

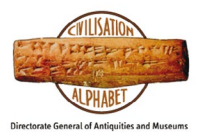


January 2014

Annual Report 2013

Syrian Arab Republic
Ministry of Culture
Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums

Aleppo old city



Prof.Dr. Maamoun Abdulkarim
General-Director



Syrian Arab Republic
Ministry of Culture
Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums
Damascus - Qasr el Hier st
Tel: + 963 - 11 - 2234331 - 2254811
Fax: + 963 -11 - 2247983
www.dgam.gov.sy

Workteam names: Arch. Lina Kutifan - Kinana Sadikni -Rasheed Abdulhadi

CONTENTS

	Introduction	4
1	The statue quo	5
	A Museums	5
	Clashes	5
	Thefts	5
	B Archaeological Sites	6
	Aleppo	7
	Clashes	7
	Illegal Excavations	7
	Construction Violation	9
	Other kind of Violation	10
	Idlib	11
	Hasaka - Dier ez Zour	15
	Raqqa - Hama	18
	Homs	19
	Damascus countryside	20
	Daraa	21
	Clashes	21
	Illegal Excavations	21
	Quneitra	22
	Lattakia - Tartus- Sweida	22
	C Construction Violation	22
	D Antiquities Forgery Phenomenon	22
2	Measures Taken	23
	A Locally	23
	B Internationally	26
	Conclusion	28

INTRODUCTION

Syria has a rich and lively heritage which reflects the aspects of diversity that the Syrian society is distinguished for. Besides, this land has preserved invaluable relics belonging to the different civilizations that lived on this land thousands of years ago in peaceful coexistence, a characteristic of the culture of the ancient world.

Nevertheless, Syria's antiquities today are standing on the thresholds of a vague and an undecided future due to destructive violence casting its shadow over all aspects of life, in addition to its impact on our cultural heritage.

Since the beginning of the painful events, several archaeological sites and historical landmarks have suffered damage as a result of becoming battlefields.

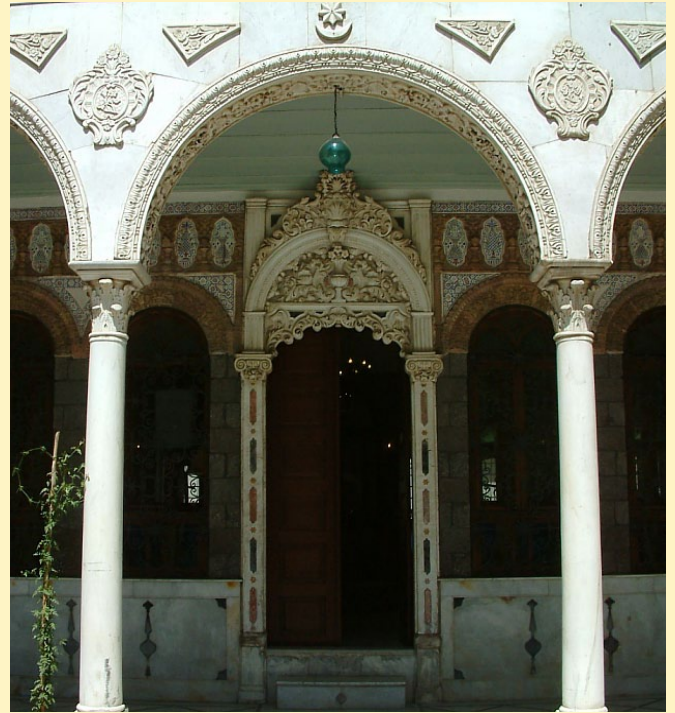
What is more, barbaric excavations and fierce digs have damaged other sites. The architectural structures of some museums have been affected down to bombings, and some of those museums have been subject to thefts, as well. Moreover, forgery of antiquities, particularly statues and mosaics, has been active lately; unique and matchless sites have recently been transformed into arenas of firearms training, and some others have been targeted on extremist ideological grounds. Furthermore, violations have affected the Syrian cultural heritage by means of destruction and distortion and have unfortunately caused damage whose effects cannot be erased from the history, cultural identity and memory of the Syrian people.

In addressing the issue of what the cultural heritage is undergoing, the DGAM has relied on the obligations imposed by its prominence as a scientific and professional institution, founded more than eighty years ago. Moreover, it has established its good reputation as a result of accumulating the efforts of generations of archaeologists and cooperating with foreign scholars who have shared their expertise and powers for decades. Hence, the DGAM has been seeking to unify visions through separating and safeguarding the cultural heritage from politics and its repercussions and through learning to come together as Syrians irrespective of our different political views to defend our own antiquities, being part of the fabric of Syrian life and a source of pride and self-definition that brings us all together as one nation for our present and future.

In order to spare the Syrian archaeological heritage and keep it far away from danger as much as possible, the DGAM has appealed to all parties to avoid the archaeological sites and respect their sanctity. Thanks to this vision, the DGAM is still functioning so efficiently; its cadres are still united in all governorates and its efforts have yielded successful results in many cases and regions. Besides, by means of cooperating with members of the local community in areas where institutions are absent, the DGAM has managed to reduce the impact of the damage and violations threatening the archaeological sites.

Thus, since events worsened, the DGAM has published detailed reports every six months in order to give a clearer picture that documents the damage befalling the sites and the measures taken locally and internationally in search of solutions to help ward off danger.

The following is an up-to-date version of the report, documenting the damage and violations at the different Syrian museums and archaeological sites as well as the measures taken since the beginning of the crisis until the end 2013. This report was prepared by the DGAM relying on any available photos and information provided by the departments of antiquities in the different governorates or sent by members of the local community in the affected areas:



THE STATUS QUO



Idlib- Maarrat Museum
Aleppo - Medicine & Science
Museum

A. MUSEUMS:

Generally speaking, museums in Syria are in good condition, given that the DGAM has succeeded in safeguarding their holdings except for some rare cases; nonetheless, clashes have caused tangible damage to some museums.

CLASHES:

Tangible damage has affected the architectural structure of some museums, such as Aleppo Museum and Deir ez-Zor Museum. For instance, some windows and doors were smashed, and some suspended ceilings were damaged due to explosions and mortar shells in areas adjacent to the two museums.

In addition, Hama and Maarrat Nuḡman Museums as well as Museums of Folklore in Homs and Deir-



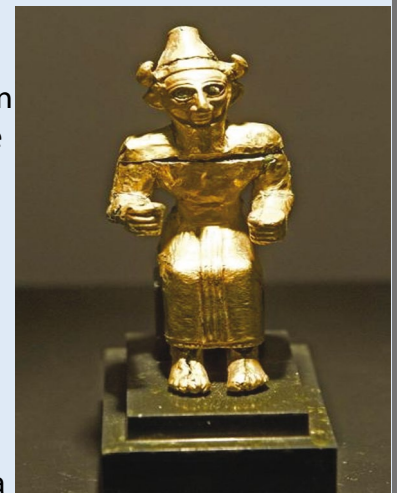
Homs - Traditional Folk Museum

ez-Zor suffered physical damage as a result of clashes. Moreover, the walls of Palmyra Museum were affected after being hit by rockets fired from the neighboring orchards.

