



Ministry Of Culture

Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums

# STATE PARTY REPORT

On The State of Conservation  
of The

Syrian Cultural Heritage Sites  
(Syrian Arab Republic)

For Submission By  
1 February 2020



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## INTRODUCTION

This Progress Report on the State of Conservation of the Syrian World Heritage properties is:

- Responds to the World Heritage request during the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the world heritage committee in Baku 2019
- Provides an update to the December 2018 State of Conservation report.
- Prepared in to be present on the previous World Heritage Committee meeting 44<sup>e</sup> session 2020.

### **Information Sources**

This report represents a collation of available information as of 31 December 2019, and is based on available information from the DGAM braches around Syria, taking inconsideration that with ground access to the Ancient Villages in North of Syria extremely limited for antiquities experts, extent of the damage cannot be assessment right now.

Name of World Heritage property: **CRAC DES CHEVALIERS & QAL'AT SALAH EL-DIN**

Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 2006

### Crac Des Chevaliers

The joint Syrian-Hungarian expedition started this year the First phase of the master plan project financed by UNESCO/WHC, the mission this year finished the following activities:

- Historical, Archaeological & Functional Studies:

The team started from the church tower (No. 20) in the inner castle, because its surface had been isolated in 2017 by the joint Syrian-Hungarian mission, many excavations and diggings (necessary for study) were conducted on a surface the tower and its interior and the surrounding area.



*Aerial photo of the Crac des Chevaliers with the church indicated with yellow. (B. Takáts)*

- Establishing Topographical Network & Drawings

The team Created a network of topographical points to be used in measurements and surveying work in the castle, these references points will be compatible with the local coordinates system and cover all the area of the castle.



*Establishing the topographical network*

### Architectural Studies & Designs

Establishing Coding System for the buildings of the castle that will forms the basis upon which all subsequent studies will depend.

Compared the studies conducted by "Paul Deschamps", "Tomas Biller" and "John Zimmer". The Zimmer model was adopted in coding, but with the modification of numbers.

Updating the horizontal plans, that were missed in Zimmer's plans, to include coding all the spaces in line with the direction of movement within the castle.

### Structural & Building Material Studies

The work was continued during August and September 2019 with an "In situ" stone decay diagnosis. That work involved mapping of stone deterioration to four facades in different directions. As well as, evaluation of decayed surface by using Rilem Tube as a non-destructive technique.



Figure 8 deterioration mapping of the external southern east façade of king's daughter tower

### Identifying Intervention Criteria & Priorities

Special Area Plans in the most affected areas of the castle started by the team. While in no way this contribution can replace the long-term planning process needed to establish priorities actions and to guide interventions in the long range and to support the rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure of the castle, it can provide orientations for short term actions and it can help raising the necessary resources from donors.

## Qal'at Salah El-Din

### CHALLENGES:

The lack of funding sources, the volatile security situation, shortages of specialist staff in addition to the difficulties of the castle location, those factors had led to a lack of maintenance and monitoring of structural changes, which led to the deterioration of the structure in parts of masonry.

- On 2019, a collapse of part of the byzantine wall on the southeastern side of the castle, which rises 50 meters from the surrounding street. On 2017, the cross vault on the second floor of the byzantine tower collapsed, which deteriorated the structural state of the walls of the tower placed on a rocky slop.
- Other masonries in the castle are exposed to severe cracks such as the Royal Tower (Donggun), stables, water tank, walls, towers, and the lower town.

The deterioration of the structural state in the castle can be explained according to the following factors:

- Dense tree roots that fill masonry and cause cracks in walls.
- Weather factors such as heavy rain, humidity, temperature variation.
- Insufficient maintenance and repair work due to lack of financial and human resources.
- The castle topography in the mountainous area and slopes.

It is important to mention the forest fire risk during the past years, that would present a high risk of threat to the buffer zone of Qa'lat Salah El-Din.



*The trees density cause cracks in the structure*



*Structural problems such as cracks, stone and mortar loss*

#### MEASURES TAKEN:

- The DGAM implemented emergency interventions to support the collapsed eastern wall and the defense towers of the lower town in the castle.
- With funding from the Ministry of Tourism, a project for preparing tourist routes and facilities will start this year in the safe areas of the castle.



