



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)

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Arch. Lina Kutiefan
Director
Syrian World Heritage Sites.



Ministry of Culture
Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums
Tel/ Fax: + 963 11 2315313
www.dgam.gov.sy
Thawra st-.Damascus- SYRIA



Prof. Dr. Maamoun Abdulkarim
General – Director



Ministry of Culture
Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums
Tel: + 963 11 2234331 - 2254811
Fax: + 963 11 2247983
www.dgam.gov.sy
Qasr al Heir st-Damascus- SYRIA

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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 on the 40 Session of the UNESCO Committee organized in Istanbul - Turkey from 10 to 20 July 2016.
- Provides update to the December 2016 State of Conservation report.
- Prepared in to be present on the previous World Heritage Committee meeting 41e session 2017.

Information Sources

This report represents a collation of available information as of 31 December 2016, 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 and Palmyra).

Name of World Heritage property: **ANCIENT CITY OF DAMASCUS**

Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 26/10/1979

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANTS

Founded in the 3rd millennium B.C., Damascus was an important cultural and commercial center, by virtue of its geographical position at the crossroads of the orient and the occident, between Africa and Asia. The old city of Damascus is considered to be among the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. Excavations at Tell Ramad on the outskirts of the city have demonstrated that Damascus was inhabited as early as 8,000 to 10,000 BC. However, it is not documented as an important city until the arrival of the Aramaeans. In the Medieval period, it was the center of a flourishing craft industry, with different areas of the city specializing in particular trades or crafts.

The city exhibits outstanding evidence of the civilizations which created it - Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic. In particular, the Umayyad caliphate created Damascus as its capital, setting the scene for the city's ongoing development as a living Muslim, Arab city, upon which each succeeding dynasty has left and continues to leave its mark.

In spite of Islam's prevailing influence, traces of earlier cultures particularly the Roman and Byzantine continue to be seen in the city. Thus the city today is based on a Roman plan and maintains the aspect and the orientation of the Greek city, in that all its streets are oriented north-south or east-west and is a key example of urban planning. The earliest visible physical evidence dates to the Roman period - the extensive remains of the Temple of Jupiter, the remains of various gates and an impressive section of the Roman city walls. The city was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. However, apart from the incomparable Great Mosque, built on the site of a Roman temple and over-laying a Christian basilica, there is little visible dating from this important era of the city's history. The present city walls, the Citadel, some mosques and tombs survive from the Middle Ages, but the greatest part of the built heritage of the city dates from after the Ottoman conquest of the early 16th century.

THREATS

The old city and its buffer zone has been targeted by fire several times during 2016:

The first one was the huge one which broke out on April 2016 in the Al-Assroniyah marketplace that damaged 105 shops. A short circuit caused the fire, started from one of the shops between Damascus Citadel and Al-Assroniyah and spread towards the west side of the walled city. The huge

fire gutting over 105 shops in addition to the ceiling collapsed of the Othman Bank. (Please refer to the DGAM Updating Information for the State of Conservation of the Ancient City of Damascus, May 2016).

On Monday October 4, 2016, a fire broke out at a traditional house (estate n 309) near the Al Ward mosque in Sarouja area, the fire caused huge material damage and collapsed to some rooms.

On December 2016 evening, a fire broke out in an ancient, trade center Al-Hamidiyah. Authorities disclosed the cause of the fire was a short circuit, which gutted over 12 shops and destroyed 8 shops. The firefighters have succeeded to control the blaze. The cause of the fire was a short circuit occurred by the heavy rainfall, which gutted over 2 estates that including several shops. Immediately the power supply cut off from the area, the firefighters succeeded to control the blaze. In the next morning, when the electricity came back, several electrical sparks led to the broke the fire again by the continuous heavy rainfall and the presence of the extensions of the electrical installation mostly due to external pieces for the air conditioners that placed on the roofs of the shops ground floors. The firefighters came back to the area and control the blaze again. Two estates damaged by the fire (263 - 264) with several parts of the estate (266) .

MEASURES TAKEN

In addition to the implementation of the emergency response plan that we mentioned in our previous report on 2016, several additional steps taken within the Department of Old Damascus during the recovery phase:

- Damage Assessment: resulting from the fire, the location is directly inspected, the damage is documented through photographs, and cooperation is carried out with the damage assessment committees in Damascus Governorate and the owners of the damaged real property.
- Cooperation and coordination between the Department of Antiquities of Damascus, The Heritage Committee of Damascus Engineers Syndicate and the Directorate of the Old City (Maktab Anbar Office) in documentation projects and exchange of information.
- As for implementing the recovery phase, the damaged shops have been reconstructed with the intention of recreating the historical and traditional image but in fact, in a certain places, building materials and techniques have been adopted which conflict with the traditional ones.
- The Directorate of the Old City (Maktab Anbar Office) undertook a project to execute all the electrical cables buried in the ground floor.
- DGAM continue working within the Anqa project on the first phase of the project on measurable 3D models of the landmark monuments

within Damascus ancient City such as: AL AZEM Palace, Khan ASSAD PASHA, Science and Medicine museum, Arabic Calligraphy museum etc...