Thus, these affected places with cracked and damaged walls are in need of reconstruction and rehabilitation; consequently, the DGAM has taken some emergency measures to provide temporary protection to the museums following the damages befalling them.

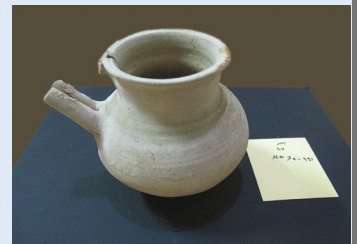
THEFTS:

- Since the beginning of the crisis, Syrian museums have witnessed the theft of two archaeological artifacts, namely a gilt bronze statue, dating back to the Aramaean era, from Hama Museum and a stone marble piece from Apamea Museum.



Hama museum - A gilt bronze statue had been stolen from the museum

- Thieves stole historical pieces from Aleppo's Museum of Folklore, namely glassware, Baghdadi daggers, six spears and some garments.
- 17 pieces of pottery in addition to some clay dolls were stolen from the exhibition hall of Jaabar Castle.



Pottery stolen from Jaabar castle

- **U n c o n f i r m e d** information on the theft of some of the assets of Homs Museum spread around, whereas reports from the Department of Antiquities of Homs did not verify this information although these reports indicated that there was difficulty in assessing the situation precisely. However, the department confirmed that the situation was not grave.

- In Spring 2012, due to the painful events endured by the city of Raqqa as well as the absence of the concerned governmental and cultural institutions, an armed group, called «Cham free people», has moved the three boxes containing 527 artifacts to an unknown location under the pretext of protecting them.



Raqqa- Potteries stolen from Hergla warehouse



Raqqa- Tel Hamam Terkman

In June 2013, robbers seized six boxes, containing archaeological artifacts, which were stored in Raqqa Museum's warehouses, efforts exerted by the cadres of the department have not been successful in returning those boxes so far. Those three boxes containing 104 archaeological artifacts were found in Tabqa city. Besides, the staff of the department is attempting to return the boxes to the museum after they are checked and inventoried.

- An armed group stormed the museum of Deir Atieh on Thursday, 21 Nov.2013, and stayed there until the Syrian army regained control of the place on Saturday afternoon, 23/ 11/ 2013. After inspecting the museum by its staff, it was evident that the weaponry hall was subject to theft of historical and modern pistols and rifles, and the silverware hall suffered from theft of silver jewelry which was kept in hidden places. In addition, the museum was subject to some destruction and damage at specific points due to clashes. Consequently, the DGAM closed the gates of the museum tightly so as to safeguard it and maintain the status quo while awaiting the situation to calm down in order to carry out a full and detailed inventory of the museum's holdings.

- 30 pieces of art were stolen from Maarrat Museum almost a year ago after an armed group stormed the place. The pieces included small dolls and statues made of clay and mud, broken pottery and amulets. Nevertheless, all the mosaics in the museum are safe and unscathed.

B. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

- Today, the Syrian antiquities are facing a new setback as unique sites are being converted to fields for gun training and are being targeted either for combat or ideological purposes in another destructive attempt that can be added to previous negative factors affecting the Syrian cultural heritage.
- The following shows the damage resulting from clashes, construction violations, illegal excavation and other forms of violations organized according to the governorates from north to south of Syria:

ALEPPO

CLASHES:



Aleppo old city - Omayyad Mosque

- The Directorate of Antiquities of Aleppo has confirmed the destruction of the minaret of the Great Umayyad Mosque of Aleppo, one of the most important archaeological mosques in Syria. The minaret is considered one of the most amazing Islamic minarets in the old city of Aleppo inscribed under the UNESCO World Heritage List. Nevertheless, the DGAM has not been able to obtain more



Aleppo old city - old Souq

details or information in this respect down to difficulty in accessing and inspecting the place. Furthermore, an armed group disassembled the wooden minbar (a raised platform) of Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo and claimed to be transferring it to another safe place even though that happened without any prior knowledge of the archaeological authorities involved in protecting the cultural heritage in Aleppo. The Umayyad Mosque resulted in severe damage to the structure and the interiors while detailed information on the extent of the damage is hard to come by due to the security situation.

- hundreds of historic antique shops as well as goods and new wooden doors were burned down in old Aleppo souks such as Al-zerb, Al-Obbi, Al-Atme, Al-Attareen, Al-Niswan, Al-Soof, Al-Sagha.
- Pictures published by some news agencies have shown that Bimaristan Arghun, Aleppo, (also known as the Museum of Medicine and Science) suffered from some damages which was confirmed by the Directorate of Antiquities in Aleppo. Nevertheless, it seems impossible to determine the nature and extent of the damage due to difficulty in accessing the place for the time being.
- Most of the buildings in Old Aleppo were damaged as a result of the continuous clashes.
- The entrance to the Castle of Aleppo as well as its northern tower were subject to damage caused by the explosion befalling it.

For more information visit DGAM website about the damage in Aleppo: (www.dgam.gov.sy)

or view the Initial Damage Assessment map on the link (<http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=1097>).

• ILLEGAL EXCAVATION:

Some archaeological sites in the areas surrounding Aleppo have been subject to damage that cannot be identified precisely due to escalating violence there. The following is information received by the DGAM as regards some archaeological sites: Large areas on the northern and western sides of Tell Qaramel in the countryside of Aleppo



Aleppo countryside- Tell Qaramel

dating back to the Bronze Ages, were destroyed by means of heavy machinery after armed thieves of antiquities dug holes reaching 3 meters in depth while searching for treasures at the site.

- **Chalcis site (Qinnasrin)** southwest of Aleppo, located on al-Eis Mountain, which dates back to the Roman and Islamic periods, has been subjected to secret extensive digs carried out by thieves coming from the neighboring areas. This area was subjected to secret excavations in 2009, 2010 and 2011, particularly on the northern side of al-Eis Mountain which encompasses a number of archaeological cemeteries. Moreover, secret digs have escalated at this site due to the latest events.
- The archaeological sites in **Khanaser** area are being subjected to wide-ranging violations resulting from illegal excavation and digs there. Moreover, a group of armed thieves of antiquities removed and stole a mosaic from the church at the monastery archaeological site. The guard of the site was assaulted by them, as well.