*The collapsed part of the byzantine wall on the southeastern side of the castle - before*



*The byzantine wall on the southeastern side of the castle - after*



*The stone step before restoration*



*The stone step after restoration*



*The damaged tower before restoration*



*The damaged tower after restoration*

The DGAM has **submitted IAR on 5 September 2019 for Documentation & Emergency Structural Intervention In Qa'lat Salah El-Din**. The IAR will assist DGAM to undertake a survey to the castle as a part of the preservation process, management and monitoring of the property.. Information shall be of sufficient quality to provides an adequate basis for making historic preservation decisions and touristic plans as requested by the 43rd world heritage committee. A major goal of the Project is to create a detailed site plan in the Qa'lat with documentation of the missing standing architectural remains in Beit Al Madina area.

Physical conservation works have been carried out at the properties and works are progressing according to available funds. The reasons for placing the castles on the Danger List no longer applied as the ancient city is not facing danger of war anymore. In this case the DGAM is ready to welcome the monitoring mission and to implement the necessary corrective measures to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.





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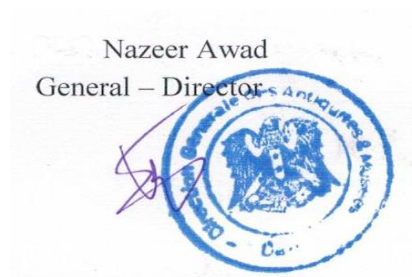
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*Lina*

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## INTRODUCTION

This Progress Report on the State of Conservation of the Syrian World Heritage properties is:

- Responds to the World Heritage Center on the 43 Session of the UNESCO Committee organized in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 30 June to 10 July 2019.
- Provides update to the December 2019 State of Conservation report.
- Prepared in to be present on the previous World Heritage Committee meeting 44e session 2021.

### **Information Sources**

This report represents a collation of available information as of 31 December 2020, and is based on available information from the DGAM braches around Syria, taking inconsideration that with ground access in some cities in Syria extremely limited for antiquities experts, extent of the damage cannot be assessment right now such as (Ancient Villages in North of Syria).

Name of World Heritage property: **CRAC DES CHEVALIERS & QAL'AT SALAH EL-DIN**

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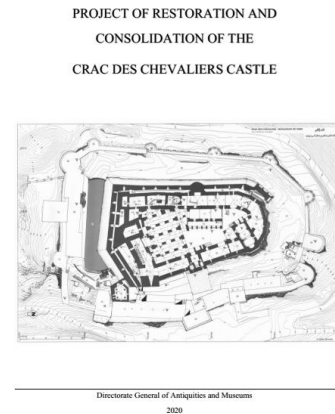
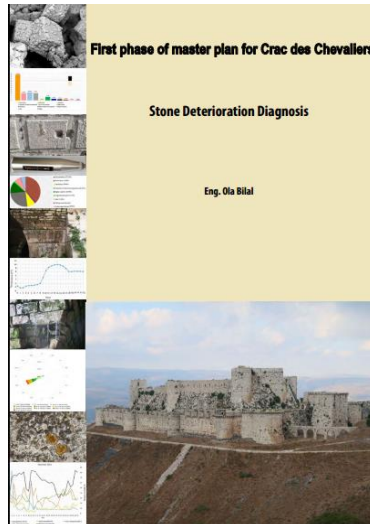
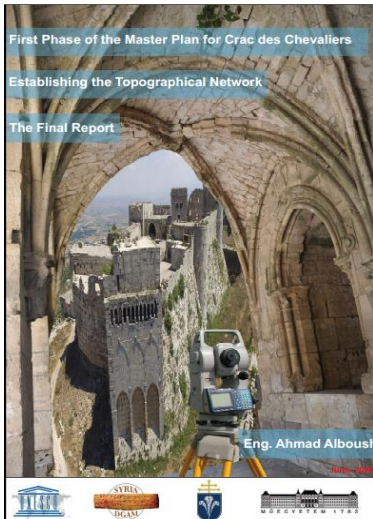
**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANTS:**

The two castles represent the most significant examples illustrating the exchange of influences and documenting the evolution of fortified architecture in the Near East during the Byzantine, Crusader and Islamic periods. The Crac des Chevaliers was built by the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem from 1142 to 1271. With further construction by the Mamluks in the late 13th century, it ranks among the best-preserved examples of the Crusader castles. The Qal'at Salah El-Din, even though partly in ruins, retains features from its Byzantine beginnings in the 10th century, the Frankish transformations in the late 12th century and fortifications added by the Ayyubid dynasty (late 12th to mid-13th century). Both castles are located on high ridges that were key defensive positions. Dominating their surrounding landscapes, the two castles of Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din are outstanding examples of fortified architecture relating to the Crusader period. Their quality of construction and the survival of historical stratigraphy demonstrate the interchange of defensive technology through features of each phase of military occupation.