- A project of documenting old Damascus by a drone in cooperation with Khani Media Company had been started. The project aims to documenting the historical buildings & layers within the city of Damascus, through the use of modern technologies which will contribute to provide important scientific documents.
- The DGAM continue to argue the concerned local authorities on the need for a serious and effective action from all the relevant authorities to remove all of the causes of the fire in the old city, all flammable materials from the shops, implement fire extinguisher and warning networks and to use traditional materials to build fire-resistant. As well as the indispensability provide automatic extinguishing devices in the shops and to provide the firefighters with extinguishing devices do not rely on water pumping.



A huge fire broke out on April 2016 in the Al-Assroniyah marketplace that damaged 105 shops



The municipality sealed off the area and began cleaning up



The damaged shops have been reconstructed building materials and techniques have been adopted which conflict with the traditional ones



Severe damage at a traditional house (estate n 309) near the Al Ward mosque in Sarouja area



Damage to an ancient, trade Al-Hamidiyah, which gutted over 12 shops and destroyed 8 shops.



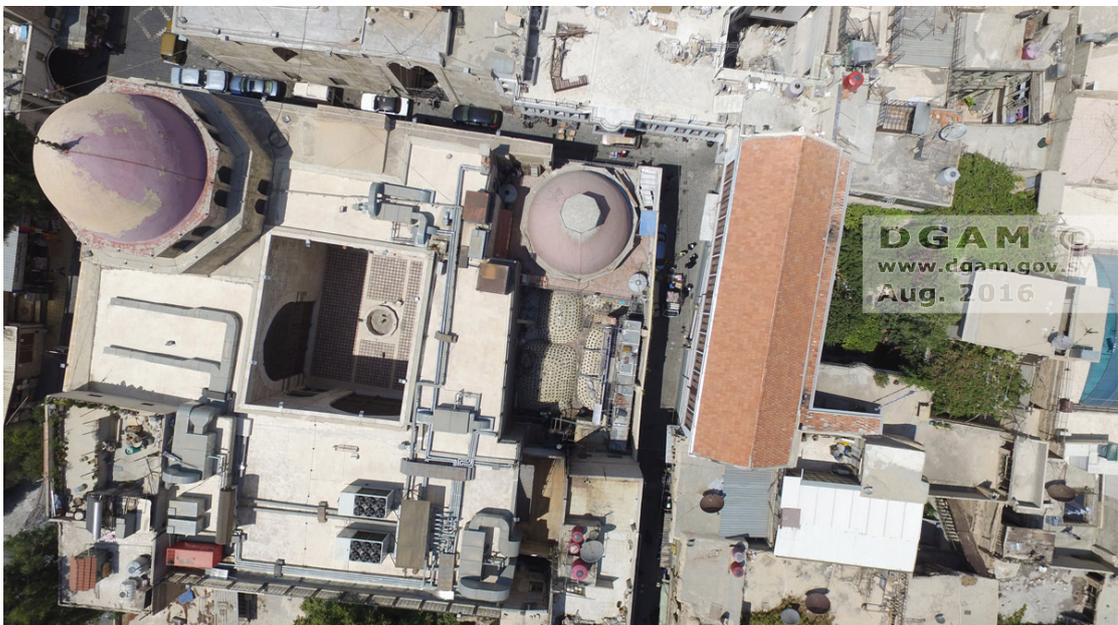
Ignoring the ancient witnessed in the restoration project at Al-Hamidiyah,



Using new building materials



Using new building materials



A project of documenting old Damascus by a drone in cooperation with Khani Media Company had been started in the old city.

Name of World Heritage property: **ANCIENT CITY OF BOSRA**
Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 1980

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANTS:

The name of Bosra occurs in the precious Tell el-Amarna tablets in Egypt, which date from the 14th century B.C. and represent royal correspondence between the Pharaohs and the Phoenician and Amorite kings. It became the northern capital of the Nabataean kingdom. In the year of 106 A.D, a new era began for Bosra when it was incorporated into the Roman Empire.

Alexander Severus gave it the title Colonia Bosra and Philip the Arab minted currency especially for it. During Byzantine times, Bosra was a major frontier market where Arab caravans came to stock up and its bishops took part in the Council of Antioch. Bosra was the first Byzantine city, which the Arabs entered in 634 in the phase of Islamic expansion.

Today, Bosra is a major archaeological site, containing ruins from Roman, Byzantine, and Muslim times. Further, Nabataean and Roman monuments, Christian churches, mosques and Madrasas are present within the city.