Aleppo countryside- Deidariya cave

- **Al-Deidariya cave** in Mount Simeon suffered from acts of sabotage, which included the excavation area and archaeological sectors previously explored by the mission working there; in addition, the equipment of excavations, wooden columns and boards were looted.
 - **Manbej and its surroundings** (60 kilometers east of Aleppo city): the level of violation at the archaeological sites in Manbej and its surroundings is escalating seeing that antiquities in the region are being subjected to excavation and damage. Information has also indicated that there are certain groups assigned to steal antiquities through using metal detectors so as to unearth potteries, glassware and coins in order to sell them.
1. **Manbej city:** Tabbet Manbej (popularly known as the castle) was subject to digs in its entire surroundings and within homes. In addition, the northeastern quarter suffered from illegal digs inside one of the houses. Some archaeological layers were leveled in al-Sina'a area, as well.
 2. **Kherbet Alabash:** most caves there were exposed to opening and excavation.
 3. **Tell Arab Hasan:** since the beginning of the crisis, this site has been subject to intensive digs and excavations by thieves of antiquities in its entire surroundings. However, the extent of the damage has recently decreased by 90 per cent.
 4. **Tell Abu Qalqal:** it has been subject to limited digs and excavations.
 5. **Monastery of Deir Qanshara:** it has been subject to extensive violations seeing that it is located far away from residential communities and roads, which has resulted in damage to the walls of the monastery made of limestone as well as damage to the decorative elements carved on the walls of the monastery (the lintels of the windows). In addition, digs are being carried out in the adjacent hill which houses the service facilities of the monastery.
 6. **Serrin:** archaeological cemeteries dating back to the classical period in Serrin were subject to digs which resulted in damage to some of their walls. In addition, Maanu tower cemetery (known as Maghzal Serrin)

was exposed to violations, considered the most serious, which might cause the collapse and destruction of its walls in a short period of time since the upper part of the tower cemetery was damaged. Moreover, the constructional condition of the tower has always been bad, and it is getting worse and worse due to excavations within the cemetery and its surrounding.

7. *Shash Hamdan*: This site is one the funerary cemeteries dating back to the Roman period which is famed for its funerary relief cemeteries it suffered from several violations that led to the destruction of most of its unique elements,



Aleppo countryside- Shash Hamdan

namely:

- Sabotaging the statue of the bull carved on the northern wall.
- Destroying the altar completely.
- Sabotaging the two deer on the western side completely.
- Digging in the northeastern corner.



Aleppo countryside- Manbij- Tell Halula

- Stealing the metal gate protecting the site.
- 8. *Tell Halula*: It belongs to the New Stone Age, thieves destroyed the mud room built at the site, which was used as a warehouse of the mission and was burgled, as well.
- 9. *Um al-Sarj*: the southern cemeteries were subject to excavations that damaged parts of these cemeteries.
- 10. *Al-Halonji Castle*: it has suffered from digs all over the site.
- 11. *Al-Nabgha site*: digs took place at the site. In addition, the mosaic there was subject to damage, and the zinc room built above the mosaic for protection was stolen.
- 12. *Al-Hoshariya*: the areas of the Danish expedition were subject to digs and damage. Furthermore, many caves used as houses or cemeteries were opened.
- 13. *Shaqla*: extensive digs and excavations (ruining mosaics) were carried out. besides stone foundations were destroyed.
- 14. *Kherbet Nafakh*: digs and excavations are being carried out.
- 15. *Tell al-Zanqa*: it was subject to shallow digs and excavations within the rubble layers.
- 16. *Tell Khamis*: it was subject to secret shallow excavations within the rubble layers.
- 17. *Tell Shiyukh Tahtani*: it has been subject to several digging operations. In addition, some gangs attempted to level some part of the hill using a bulldozer. However, due to the intervention of the residents of the area, leveling the hill stopped, and it is in good condition now.
- 18. *Tell Shiyukh Foqani*: it has been subject to digs and excavations, which, however, have stopped lately.

Moreover, the cadres of the DGAM managed to reduce the impact of the current events on the archaeological heritage. In addition, by means of field visits and through communicating with the residents and popular events, the cadres also managed to protect some sites completely and prevent any more damage to some sites previously violated.

CONSTRUCTION VIOLATIONS:

- **Al-Rafada and Set al-Roum sites** (north of Aleppo nearby Simeon Castle):
Some local residents in the area of Shaikh Barakat

mountain opened illegal quarries at the foot of the mountain overlooking the town of Daret Azzeh. In addition, archaeological stones abundantly available in both Set al-Roum and al-Rafada villages, located between Simeon Castle and al-Qatora village (500m away), are being dismantled and sold as stone blocks for construction, which will damage these two distinctive archaeological sites which date back to the Byzantine period, and which were inscribed under the World Heritage List in 2011 within the archaeological parks, including the archaeological villages in the Limestone Massif, north of Syria.

- **Manbej city and its surroundings**

Construction violations on the tells (hills), located within residential communities, are spreading all over the place where residents are taking advantage of the current circumstances so as to construct rooms, walls and buildings on the archaeological hill or within its main part. Due to lack of awareness, others are using the archaeological stones in construction, cultivating



Aleppo countryside- Manbij- Jabal Khalid

the archaeological hills and growing seasonal trees or using some of those hills for burial, which is considered the least damaging compared to other violations in terms of the magnitude and extent of the damage inflicted.

- **Manbej city/the western quarter:**

1. The remains of the entrances to cave cemeteries were completely destroyed during the construction of the foundations of a building in the western quarter behind Mustafa al-Kabbar School.

2. Two individual tombs made of limestone containing no written or decorative elements were discovered.
3. A cemetery was discovered at a depth of six meters on the northern side of the aforesaid destroyed cemeteries; in addition, it is full of rubble now.
4. *Tell Ahmar*: there are construction violations as well as cultivation in some parts of the hill.
5. *Tell al-Aber*: its southern part has been subject to construction violations as well as growing trees within the national mission's areas. In contrast, the northern part is in good condition as the residents got convinced they should not cultivate or build anything at the site.
6. *Tell Yasti* and *Tell al-Rafee*: they were subject to plowing and cultivation of barley and olive trees.
7. *Tell Shiyukh Tahtani* and *Kherbet Nafakh*: they suffered from violations of constructing residential buildings.

It should be noted that there are a lot of construction violations in many sites we can not monitor them because of the crises.

OTHER FORMS OF VIOLATIONS:

- Today, the Syrian antiquities are facing a new setback as unique sites are being converted to fields for gun training and are being targeted either for combat or ideological purposes in another destructive attempt that can be added to previous negative factors affecting the Syrian cultural heritage:

- **Simeon Castle:**

1. According to testimonies by antiquities experts in Aleppo and the northern countryside, Simeon Castle has been subjected to deliberate distortion and damage since an armed group took shelter there, brought their weapons and heavy artillery and transformed the whole place into an arena of combat and gun training.
2. Moreover, shooting and other forms of training caused damage to the interior façades of the monastery and the church all together with its column capitals bearing curling acanthus leaves with winds. In addition, the site was exposed

to damage due to illegal digs and excavations carried out by that group within the religious complex dedicated to Saint Simeon Stylites.

3. *Simeon Castle* is considered as the jewel of the churches of the Forgotten Cities; therefore, the church and its natural surroundings were designated as World Heritage Site in 2011 down to its uniqueness and exceptionality in the whole world, which is the result of its distinctive architectural and decorative features, as well as its special religious sacredness.
- **al-Qatora site** (one kilometer away from Simeon Castle, north of Aleppo):
1. The stone statues located on the façades of the valley slopes in al-Qatora village, Sheikh Barakat mountain region, are being subjected to deliberate damage as they are directly targeted by gun fire making them training and sniping points, which will leave a destructive mark on exceptional archaeological structures that have spanned two thousand years since



Aleppo countryside- al Qatora

the second century AD at this site.

