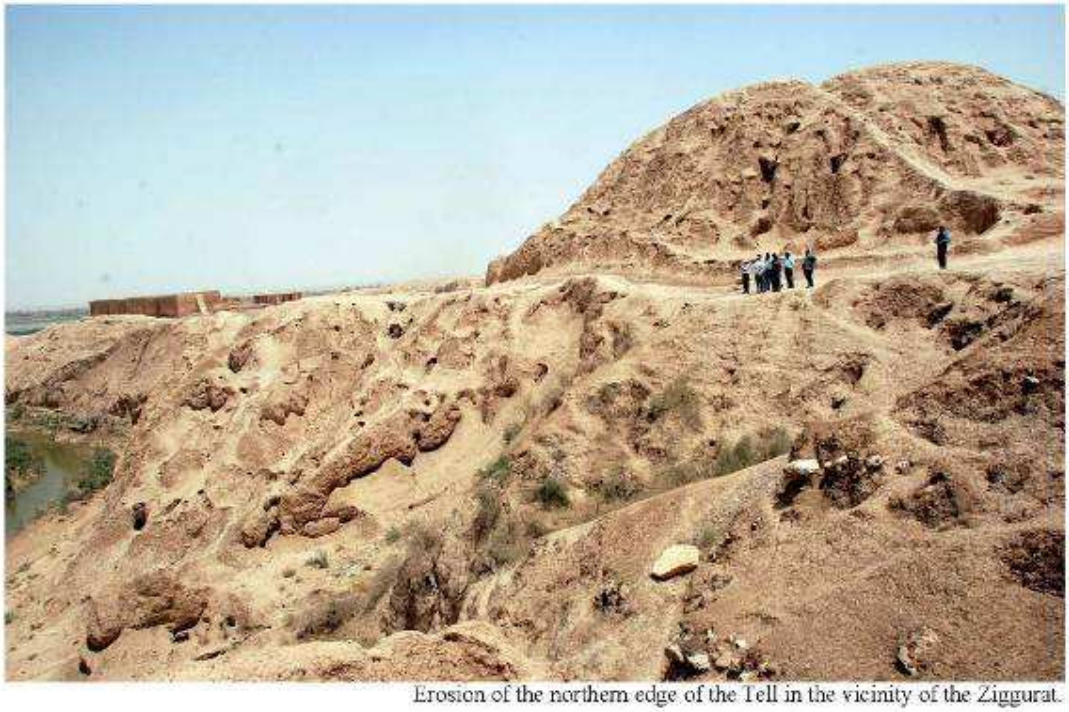
However, the SBAH representatives and the Ashur site staff members all have recognized the need to develop an emergency preventive conservation program and maintenance activities in order to stabilize the rate of erosion, to improve the site conditions and to protect temporary the more significant structures and monuments. The recommended strategy proposes the development of research and experimental program allowing performing small-scale tests of the possible solutions and materials before taking a decision for their application on a large scale.

This program can be conducted in selected areas and structures covering specific erosion problems, without touching the most outstanding elements of the site, to test, improve and evaluate the conservation techniques in a real setting. This project will lead to first immediate results that will be paramount for the success of the planed conservation/restoration/maintenance process. Besides, it will identify an area within Ashur site where regular workshops and training programs might take place in the coming years. In parallel to the preparation of the site management and the long term conservation plan, that require more studies and analysis, it's recommend to propose a specific program to answer urgent needs for the conservation of endangered monuments of the site by developing a preventive conservation strategy phased to take advantage of those activities and treatments that can proceed with minimal research.

THE ZIGGURAT
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Deep gullies and superficial erosion due to weathering, southern facade of the Ziggurat.

Erosion on the southern facade of the Ziggurat.



Erosion of the northern edge of the Tell in the vicinity of the Ziggurat.

THE ZIGGURAT
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Deep gullies and erosion of the northern edge of the Tell at the base of the Ziggurat.

Weathering erosion, east-northern corner of the Ziggurat.

TIGRIS RIVER SEEPAGE
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Successive collapsing of parts of the Tell at the eastern front of the site in contact with the Tigris River.

Undermining action of the eastern edge of the site by the river waters.

FLOODING & RISING UP OF THE RIVER WATER
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Flooding of the Wadi um-Achababit and erosion at the northern base of the site.

Rising up of the Tigris River water and collapsing parts at the eastern front of the site.

THE ANCIENT RETAINING WALL «AL-MUSSANAT»
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

The ancient retaining wall «al-Mussanat» at the eastern edge of the site in contact with the Tigris River.

The ancient retaining wall «al-Mussanat» flooded by the water of the river.

WADI UM-ACHABABIT
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Eastern escarpment of the Ashur promontory sloping down to the plain and the new watercourse of Wadi Um-Achababit.

Seepage and erosion of the northern edge of the site in contact with the course of the Wadi.

LACK OF DRAINAGE & WATER STAGNATION
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Poor site drainage and water stagnation problems.

Runoff and superficial erosion.