Its main feature is the second century Roman Theatre, constructed probably under Trajan, which has been integrally preserved. It was fortified between 481 and 1251 AD. Al-Omari Mosque is one of the oldest surviving mosques in Islamic history, and the Madrasah Mabrak al-Naqua is one of the oldest and most celebrated of Islam. The Cathedral of Bosra is also a building of considerable importance in the annals of early Christian architecture.

Bosra survived about 2500 years inhabited and almost intact. The Nabataeans, Romans, Byzantines and Umayyad, all left traces in the city, which is an open museum associated with significant episodes in the history of ideas and beliefs.

THREATS

- No damage recorded during this year.

MEASURES TAKEN

- Despite the difficult situation after the ancient city filled in to the armed group control on March 25, 2015, the Bosra Antiquities resume working, keep an eye on the sites, and report back to the DGAM about the site condition and any changes affecting the city. They are able to visit the site easily and regularly and the DGAM is in direct supervision to the intervention done in the city.
- The DGAM still communicated with the local community in order to cooperate and support in neutralizing the ancient city from the ongoing events and its effects.

Name of World Heritage property: **SITE OF PALMYRA**

Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 1980

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANTS:

An oasis in the Syrian Desert, northeast of Damascus, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centers of the ancient world. From the 1st to the 2nd century, the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilizations, married Graeco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences.

First mentioned in the archives of Mari in the 2nd millennium BC, Palmyra was an established caravan oasis when it came under Roman control in the mid-first century AD as part of the Roman province of Syria. It grew steadily in importance as a city on the trade route linking Persia, India and China with the Roman Empire, marking the crossroads of several civilizations in the ancient world. A grand, colonnaded street of 1100 metres' length forms the monumental axis of the city, which together with secondary colonnaded cross streets links the major public monuments including the Temple of Ba'al, Diocletian's Camp, the Agora, Theatre, other temples and urban quarters. Architectural ornament including unique examples of funerary sculpture unites the forms of Greco-Roman art with indigenous elements and Persian influences in a strongly original style. Outside the city's walls are remains of a Roman aqueduct and immense necropolises.

Discovery of the ruined city by travelers in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in its subsequent influence on architectural styles.

THREATS:

Till December 10, 2016 Palmyra, the archaeological site was under the control of the Syrian government after that ISIS terrorist groups have retaken the ancient city of Palmyra.

MEASURES TAKEN (before retaken the site by ISIS)

Before the second invasion of ISIS to Palmyra, the DGAM took several precautionary measures to protect the site, the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) rushed to the site to assess the damage to the museum building and the collections as well as the ancient site:

- A conservation survey of the collection and the museum building was done, as well as a protective measure at the museum to prevent looting. Clean-up, salvage procedures for both the collections and the buildings were done. The DGAM conservators with the help of the Polish team sifted through the debris to gather as much of the broken, destroyed and damaged objects, inventory and documentation to the objects were carried out and a written record of artifact evacuated activities were made. *This work was done within the (DGAM-UNESCO) contract*

number: 4500302338 and in the frame work of the emergency assistance coordinated by the World Heritage Center (Arab State Unite) and the UNESCO office in Beirut, to launch the implementation of the first aid actions in Palmyra Museum collecting to safe places, study and finished the museum damage assessment.

- For 2 months the staff collecting fragments of sculptures and preparing them for transportation to Damascus for conservation by supporting of the UNESCO World Heritage Center and the Emergency Safeguarding to the Syrian Cultural Heritage project. The Statue of Al-Lat was transferred from Palmyra Museum in order to be restored in DGAM laboratories in Damascus during the next phase.
- Documenting the damage and record the status at the museum by using 3D processing was done with ICONEM. DGAM staff were henceforth to stay in the museum round the clock, living conditions were dark, without much electricity or food, under blackout conditions.
- 3D processing and simulation were done to several damaged monuments (Temple of Bel, the Arch of Triumph), scientific & analyze studies were prepared with the support of the international partner ICONEM.
- Damage assessment were done to the monumental area and the team finished defining the strategy of the recovery phase of Palmyra and estimated budget was defined.
- A scientific mission started working collecting information to restudy the buffer zone and define the protection measures according to the international standards and by support of UNESCO World Heritage Center.
- A meeting was held on 26 December 2016 with the governor of Homs regarding the plan of the recovery phase of Palmyra, the governor was very helpful he stated that all the works in the site and its surrounding will be under the supervision of the DGAM, he also donated a land (belongs to the municipality) near the museum to be used to the extension works for the museum building.