2. Consequently, those acts conducted at the sites of Simeon Castle, Set al-Roum, al-Rafada, al-Qatora and Sheikh Barakat mountain have taken part in distorting the archaeological scene which was a key factor in the inscription of this park on the World Heritage List.

IDLIB

- An armed group stormed into the two churches and monastery of **al-Jadida village** located in Jisr al-Shughur area (Idlib countryside), destroyed all the crosses and icons and stole 11 archaeological icons registered at the Department of Antiquities of Idlib.

- **Harem castle:** It has witnessed clashes; however, we do not have enough information on the damage caused.

- **Ebla site:**

The archaeological site of Ebla witnessed fierce and intensive digs at the onset of the crisis whose intensity decreased thanks to the efforts of the DGAM's cadres and archaeologists, which put an end to damage.

Some antiquities thieves carried out illegal excavations at the site in July 2013 after these operations had come to a halt for several months using heavy machinery in sweeping away the ground of a cave to reach its bottom, which resulted in a collapse claiming the lives of two members of the group and injuring others. Thus, during the first week of November 2013, the cadres of the Department of Antiquities of Idlib in cooperation with the local community conducted a tour at Ebla site to investigate about the damage caused by natural conditions at the site as well as that resulting from illegal excavation and digs.

Generally speaking, residents in the area in addition to members of the local community are exerting relentless efforts and attempts to safeguard the site and reduce the impact of the damage affecting it due to digs carried out by thieves of antiquities– which has reflected positively on the situation at the site.

Idlib Directorate of Antiquities provided detailed information on the acts of antiquities thieves which has reflected positively on the situation at the site. Consequently, the situation calmed down, and digs reached its minimum towards the end of 2013.

Violations resulting from fierce acts of excavation caused a lot of damage to the modern facilities of the site in Ebla, which caused a lot of damage to the modern facilities of the site such as the cafeteria at the entrance to the northern hill and the newly constructed

building southwest the site, which was supposed to be a center to receive visitors, in addition to the service room and its facilities.

As for the damages at the historic site and its relics, they, for the most part, were caused by weather conditions in winter which affected some walls, annually restored by the archaeological mission working at the site.

As well, the site suffered from damages caused by some people who focused their attention on the following sectors:

1. The Acropolis: Random holes spread all over the courtyards of the Royal Palace (G) especially around the archive room. Thieves attempted to enter by means of digging holes below some walls in order to reach older levels not explored yet. Moreover, they partly destroyed the basalt staircase in the administrative suite of the palace with the purpose of penetrating the layers; a number of wells were searched again despite being previously excavated by the expedition there. More historic levels were sabotaged in parts of the Palace (E). Besides, some insignificant diggings took place at the top of the Acropolis.
- The Northern Palace (P) and the Great Temple of Ishtar were subjected to digging operations



Ebla- Damages in the Royal palace

in some halls, but that posed no real threat. Also, some wells were searched again despite being previously excavated.

-The Southern Palace (FF), located in the slope of the Acropolis, suffered from vandalism and minor diggings which did not affect the building and can be repaired later.

-The perpetrators excavated several sectors in

the Temple of the Rock (HH) which was a significant temple in Ebla during the ancient Bronze Age (the middle of the 3rd millennium BC). Only one hole was dug there, and one well was searched.

-The Royal Palace (Q) in addition to the fences, gates and other sectors of the historic hill were not subjected to any damage.

2. The dead cities:

Some archaeological villages within the Northern Limestone Massif in Syria (known as the Dead Cities or Forgotten Cities) are being subject to different violations, particularly within the five parks of Idlib, such as:

- People there are residing in some of the archaeological villages such as Gebel az-Zawya.



Idleb- Gebel az-Zawia-Serjella

- Other areas are witnessing some attempts to use the archaeological rocks in construction.
- Slums and construction violations are spreading in some areas and villages.
- Several sites are suffering from illegal digs and excavation.
- Latest information has indicated that the condition of the sites of Gebel az-Zawya, inscribed on the World Heritage List, such as al-Bara, Serjilla and others, is stable due to cooperation between the DGAM's cadres and the local residents of most of these sites, who have taken on the responsibility of protecting the sites against any damage that might be caused by thieves of antiquities and vandals.

It is worth mentioning that the number of

the archaeological parks inscribed on the World Heritage List since 2011 has amounted to eight, five of which are located in this region within Idlib Governorate (namely, two parks in Gebel az-Zawya; one park in Gebel al-Aala; one park in Gebel Barisha and one park in Gebel al-Woastani), and three others in Aleppo.

Violations affecting the sites of Gebel al-Aala, Gebel al-Woastani and Gebel Barisha in Idlib:

1. *Kafr Oqab* site of Gebel al-Woastani: it has been subjected to destruction and damage by antiquities thieves. Moreover, information has confirmed that Kafr Oqab is the most damaged and most affected site in the region in that large and deep pits spread all over the place. Some of these pits contain virgin cemeteries which have been looted and destroyed; in addition, the southern tower has been knocked down and the nave of the church has suffered from secret digs and damage.
2. *Banassra* site of Gebel al-Woastani: a large number of pits have spread all over the site; a 2 x 2m and a depth of 90cm pit has been seen in the Martirio (martyrdom) Chamber in the northern church and a similar one in the southern church. Besides, damage to the southern church has caused all the stone columns to topple down and some parts of mosaic floors to appear. In addition, a large sarcophagus east of the church has been destroyed.
3. *Qalb Lozeh* of Gebel al-Aala: the church is completely intact apart from breaking four stones of the apse. In addition, a carved stone in an embossed and distorted human shape has been found at the west end of the church.



Idlib- Gebel al-Aala-Qalb Lozeh church

4. *Qarqabiza* site of Gebel al-Aala: a number of archaeological walls have been damaged; moreover, the eastern wall of a house east of the church has been destroyed and several digs have been spotted.
5. *Kfeire* site of Gebel al-Aala: excavation pits have spread all over the place; the most dangerous of which has been in the Martirio Chamber of the church. Furthermore, a small burial ground has been discovered in the bottom as a result of breaking the stone slabs.

Idlib Department of Antiquities has declared that the nature and places of excavations suggest that the thieves have contacted antiquities and excavation experts seeing that the digs are taking place in an orderly fashion focused, in general, on specific places inside the churches and underneath and around sarcophagi searching for treasures and archaeological finds. Furthermore, information obtained from the local community has confirmed that a lot of antique dealers and smugglers, Syrians and non-Syrians, Turkish in particular, are in the region.

Gebel az-Zawiya Park/al-Bara, which includes (al-Bara, Wadi Martahun, Magelya, Batirsa, Bshilla, Baoudeh, Sergella, DeLozeh, Shanshrah, and Rabeea), suffered from violations and vandalism in some parts:

- **Al-Bara site:**



Idlib- Gebel az-Zawia-Bara

A report received from the office of the Archaeological Parks in Idlib has indicated that some construction violations have taken place next to or at al-Bara archaeological site.