EROSION OF FRAGILE MUD BRICK STRUCTURES
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Previous restoration works at the Parthian Palace.

Poor conditions of mud brick archaeological structures. Rainfall erosion and undercut at the base of the walls.

RESTORED AND RECONSTRUCTED MONUMENTS
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Tabira Gate, full reconstruction of the upper parts of the Tabira Gate in 1978.

RESTORED AND RECONSTRUCTED MONUMENTS
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Temple of Ishtar, reconstructed walls.

Restored lower structures of the Royal tombs of the Old Palace.

RESTORED AND RECONSTRUCTED MONUMENTS
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Previous restoration works at the Parthian Palace.

Reconstructed section of the City Wall.

2010 TABIRA GATE MAINTENANCE WORKS
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

On-site traditional production of fired bricks.

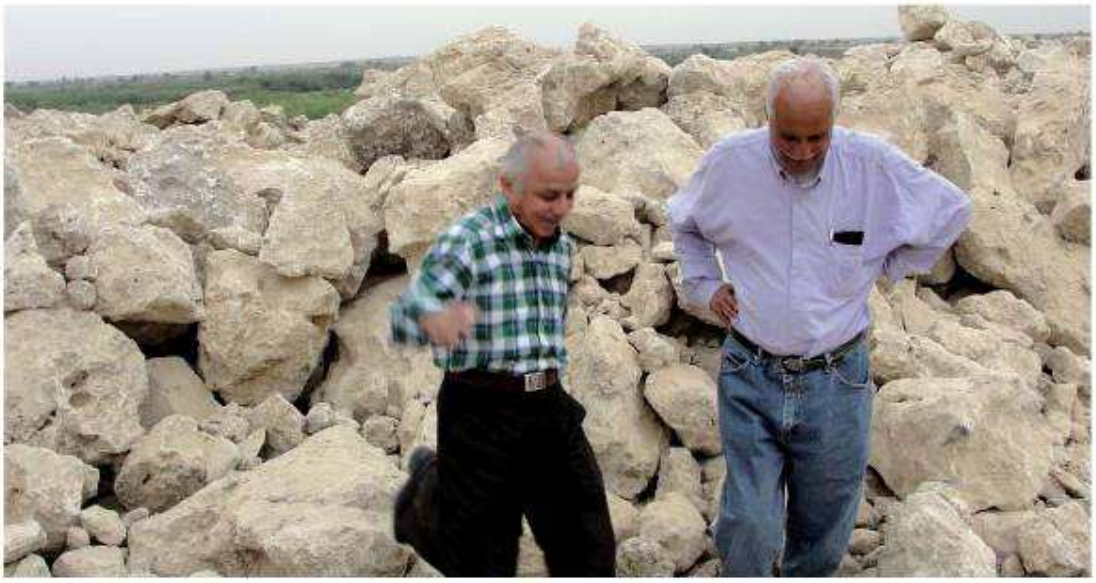
Mixture of soil, straw and water to be used for the mud brick production and masonry mortar.

2010 TABIRA GATE MAINTENANCE WORKS
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Mud brick masonry used for the restoration of the passage way of the gate.

Reparation of the water erosion at the base of the Tabira Gate walls.

RETAINING WALL PROJECT
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)



Stone and fiered bricks materials for the construction of the retaining wall (stored near the site work).

RETAINING WALL CONSTRUCTION STEPS

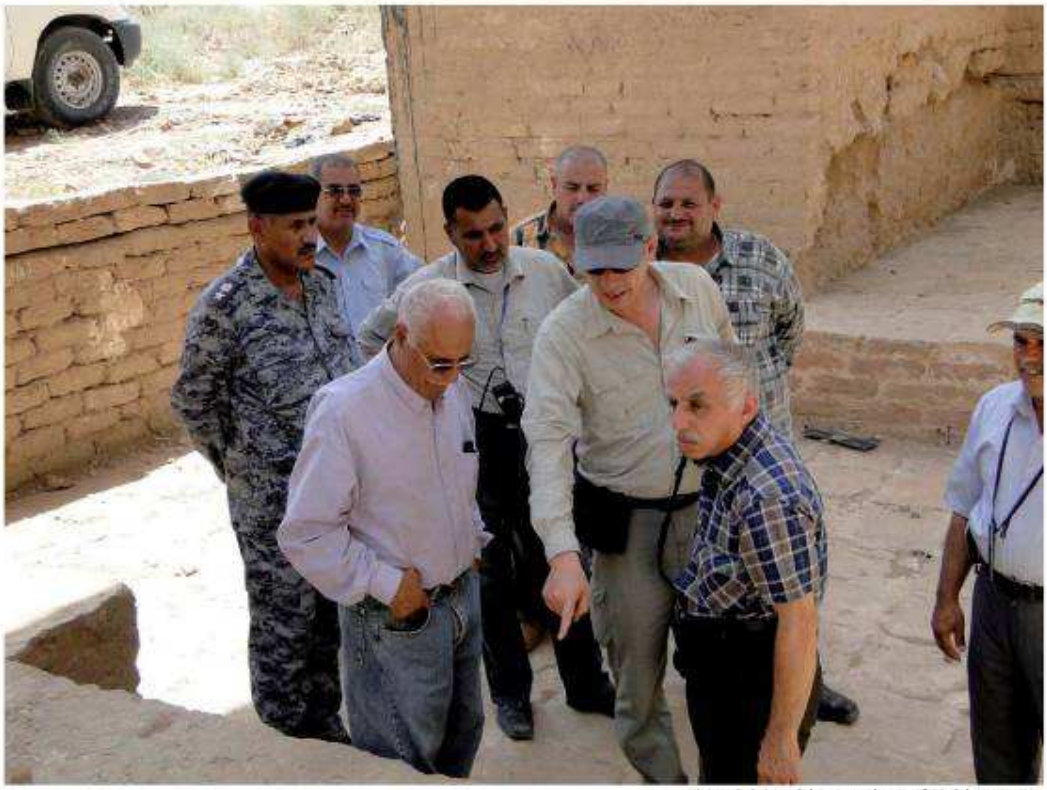
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