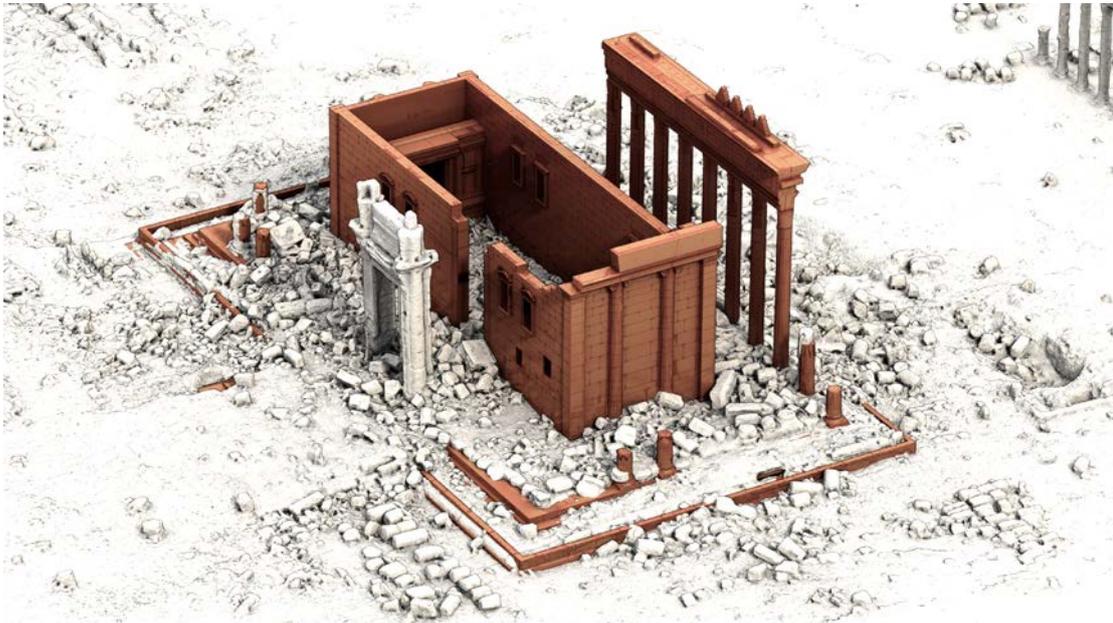
Removing rubble that occurs from the crash of the windows and the fall of the ceilings and electrical tiles with careful work to collect the damaged objects



Iconem used a Nikon AMD digital camera with 20 mega pixels, in order to record all the blocks of the museum and survey each of them and to provide a detailed documentations to the damaged statues and sculptures that help experts in the restoration phase.



Aerial Footage of the tower tombs showing the destruction in the area



The drawing shows the preliminary reconstruction of the temple of Bel before the explosion (in red), using old surveys and crowd sourced pictures overlapping the actual state of the temple (in white)

Name of World Heritage property : **ANCIENT CITY OF ALEPPO**

Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 1986

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANTS

Located at the crossroads of several trade routes since the 2nd millennium B.C., Aleppo was ruled successively by the Hittites, Assyrians, Akkadians, Greeks, Romans, Umayyads, Ayyubids, Mameluks and Ottomans who left their stamp on the city. The Citadel, the 12th-century Great Mosque and various 16th and 17th-centuries madrasas, residences, khans and public baths, all form part of the city's cohesive, unique urban fabric.

The monumental Citadel of Aleppo, rising above the suqs, mosques and madrasas of the old walled city, is testament to Arab military might from the 12th to the 14th centuries. With evidence of past occupation by civilizations dating back to the 10th century B.C., the citadel contains the remains of mosques, palace and bath buildings. The walled city that grew up around the citadel bears evidence of the early Graeco-Roman street layout and contains remnants of 6th century Christian buildings, medieval walls and gates, mosques and madrasas relating to the Ayyubid and Mameluke development of the city, and later mosques and palaces of the Ottoman period. Outside the walls, the Bab al-Faraj quarter to the North-West, the Jdeide area to the north and other areas to the south and west, contemporary with these periods of occupation of the walled city contain important religious buildings and residences. Fundamental changes to parts of the city took place in the 30 years before inscription, including the destruction of buildings, and the development of tall new buildings and widened roads. Nonetheless the surviving ensemble of major buildings as well as the coherence of the urban character of the suqs and residential streets and lanes all contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value.

THREATS:

Since the beginning of the crises, the extensive clashes of ALEPPO's ancient city has left part of the old city in ruins and caused massive destruction. A series of explosions strike ALEPPO ancient city. The Armed groups have detonated bombs in tunnels under the old city.

The Syrian army retaken Aleppo on December, 2016, as the group of armed fighters were evacuated.

MEASURES TAKEN

- The National Museum of Aleppo was attacked on July 2016, by a large number of missiles and explosive bombs, fired by armed extremist gangs, which led to a badly damaged in the construction structure of the museum, and it included the partial destruction of the concrete ceiling in different parts of the Museum, a big damages in infrastructure, exterior doors, the offices of employee & Museum

curators, and destruction the room of the generators, parts of the Museum outer fence.