Furthermore, it has been realized that a large number of sites surrounding al-Bara are inhabited by some local residents in the region during this crisis. Thus, the DGAM is communicating with those people in order to safeguard these relics against any damage that might be inflicted on them by means of breaking stones, setting fires and violating them (by some thieves). According to information received from the Department of Antiquities of Idlib, most of the residents of the region are cooperating and showing a relatively good response as regards reducing the impact of the damage on these sites.



Idlib- Gebel az-Zawia-Bara

Three stone sarcophagi inside the pyramid tomb were broken as well as a gate lintel and the door of an olive oil mill. Moreover, four historic crowns were stolen.

Some local people are living in around 15 caves and refurbishing some others in addition to rock engraved Byzantine tombs.

- Some front parts at the site were tarnished due to clashes. These are the front parts of Abi Sufyan Castel, the pyramidal burial chamber (known as Sawmaa), the eastern façade of one of the five churches, the pyramidal burial chamber (known as Mazuqa) north and south, and the eastern façade of the Monastery.

- **Sergella site:**

-Sign boards were broken as well as the sarcophagus at the entrance of Sergella site.



Idlib- Gebel az-Zawia-Serjella

Some villagers from Kafr Roma dwell in about 10 historic houses in Sergella.

- The doors, windows, and switches of the entrance to the site were broken. Moreover, the office, the electricity room and the tickets office were broken into.

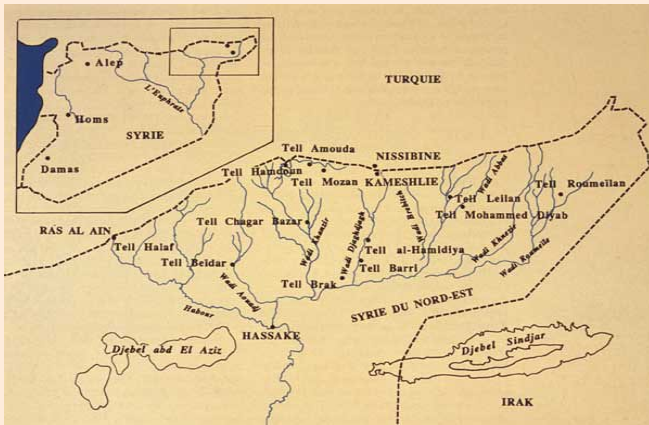
- *Wadi Martahun, Magelya, Batirsa, Bshilla, Baoudeh, and DeLozeh sites:*

Some people have lived and refurbished 7 caves; in addition, secret excavation took place in scattered spots.

- Gebel al-Zawyia/al-Maara Park, which includes (*Jerade and Ruwiha*), suffered from secret excavation, and recent building violations reached Jerada site; some façades in Jerade site were tarnished.

Furthermore, the headquarters and homes of foreign expeditions were burgled in Idlib.

HASAKA



Hasaka-Tell Beydar

The Hasaka Directorate of Antiquities pointed out in a report that the archeological sites north of the governorate have so far been in good condition as no illegal excavations took place, especially the important sites where Syrian and foreign missions have been conducting explorations for years. Those sites are (Tell Mozan, Tell Leilan, Tell Beydar, and Tell Arbeed), and they include some of the most significant ancient kingdoms in the region. The directorate also asserted that Hamokar archaeological site is fine; however, nearby hills suffered from secret excavations. As for (Tell Berry, Tell Brak, and Tell Halaf), they have not been subjected to attacks or sabotage. The report showed that the absence of vandalism acts at these important sites is the result of the cooperation of the local community in the area.

- The residence of the British archaeological mission working at the hill of Tell Brak was subjected to attacks by an armed group; as a result, wooden logs and equipment therein were stolen, and some pottery pieces were thrown away there.
- In addition, some illegal digs were conducted by using heavy machinery at the hill.

- There are no specific details or information as regards the archaeological sites south of the governorate seeing that archaeologists and guards cannot access the area. However, some residents of the southern region have reported noticing illegal



Hasaka-Tell Brak

excavation at some archaeological sites like Tell Ajaja.

DEIR Ez ZOR

- **Tell es-Sin:** Secret excavation is still being conducted at the site as follows:
 1. outside the fence and within the area of the cemeteries on the northern side of the site.
 2. sweeping away the ground by means of heavy machinery (an excavator) within the fences on the northwestern side of the site resulting in a 15m-long-and-4m-deep hole, which led to the damage of the archaeological layers there.
 3. sweeping away the ground in the northwestern tower of the fence (located on the northern side of the fence towards the cliff overlooking the Euphrates valley).
 4. Also, more than 280 holes and deep trenches have spread within the Byzantine cemetery located north of the fence of the hill which has resulted in the uncovering of several tombs as well as the theft of their contents. In addition, wide spaces of the site have become a landfill of waste and residues resulting from

demolishing houses, and the southern part of the hill has been used as a market by oilmen, as well.

- **Tell Buseira:** Construction violations are still taking place within the site as follows:
 1. Shoveling away the ground on the eastern side of the hill overlooking the mouth of Khabour River where it flows into the Euphrates River, and where a building block of six shops was constructed.
 2. Damaging and destroying Maqam Sheikh Issa at the top of the archaeological hill.
 3. Shoveling away the ground in the northern part of the hill very fiercely in order to construct a large building block.

What is more, 70 holes, whose depth ranges from 1 to 4 meters, resulted from illegal excavation at several parts of Buseira site.



Deir ez Zor-Buseira

- **Tell al-Ashara:** Construction violations are still taking place within the archaeological site in addition to leveling the hill:
 1. 1- 8-meter-deep sweeping away of the third-millennium-BC fences on the southeastern side of the hill located at the entrance to al-Ashara Bridge.
 2. 2- constructing shops and sky-high buildings on both sides of the road leading to al-Ashara Bridge, where the western side of the hill was fiercely shoveled away. In addition, several archaeological layers and levels dating back to the Akkadian and Assyrian periods appeared.
- **Dura Europos site (Salhiya):**
 1. Almost 300 people are excavating intensively in several sectors within the site. Furthermore, fierce excavation has escalated at the site since September 2013 as someone found a gold bracelet within the site. Red rocks within the sector of the Temple of Bel were stolen

and transferred outside the site.

2. So far, Dura Europos site has been suffering from systematic acts of looting, vandalism and destruction violating its sanctity by means of fierce and secret excavations using heavy machinery. Attempts by members of the local community to put an end to those



Deir ez Zor-Dura Europos

acts, however, have failed. Those violations have also led to the destruction of Dura Europos site at a very high percentage estimated at 80% of the site as perpetrators are digging holes that can reach 3 meters deep. Moreover, according to reports received from Deir ez-Zor in April 2013, the number of holes resulting from illegal excavations in search of archaeological finds at Dura Europos site has amounted to 300 different-sized holes all over the site, particularly Bait Lysias, the markets, the public baths and the synagogue as well as the archaeological buildings within the site. What is more, unconfirmed information received by the department referred to the discovery of a white stone statue of a two-winged lady carrying a child.