**MEASURES TAKEN**

**CRAC DES CHEVALIERS**

1. The government announced that all monuments and museums across the country should be closed to keep people safe as a preventive procedure to confront Coronavirus, the two sites were closed until July 2020.
2. In the framework of the International Assistance request No 3042 entitled "First Phase of the Master Plan of Crac des Chevaliers", the DGAM team had finished the topographic network of survey points on the entire site and its surroundings; Identify critical stability cases and other restoration needs at the site, set priorities of interventions and elaborate detailed restoration proposals aligned with the recommendations of the UNESCO technical assistance workshop (Beirut, 2016); The stone deterioration diagnosis; The absence of the Hungarian experts this year due to coronavirus had delayed the project till the end of 2021.



Topographic network of survey points report

The stone deterioration diagnosis report

Priorities of interventions and elaborate detailed restoration proposals report

Al-Hawash Private University in Wadi Al-Nadara, in cooperation with the Governorate of Homs and the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, launched an initiative to weed and exterminate trees and herbs in Crac des chevaliers, with the participation of 400 volunteers. The work started in cleaning and weeding at the tourist line, the outer castle wall, and the space between the western walls of the inner and outer fortress. The importance of this initiative, is the emphasizes the role of the local community in preserving historical and archaeological monuments and support the protection the castle from fires and the negative effects of the growth of herbs and trees in it, especially with the presence of giant trees of figs and pomegranates in the ceiling of the Knights Hall, which poses a great danger to it. This cooperation include also, a survey the entire castle to create a digital maps.



An initiative to weed and exterminate trees and herbs in Crac des chevaliers, with the participation of 400 volunteers

The work this year included the restoration of the retaining wall supporting the road on the northern side; Restoration of the arch pillar and vault on the south side of the Knights' Hall; The rehabilitation works

also included: the so-called reserve corridor that facilitates the movement of visitors pending; the main staircase in the inner courtyard that leads to the roof at the Round Table; the northeast corner of the stable; and Isolate the roof of the vault south of the Knights' Hall. The most dangerous places within the castle were noted in the project, to have priority for restoration and rehabilitation, and to provide the most basic comfort requirements for visitors to the castle, whose number last year reached about 23 thousand visitors. In turn the M. of Tourism financed the setting up of signboards, and the installation of doors and windows for the Bint Al-Malik Tower in preparation for its use as a cafeteria for visitors.

### **Qal'at Salah El-Din**

Huge deliberate Fires broke out early in the morning on Friday, October 9, in several areas in Lattakia countryside. These fires swept through large areas of land and forests, reaching the buffer zone in the Qal'at. The images show massive destruction of mountain forests and the erosion of vast green areas.



The south buffer-zone during the fire



The south buffer-zone after the fire

Preventive measures were started with the M of agriculture to minimize the negative impacts of fire by constructing breaking lines around the castle to avoid spreading the fires to the Qal'at building.

Works in the Qal'at has been limited this year to finish the document within the framework of the International Assistance request No 4500421026 "documentation & emergency structural intervention". The Lattakia Antiquities team had conducted a field visits to document the Qal'at, finalized the topographic survey, prepare damage assessment in order to identify priorities criteria for interventions in risk areas, and finally preparing reinforcement and restoration projects for Burj Al Tibn containing estimated quantities and costs. The final report will submit to the whc next month.

A comprehensive visitor plan is being developed for the site, within the framework of the agreement signed with the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Tourism including the development of sustainable tourism for the ever-growing number of visitors to the site. This will include visitors' paths, an information center, explanation sign boards and visitor leaflets, proper facilities, and proper fencing and protection of the site to protect it from unauthorized visitors and illegal archaeological digs. His year a short visitor route was rehabilitated in addition to the tourism information center.



Rehabilitation works to the short visitor route.