RETAINING WALL CONSTRUCTION STEPS

Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

SITE VISIT
Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

Working meeting with the site staff at the office of the site unit.



Site visit and inspection of Tabira Gate.

6. ANNEXES

Annex 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

In conformity with the Decisions of the WH Committee 34 COM 7A.18 and 34 COM 7A.19 (attached) adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), concerning the state of conservation of Ashur and Samarra, inscribed on the World Heritage List respectively in2003 and 2007 and on the List of World Heritage in Danger the same years, and taking into consideration the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the Committee requested the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to visit the property to assess the state of conservation of the two sites and assist the State Party with technical guidance to address the following issues:

1. Visit the properties and meet with relevant local and national authorities, to discuss and review:

    a) the current situation and the overall state of conservation of the properties;

    b) the implementation of the decisions of the World Heritage Committee;

2. Assist the State Party in revising and detailing the corrective measures to be carried out in order to remove the properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger and define an approximate timeframe to this end;

3. Assist the State Party in drafting a proposal for the “Desired state of conservation for the removal of the properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger”;

4. Assist the State Party in revising the draft proposal for the “Statement of Outstanding Value” for the site of Ashur.

5. Prepare a comprehensive report according to the established format, including recommendations and an executive summary, by 30 June 2011, as well as the verbal report to be provided to the State Party and further reviewed by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (Paris, 19-29 June 2011).

Annex II. Itinerary and programme of the mission

Saturday, June 4th

- Departure from La Chapelle de la Tour to Istanbul via Paris,
- Arrival in Istanbul (one night in Istanbul)

Sunday, June 5th

- Departure from Istanbul to Baghdad
- Meeting at Baghdad airport with Mr. Mehdi Salih Latef, Unesco Office in Najaf and Mr. Saleh Mohammad Redha Al-Mufti, chef engineer, SBAH
- Departure to Samarra
- Meeting with Mr. Mahmoud Khalaf Ahmad, Mayor of Samarra and Mr. Omar Abd- AlRazzaq Mahmoud, Inspector of Samarra Archaeological Site, SBAH
- Site visit to selected monuments in Samarra (Grand Mosque & Al Malwya, Caliphal Palace, Abu Dulaf Mosque)
- Meeting at the Inspectorate office with Mr. Omar Abd- AlRazzaq Mahmoud, Inspector of Samarra, Mr. Saleh Mohammad Redha Al-Mufti and Mr. Mehdi Salih Latef.

Monday, June 6th

- Site visit to selected monuments in Samarra (Balkuwara Palace, Tell as-Sawwan, the Manarat Tower)
- Working meeting at the municipality with Mr. Mahmoud Khalaf Ahmad, Mayor of Samarra and Mr. Omar Abd- AlRazzaq Mahmoud, Inspector of Samarra.

Tuesday, June 7th

- Departure to Ashur
- Meeting at the site unit with Mr. Abd Jaro, Director of Ashur Archaeological Site and the Ashur site staff.
- Site visit and discussions
- Working meeting at the site unit to collect restoration and archaeological documentation.
- Departure from Ashur to Samarra

Wednesday, June 8th

- Departure from Samarra to Baghdad
- Meeting at the Baghdad Museum with Mr. Qais Rashed, SBAH Chairman, Ms Faeza Hussein Hussein, Director General of Restorations and Engineering, Mr. Saleh Mohammad Redha Al-Mufti, Mr. Omar Abd- AlRazzaq Mahmoud, Inspector of Samarra, and Mr. Mehdi Salih Latef, Unesco Office in Najaf.
- Visit of Baghdad Museum

Thursday, June 9th

- Departure from Baghdad to Paris via Istanbul
- Arrival in La Chapelle de la Tour

Annex III Composition of the mission team

The mission has been undertaken by Dr. Mahmoud Bendakir, who represented both UNESCO and ICOMOS.