- **Tell al-Hariri (Mari):** An armed gang of antiquities is staying within the residence of the mission and

Mari site visitor center with the participation of some locals in the area, particularly from al-Sayal village. In addition, information has confirmed that the gang has obtained treasure detectors and that they intend to utilize them in an attempt to steal some antiquities from the site, which calls for attention against worse violations that can be added to the previous ones affecting the site. It is worth mentioning that the archaeological site of Mari has suffered from excavations similar to those Dura Europos site has witnessed, which have affected significant buildings and several places in Mari. Besides, digs at Mari archaeological site were carried out with complete focus on the Royal Palace, the southern gate, the public baths, Temple of Ishtar, Temple of Dagan and the Temple of the Goddess of Spring. In addition, the number of holes at Mari site totaled 50 till the end of April 2013; also the residence of the mission as well as the visitors center were burgled. Some violations took place at al-Sayal site, as well.

- **Tell Taboos:** it has been subjected to excavations and thefts by thieves of antiquities who sell the discovered finds to tradesmen coming from Aleppo and Raqqa. In addition, the remaining buildings were damaged and destroyed.



Deir ez Zor- Tall Taboos

- **Halbia site:** The intensity of excavation has decreased for the past two months following large-scale attacks which the site suffered from previously. Besides, thieves have recently been prevented from accessing the site thanks to the endeavors of the residents of the area after the staff of the Department of Antiquities of Deir ez-Zor coordinated with the social elites and the heads of the tribes in the region. Moreover, they agreed to protect the site against vandals. Previously, Halbia site witnessed blatant excavations using heavy machinery in the area of the north tower cemeteries adjacent to al-Harbi Bridge, on the eastern side along the Euphrates River and next to the basilica located in the middle of the site to the west along

the basalt plateau. The thieves stole the protective doors of the entrances to the gates of the towers and the entrances to Halbia archaeological site, Deir ez-Zor. The ticket office was also burgled. Furthermore, the excavation tools of the archaeological mission working



Deir ez Zor- Halabia

at the site were stolen as well as one of the Directorate of Tourism caravans servicing at the site. In addition, Maqam Sheikh Shipley, located outside the fence within the southern side of the site, was blasted and leveled to the ground using heavy machinery.

- **Tell Sheikh Hamad** site: it has been subject to blatant and illegal excavations. In addition, the accommodations of the mission working at the site have been burgled. Also dignitaries in the village have intervened to put an end to the digs and the resulting damage.
- **Rahba Castle** has undergone limited damage in specific positions.

RAQQA

The Directorate of Antiquities in Raqqa indicated in a report that Jaabar Castel is safe but closed for the time being due to the presence of gunmen in the area and the neighboring villages.

Some archaeological sites in Raqqa have been suffering from illegal excavation, on which the DGAM has not been able to obtain any detailed information since the guards cannot access the place down to the violent clashes. Thus, the DGAM has relied on information received from some members of the local community in the region regarding the situation at these sites:

1. **Tell Sabi Abyad** has suffered from digs within the excavation areas of the Dutch mission previously working at the site. No detailed information is available on the nature of the

- damage at the site due to difficulty in accessing it.
2. *Maadan desert* in the countryside of Raqqa has been subjected to illegal digs.
 3. A lot of destructive violations to the archaeological layers at *Tell al-Bayah* and other neighboring tells (hills) were recorded.
 4. The DGAM has received photos showing violations and damage affecting the archaeological sites within and beyond the Governorate of Raqqa. Damage caused by digs excavations differ in intensity, range and depth seeing that some archaeological sites have been subject to violent excavation and digs, while damage has been limited at some other sites, namely Tell al-Mafsh, the old mosque/al-Mansoor mosque, Maqam Wabsa, Tell Hammam Turkmen, Tell Shaheen and Sheikh Hasan site).
 5. The storehouse of Hergla archaeological building, belongs to Excavation Directorate has been stolen by almost 100 armed men specialized in antiquities theft, who break into the storehouse and burgle it. The contents comprising of hundreds of artifacts, such as different kinds of potteries, plaster ware, pieces of mosaics and



Raqqa- Potteries stolen from Hergla warehouse

broken pottery for research, which represented the results of archaeological excavation at different sites in Raqqa over the years. Thus, the employees of the Department of Antiquities of Raqqa took a number of measures to safeguard Hergla building having been subjected to several break-in and robbery attempts. Hence, the doors and windows of the warehouses were closed using sand mixed with bricks in the beginning of summer 2013. Due to continued threats and attacks, the staff there, after coordinating with the central administration of the DGAM in Damascus, emptied the contents of the warehouse of the building and transferred them to a house made of concrete in Hergla village. Unfortunately, these efforts



Raqqa- Tell Hammam Turkmen

were unsuccessful in protecting the artifacts and preventing any attempt to steal them at gunpoint and in front of all of the villagers.

HAMA

- *Apamea* site is considered one of the most affected sites as a result of the ongoing secret excavations at the site, which are centered around the eastern, northeastern and western regions of the city. Moreover, a comparison between two photos taken by satellite, the first of which was taken before the beginning of the crisis in Syria and the second on April 4th, 2012, shows the amount of looting and destruction *Apamea* site was subject to due to secret excavation.
- Construction rocks were stolen from *al-Andreen* archaeological site. Besides, an armed group attacked the residence of the German mission working at the site, took out the contents of its rooms and made it their own headquarters.
- Both *Shayzar* and *Madheek castles* have undergone minor and limited damage at specific points.

HOMS



Homs - Ancient Souq

- *Um al-Zennar Church* in addition to other churches and some old souks in Homs suffered major damage due to clashes. It is worth mentioning that the City of Old Homs is one of the most affected cities together with Aleppo.

You can have more detailed information on the affected buildings in Homs by visiting the following link of the map of the affected cultural heritage: <http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=1097>

- Clashes caused damage to some parts of the interior of *Krak des Chevaliers*. The cadres of the department, however, could not examine the castle from the inside or take any photos due to difficulty in accessing the castle during the current situation.
- *Khalid ibn al-Walid Mosque* in Homs has been subject to damage down to clashes in the region.



Homs- Khalid Ibn al -Walid mosaque

• Palmyra:

Digs are spreading within the southeastern cemeteries area previously excavated in an attempt to open some of them. Furthermore, it is not possible, for the time being, to estimate the extent of the damage caused by these digs prior to carrying out detailed inspection as well as removing the dust covering those graves. In addition, the archaeological Temple of Bel was subject to some damage due to clashes taking place in al-Basateen area. The damage caused was as follows:

1. A hole in the southern wall of the Temple (1x2m approx) as well as another in the eastern wall of the wood warehouse adjacent to the guesthouse, to its southern side (1.5x1.5m approx).
2. Several columns of the southern portico of the Temple were hit, and two of them collapsed.
3. Due to clashes, the southern wall of the Temple was hit by bullets and shells in several positions; the western wall was hit on the inside and outside; the northern wall was struck by two limited hits and the eastern wall of the Temple endured two holes.
4. The column in the northeastern corner of the portico of the fence of the Temple was hit.
5. Traces of burning the lintel of the eastern portico of the Temple.
6. Traces of burning the northern wall, eastern wall and southern window of the Temple.
7. Some of the contents of the guesthouse were stolen, and the rest were destroyed.