- Before the liberation the DGAM in cooperation with (AL KHANY - Media Agency) and Engineering Office (ICONEM), undertook the works of 3D documentation by using of modern technologies in the Aleppo Citadel, and the team began processing of the data.
- The Syrian president formed a committee to undertake the rehabilitation project to the Umayyad Mosque with the member of Director of Aleppo Antiquities.
- The Prime Minister hold a meeting on January 4, 2017, he highlighting the need of forming committees and work teams to rehabilitate the old city of Aleppo.
- The governor of Aleppo started raising awareness to the local community to preserve the old city and avoid any wrong intervention during the recovery phase.
- The city council started immediately (under the supervision of the joint work of the DGAM of Aleppo and the old city team) to clear away some of the debris (which are not archaeological elements), they tried to keep streets open and maintain access to Umayyad Mosque and Aleppo Citadel by pushing rubble to the sides.
- Historical buildings were left until they can be assessed as to how they can be reconstructed. Valuable stonework were safeguarded as much as possible for re-use.
- The Aleppo antiquities was able to control the service urgent works within the old city.
- Damage assessments emerged immediately when the Syrian government assumed full control of the city, more than half of Aleppo's fiercely contested ancient center suffered varying degrees of damage. *(A full report will be send soon)*

Damage Extent
Mildly Affected
The citadel
Hammam Al Nahassin
Buch Khan
Al Mahmas Souq
Suitin Souq
Dahsha Souq
Nur al Din Bimaristan
Argon Bimaristan
Bab Al Maqam

al Tawashi Mosque
Atroush Mosque
Jub Alkuba area
Alaajem area
Qastal Musht Mosque
Beit Muhb
Al Jabri Madrassa
Banqousa Mosque
Hammam al Ahmar
Al Hamwi Mosque
Bab Qinnestrin
Moderate Affected
Citadel Parameter
Al-Haddadin Mosque
Umayyad Mosque
Qastal Harami Mosque
al Tananeer square
Maronite church (Our lady)
Alfadilah Madrassa
Khanqah al-Farafira (al-Farafira district)
al-Dabbagh al-'Atiqa Mosque
Bab al-Nasr
Bab al-Hadid
Police Station (Bab al-Hadid)
Dar Al Eftaa
Higly Affected
Khan al Harir axis
Khan al Wazir
al-Matbakh al-Ajami
Beit Qataraghasi (Seif Addawleh Madrassa)
Beit Ghazaleh (al-Jdayde quarter)
Beit Achiqbash (al-Jdayde quarter)
Sahat Al Hatab (al-Jdayde quarter)
Sabaa Bahrat Square
Sejeen street
Destroyed
al-Madrassa al-Zahiriyyeh
Grand Serail (main government building)
Carlton Hotel
Suweiqqa area (Sabaa Bahrat Square)
Golden Souq

Women Souq
Istanbul Souq
Al Zaher Souq



al Tananeer square



Maronite church (Our lady)



Khan al Harir



Qastal Harami



The passports and immigration building



The citadel parameter



Al Zaher Souq



Police Station (Bab al-Hadid)



Beit Qataraghasi (Seif Addawleh Madrassa)



al Khusruwiyah Mosque



Al-Sultaniyah Madrasa



Khan al Shuna



The citadel surrounding



The citadel surrounding

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

Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 2006

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

- In cooperation with the joint Syro-Hungarian archaeological mission SHAM documentation works started on July 2016, for the church and the Hall of Knights at the Crac des Chevalier. The mission also did surveys with geo-radar and 3D documentation for some buildings.
- In the framework of the EU-funded Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage project (contract N°: 4500318307) was launched with ICONEM to create a complete 3D model with a resolution of one centimeter of Crac des Chevaliers (exterior and interior), in view of completing the body of documentation necessary for post-conflict interventions.
- The work was limited on 2016 for removing climbing and heavy vegetative growth plants that blocking paths.
- The rooms of the Antiquities office staff were repaired and supplied of electricity and water, furniture also were installed.
- The minor damaged parts were restored at Qal'at Salah El-Din and the castle reopened to the visitors.

