



Arab Republic of Egypt

**State of Conservation Report:
III. Abu Mena, 2019**



Ministry of Antiquities



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**State of Conservation Report,
World Heritage Site:
III. Abu Mena**

Egypt

2019



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Summary:

Regarding the decision of the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session, held in Manama 2018, and after looking at the committee's accredited decision concerning the site of Abu Mena, this report about the state of conservation of the site in 2019 was prepared, and responds to the raised concerns with a number of significant decisions and corrective measures to preserve the Abu Mena property and remove it off the List of World Heritage in Danger. This report deals mainly with:

- Allocation of Fifteen million Egyptian Pounds by the Egyptian Cabinet (September 2018) for a re-operating and a de-watering project at Abu Mena and importing high quality pumps
- An advisory mission from the UNESCO Cairo office and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) visited the site in May 2018. Recommendations based on the aforementioned meeting were given in a meeting held in November 2018.
- HE the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi established for the first time in Egypt the *Supreme Committee for the Management of World Heritage Sites in Egypt (Supreme Committee)*, under the chairmanship of the Assistant to the President for national and strategic projects. Ministries and state officials invested in the preservation of Egyptian World Heritage Sites have been made members of the committee, and will facilitate and coordinate between all the concerned Egyptian authorities in order to preserve and valorize the Egyptian World Heritage Sites.
- The Supreme Committee in its first meeting on January 10, 2019, addressed the problem of the rising of the groundwater at Abu Mena. Experts from the Ministry of Water Resources & Irrigation, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Antiquities visited the site on January 12, 2019. This new committee will submit a report to the Supreme Committee in its 2nd meeting in February, 2019, to work on the threats facing the site.
- On January 14, 2019, the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation began cleaning and sterilizing the drainage and water channels on the site.



- The Egyptian law for the protection of antiquities was amended in 2018 to enhance the protection of the archaeological sites.

Decision of the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session held in Manama on the World Heritage Site:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/18/42.COM/7A.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **41 COM 7A.32**, adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017),
3. Continues to express great concern regarding the state of conservation of the property and the low level of implementation of the recommended corrective measures;
4. Notes that a scientific committee to study the threats to the property arising from the rise of the groundwater level and to elaborate a project to address them, has been established, and urgently requests the State Party to:
 1. Devise an action plan to address the rise of the groundwater level,
 2. Establish an efficient system for monitoring the water table in the archaeological site and in the surrounding zones,
 3. Devise mitigation measures for the archaeological remains, during the process of lowering and stabilizing the water table;
5. Also notes that, with the agreement of the State Party, an Advisory mission involving UNESCO and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is to visit the property to provide advice on appropriate irrigation and water management technologies;
6. Also requests the State Party to submit, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, details for all on-going or planned restoration interventions at the property, particularly at the Great Basilica, the reburial strategy, and initiatives arising from the project for the restoration and rehabilitation of the property, or any new envisaged constructions such as a visitors “center” for review prior to implementation, noting that a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) should be prepared for rehabilitation and construction projects



in accordance with the 2011 ICOMOS Guidance on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage properties;

7. Urges the State Party to proceed with comprehensive implementation of the corrective measures, to protect and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, with particular attention to the following issues:
 1. Preparation of a comprehensive Integrated Management Plan,
 2. Preparation of a conservation plan, which includes a condition survey and the identification of priority interventions to ensure stabilization of archaeological remains,
 3. Removal of inadequate new constructions, and the creation of facilities to allow for religious uses in areas outside the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, if need be;
8. Further requests the State Party to finalize the minor boundary modification request in close consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and in line with Paragraphs 163-165 of the *Operational Guidelines*, for examination by the World Heritage Committee;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2019**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd session in 2019;
10. Decides to retain Abu Mena (Egypt) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.