Palmyra- Bel Temple

DAMASCUS & COUNTRYSIDES



Damascus old city- al-Adeliya school

- An explosive device planted in Kallase street, in old Damascus, caused partial damage to the façade of *Grand Adeliya School (Arabic Language Academy)* smashing the glass of the windows of the upper floor.

- Four citizens

faced martyrdom and 26 others were injured down to a mortar shell attack on the external yard in front of the western entrance to *Umayyad Mosque* in Old Damascus. Moreover, another shell hit the wall of the façade of the Umayyad Mosque (from within) which overlooks the central yard (*sahn*) and which is coated with a mosaic panel. The shell caused partial damage at some points. Old Damascus has recently been subjected to random shelling since launching mortar shells has escalated targeting these places rich in archaeological and historical landmarks and buildings that are unmatched all over the world.



Damascus old city- Umayyad Mosque mosaic

- A mortar shell fell on the top part of the northern wall of the Throne Hall in the *Citadel of Damascus* causing minor damage to the glass shielding the skylights of the hall and to



Damascus old city- The Citadel

its metal dome in addition to the parapet of roof and the rainscreen system at the point affected by the shell. Besides, the citadel was subjected to another mortar shell which affected the western façade of the tower of the eastern entrance to the citadel dedicated to receiving visitors, and which left an 80x80-cm hole in the wall. Also, it led to breaking all the glass covers of the building and the adjacent buildings, such as the Throne Hall or the Ayoubi Hall housing a gallery. The standards, used in finishing the buildings, the heart of the museum visit in the citadel, protected the holdings of the museum from any damage since tempered glass was used in constructing these buildings which prevented the glass from shattering with sharp edges on the visitors.

- Information has indicated that the contents of some churches and monasteries in *Maaloula* have been stolen. Nonetheless, the DGAM has not been able to validate this information yet, neither confirm nor ignore. In addition, many historical houses in the city have been subject to damage.
- *Al-Suhl* site, Yabroud, has been subjected to illegal digs by some antiquities thieves in the surrounding area, who are collaborating with Syrian and Lebanese antiques dealers.
- The accommodation of the Syrian national mission working at archaeological *Tell Saka* site was burgled.
- *Khan Atna* was burgled.

DARAA

CLASHES:

- *Al-Omari Mosque*, Daraa, was subjected to damage as a result of shells affecting its sahn (i.e. courtyard), minaret and surroundings, according to a report by the Daraa Department of Antiquities clarifying the difficulty in documenting and inspecting the damage directly due to the current situation.
- Historic *Hrak Mosque in Izraa* suffered from damages in its western wall, northern wall and part of its roof. As well, the minarets of both the old mosque in the city of *Sheik Meskeen* and the old mosque in the town of *Mahajja* were damaged. Those two latter mosques are registered as traditional non-historic buildings.
- *Mabrak el-Naqa* building and *Nymph Temple* (also publicly known as King's Daughter's Bed) in Bosra were damaged. Furthermore, the



Daraa- al Omari mosque minaret



Daraa- Izraa-Hrak mosque

only remaining lintel above the columns was damaged as well as some old houses in Bosra.

- Some old houses in the town of Nawa were subjected to destruction because of clashes.

ILLEGAL EXCAVATION:

- The trend of illegal digs has become very common in the city of Daraa with hundreds of hired men and armed gangs of antiquities taking part in *Wadi Yarmuk*; *al-Ashaari Tell* and the digs inside of *al-Omari Mosque*, destroying the tiles

of the flooring, and at the archaeological sites along Wadi al-Yarmouk and at Tell al-Ashaari, which might cause irreparable damage if these digs continue at this pace.

The Department of Antiquities of Daraa has documented the damage affecting the archaeological sites during the month of October as a result of illegal digs and excavation which are still being carried out at some of these sites. The report of the department has identified the damage as follows:

- *Tell esh-Shehab site*: some old houses were removed.
- *Kherbet Nahj*: digs carried out by means of heavy machinery resulted in a hole ranging between 4 to 5 meters in depth and 1 meter in width.
- *Kharab al-Shahm*: it was subjected to digs towards the bottom of al-Yarmouk Valley.
- *Al-Yadoudeh*: digging and filling holes are taking place in the old houses.
- *Al-Mzereb*: digs at the entrance to the castle on the northern side.
- *Kherbet al-Baala*: illegal digs and excavations.
- *Al-Ajami and Tell al-Ashaari*: secret digs are still being conducted.
- *Bait Aara* (the old town): there are seven holes resulting from manual digging, each of which ranges between 3 to 4 meters in width and a half meter in depth. Moreover, there are around 20 other different-sized holes surrounding both Zayateen and al-Ouyun Bridges.
- *Koya, al-Shajra* town and *Kherbet Kom al-Jouz*: random digs resulted in different-sized holes.
- *Al-Qasair*: there are digs west of the old town overlooking the valley.
- *Heet*: there are random illegal digs next to the mosaic discovered in that region. It was apparent as well that some little pieces were removed from one side of the panel in an area of 40cm. In addition, there are digs in Wadi Heet al-Jusoor (al-Areeb Bridge – al-Dora Bridge), within and along the tunnels (the Upper tunnel – al-Minshar tunnel – the Lower tunnel).

QUNEITRA



Quneitra, Beer Ajam

Damage is only limited to some construction violations and illegal digs at a number of sites such as Beer Ajam and others.

LATTAKIA - TARTUS - SWEIDA

There is no damage according to reports from these governorates since they have not witnessed any painful events as the other governorates



Tartus- Hosn Sulaiman

have; hence, the cultural and archaeological institutions there function normally.

The DGAM through this report seeks to provide an accurate account of the archaeological and historic sites which were subjected to damages during the current crisis. Nevertheless, we would like to assert that other sites might have suffered from damages that were not documented by the

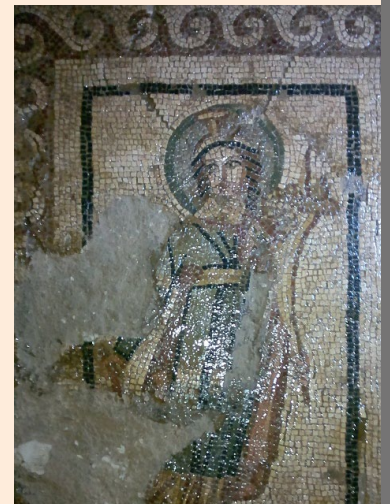
antiquities departments of the governorates due to violent clashes in their surroundings.

C. CONSTRUCTION VIOLATIONS:

Unlike practices such as secret excavations, vandalism and looting which receive high resistance and are fought against by the local people of the areas surrounding the archaeological sites, the local community does not show the same degree of cooperation with regard to recent construction violations that are prevalent as some people are taking advantage of the state of chaos and due to difficulties in controlling these violations taking place around the archaeological sites.