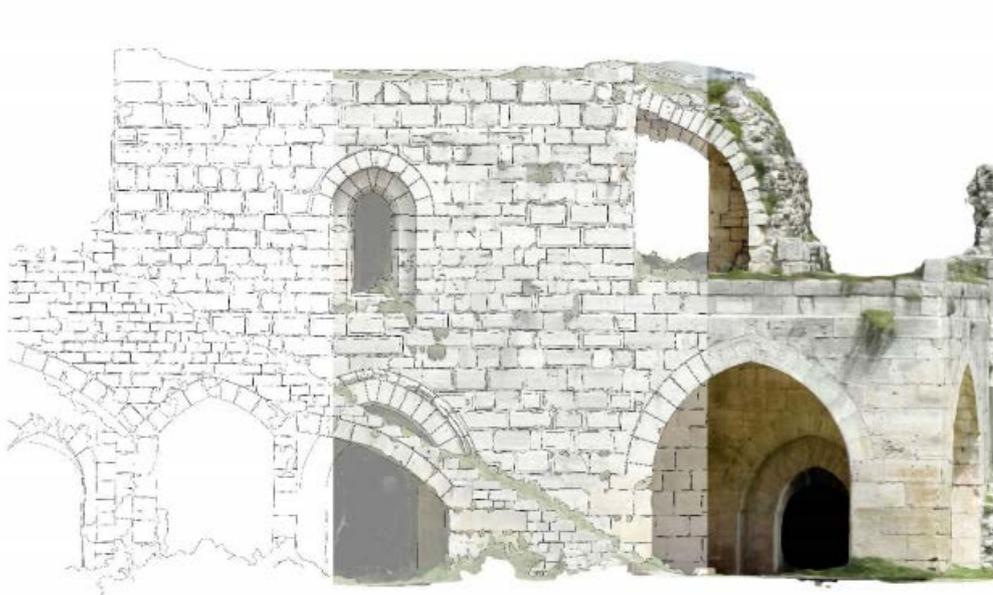
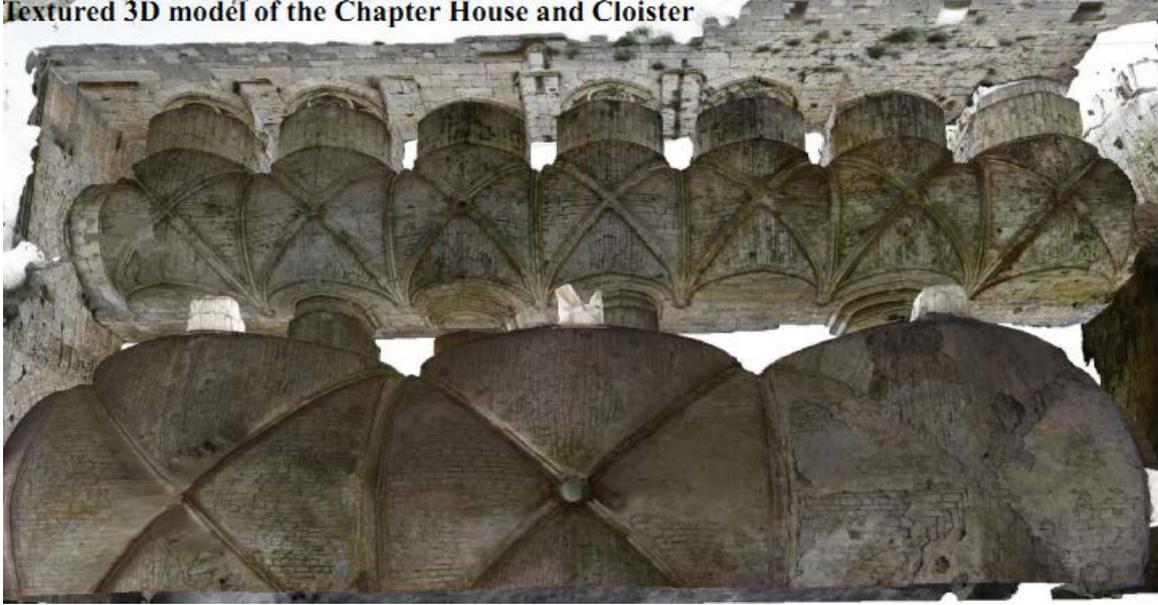


During the removing of climbing and heavy vegetative that blocking paths at Crac des chevaliers



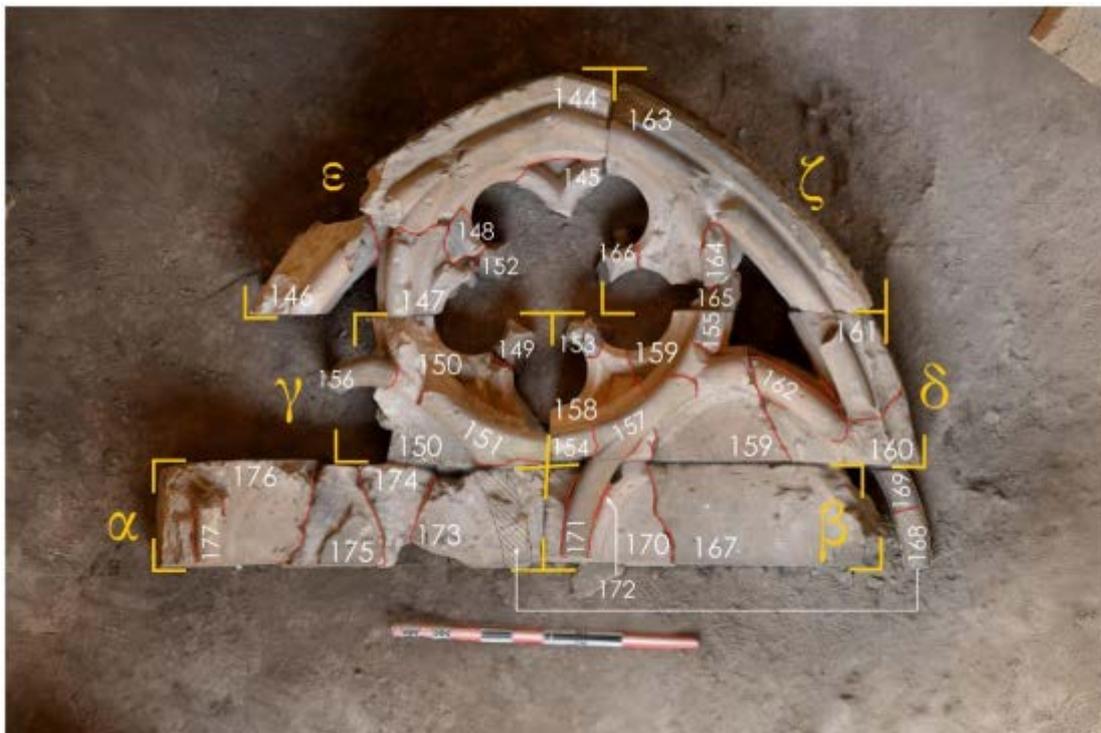
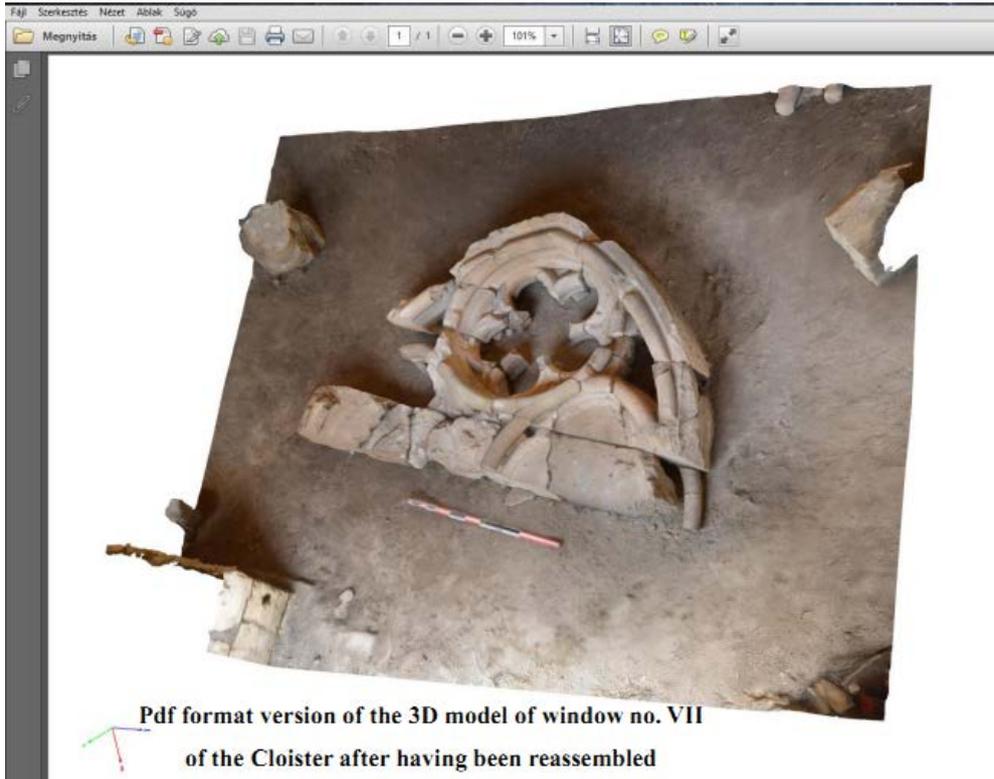
The joint Syro-Hungarian archaeological mission SHAM documentation works at Crac des chevaliers

Textured 3D model of the Chapter House and Cloister



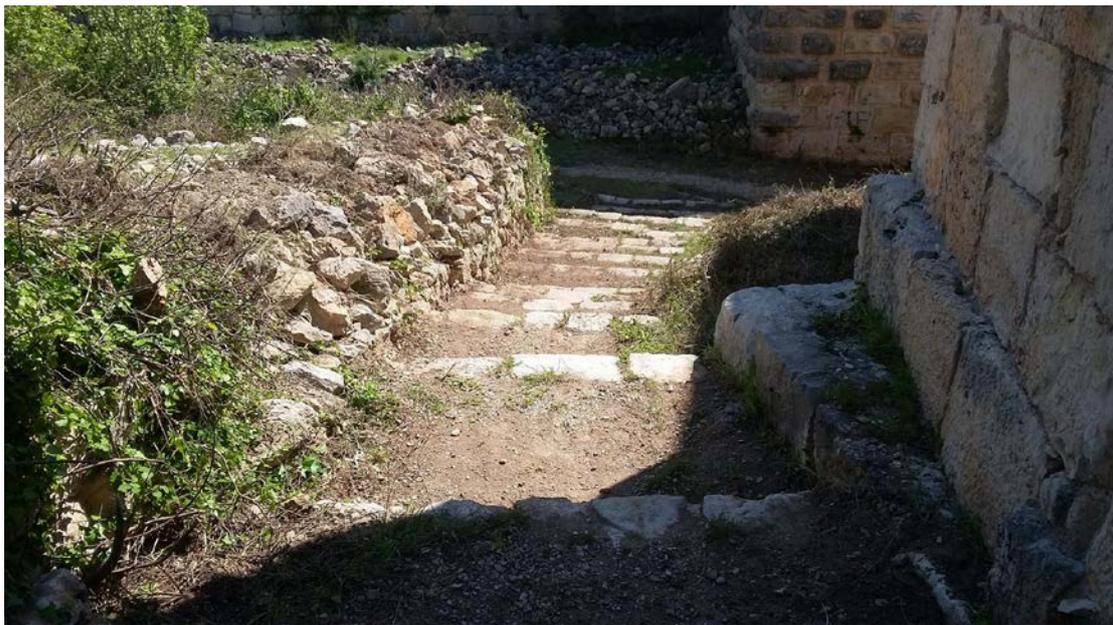
Chapel façade redrawn using the photogrammetry generated from the 3D model

Source: The report of joint Syro-Hungarian archaeological mission SHAM, 2016



Numbered fragments to the reconstructed window

Source: The report of joint Syro-Hungarian archaeological mission SHAM, 2016



After removing climbing and heavy vegetative that blocking paths at Qal'at Salah El-Din

Name of World Heritage property: **ANCIENT VILLAGES IN NORTHERN SYRIA**

Date of inscription on World Heritage List: 2011

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANTS:

Located in a vast Limestone Massif, in the northwest of Syria, some forty ancient villages provide a coherent and exceptionally broad insight into rural and village lifestyles in late Antiquity and the Byzantine Period. Abandoned in the 8th-10th centuries, they still retain a large part of their original monuments and buildings, in a remarkable state of preservation: dwellings, pagan temples, churches and Christian sanctuaries, funerary monuments, bathhouses, public buildings, buildings with economic or artisanal purposes, etc. It is also an exceptional illustration of the development of Christianity in the East, in village communities. Grouped in eight archaeological parks, the ensemble forms a series of unique and exceptional relict cultural landscapes.

THREATS

Aleppo antiquities monitored the damage at Simeon Mountain which still continuous, the armed gangs still presence at the citadel and vandalism acts still ongoing within the citadel and in the surrounding archaeological sites at Simeon Mountain:

SIMEON CITADEL:

On May 2015, the Church of Saint Simeon Stylites damaged due to the clashes, the damage appeared in several areas at the church and the pillar of St. Simeon Stylites. The Antiquities team there (which is still paid a monthly salary by the DGAM) monitor the damage regularly and still reporting to the main directorate in Damascus despite that the area is still out of the government control.

RURAL IDLEB

According to information received from the local community in IDLEB, the archaeological sites in Barisha and Al A'la mountains at northern Syrian limestone massif had witnessed different acts of damage and vandalism among them:

AL A'LA MOUNTAIN:

- Baqirha and Khrbet Al-Khatib: The sites still in a good condition, small scale of illegal diggings founds there.
- Dier Qitta: The condition of the site still unknown, armed groups prevent local community to enter the site.
- Khrbet Dierouna: The site is in good condition.
- Al Kfier church: The condition remain the same, no new illegal diggings witnessed there.
- Qalb Loza church: no damage recorded this year.

It is noted that most of the vandalism acts limited to illegal diggings using of manual tools, in addition to using the ancient stones for building material and illegal constructions.

MEASURES TAKEN

- Damage monitoring to the parks by photos, maps, reports and sometimes when available and field visit (when possible). Most of the information obtained from the cooperation of the local community. The DGAM still payed salaries to the guard at Aleppo countryside with monitoring of Antiquities of Aleppo.
- DGAM continue to cooperate with members of the local community in this region to protect the archaeological sites from destruction and illegal excavation.