D. ANTIQUITIES FORGERY PHENOMENON:

By way of examining samples from some confiscations, it is evident that artifacts forgery has been active during the crisis as antiquities thieves tend to forge pieces of art and sell them as genuine ones such as mosaic panels and Palmyra



Fake mosaic smuggled from Apamia

statues. Antiques forgery has been around for years and it is punishable by the law. Towards the end of November 2013, A team of DGAM's experts in ancient mosaics conducted a study on a number of photos of mosaics believed to be stolen and smuggled from Apamea site; the study showed that most of them were fake despite the good quality and sophistication put into their making. The DGAM received those photos from some residents of the region. The mosaics represent themes inspired by Greek mythology and popular images in Syria and the western regions of the Roman Empire in North Africa and Europe, Turkey in particular. Nevertheless, the team's technical, mythological and scientific assessment of the mosaics suggested that they were most probably fake.

MEASURES TAKEN



Damascus National Museum

Following that review of the situation of the Syrian archaeological heritage which is subject to change on a daily basis, the following is a brief summary concerning the measures taken in order to reduce the risk and damage as much as possible:

LOCALLY:

1. The museums were emptied of their holdings, and all archaeological artifacts were amassed in safe and secure places. In addition, burglar alarms were installed in some museums and fortresses, and the number of guards and patrols was increased.
2. The DGAM has taken a series of steps to involve all Syrians in defending the archaeological heritage representing their history, their



Damascus old city - National companion posters

common memory and all that brings them together throughout history. Therefore, it has launched a national campaign to raise people's awareness on the value of their antiquities and their role in protecting them irrespective of any political or intellectual difference dividing them today. The campaign has targeted 23 million Syrians with no exception to engage them all in safeguarding ancient Syrian antiquities and cultural heritage, which they are proud of.

3. The staff and cadres of the DGAM in all governorates are putting forth tremendous efforts and cooperating with members of local communities, mediators and social and religious and intellectual elites to protect hundreds of archaeological sites and safeguard them from the repercussions of the current events. Moreover, success rates vary from one place to another based on people's support which makes hope the dominant factor more often than not. For example, the joint efforts helped in the protection of Maarrat Nu'man Museum. Besides, the Department of Antiquities of Raqqa is still contacting and receiving information from the central administration in Damascus despite the painful events in the city. Moreover, in August, 2013, the DGAM with the assistance of the residents of both Bahlia and Kafr al-Awamid villages transferred a mosaic unearthed in Barada Valley to the National Museum. This mosaic, in addition, occupies a significant place as it is the first to be discovered in the countryside of Damascus.
4. Under the Patronage of Ministry of Culture The DGAM held a workshop on «fighting against illicit trafficking of cultural property: capacity-building and awareness-raising», 12 and 13 May 2013, to enrich the topic of illegally smuggled artifacts with the participation of representatives of all ministries and authorities involved in the protection of Syrian cultural property in addition to NGOs, members of the local community, researchers, artists and writers within the field.
5. The DGAM has returned more than 4000 archaeological artifacts during the past

year through confiscations carried out by the concerned bodies (the police, the customs, the governorate, the municipalities and other public bodies) in Damascus, Tartus, Palmyra, Homs, Hama, Deir ez-Zor, etc. Furthermore, the concerned authorities returned a treasure containing 1600 silver-plated bronze coins, discovered in the region of al-Shaer mountain between Palmyra and Homs, in addition to tens of artifacts which were about to be smuggled since June 2013.

6. The DGAM has launched its website both in Arabic and English (www.dgam.gov.sy), which is updated on a daily basis using information and news on the damage affecting the Syrian archaeological heritage during the crisis.
7. The DGAM has documented the holdings of all Syrian museums electronically; in addition, a team of DGAM experts is working on the documentation process and comparing between the current situation and the previous state of the Syrian archaeological heritage. Moreover, the team is digitally archiving the DGAM's information on the status of the sites prior to the crisis and on their current situation and the damage affecting them through using images and videos shown on the internet, provided by the departments of antiquities in the governorates or sent by members of the local community from the affected areas.
8. A team of experts from The Directorate of Information Technology and the Department

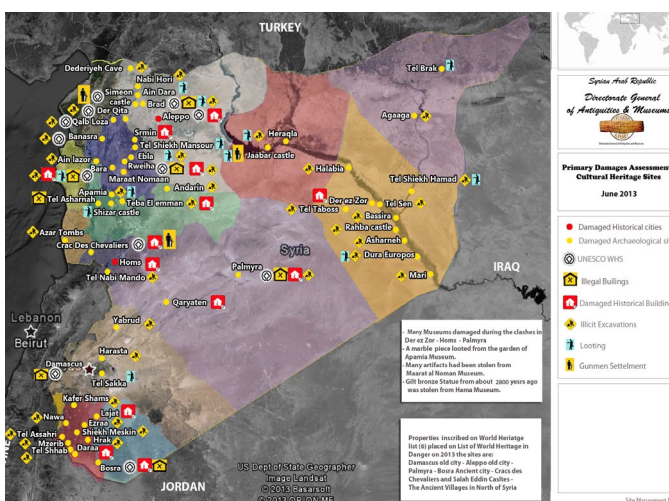
of Archaeological Sites has completed a digital map of the affected cultural heritage in Syria using the geographic information system (GIS) in order to document the damage and violations befalling all of the archaeological sites and historical buildings during the crisis. This project also includes



Interactive map for Damaged archaeological sites

the identification of the damaged sites on the map as well as their categorization according to the governorates where they belong. It has added some tables that contain a brief introduction on the significance of the site in addition to the damage affecting it based on the information and photos made available to the DGAM. This evaluation and initial documentation of the damage will help in managing the archaeological heritage in the future and in setting priorities as regards its protection and restoration.

9. The DGAM has devised an interactive digital map of the archaeological sites inscribed on the National Heritage List, in addition to all historical buildings, museums and all DGAM's administrative buildings. The map, based on a systematic and organized scheme using Google Earth system, makes it possible to set up a digital geographic database (spatial and descriptive) containing information and coordinates of more than ten thousand archaeological sites, which are all registered as archaeological sites in an attempt to prepare more accurate and detailed digital maps at the level of each governorate, where the archaeological sites are projected onto these maps using their



A map shows Initials Damage Assessment in Syrian Archeological sites

real coordinates, and information regarding the sites is documented. These maps help in locating the archaeological site in relation to its surroundings. Moreover, the project has great significance in the field of research, publishing and decision-making.

10. The Directorate of Excavations at the DGAM has finished archiving 800 files, including all the documents on excavations in Homs, following a scientific methodology based on categorizing these operations into three types, namely seasonal, emergency and archaeological surveys. This has come as preparation for the completion of a full digital archive of all the files and documents of the directorate, that are associated with excavations at the Syrian archaeological sites, which will ensure their protection and easy accessibility without returning to the paper files in addition to carrying out accurate statistics of the excavated and surveyed archaeological sites according to historical periods.
11. The Directorate of Buildings has digitally archived all the decisions on the registration of the archaeological sites in Syria which contain around 950 laws and decisions, the oldest of which dates back to the twenties of the past century. It also includes scripts, maps and photographs belonging to all of the Syrian governorates.
12. After almost three years of hard work, the national team of the DGAM and the Ministry of Culture has completed a new draft law on the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage which complies with the standards set out in international conventions, keeps

abreast of the development of global thinking in this domain and is compatible with Syria's uniqueness and diverse cultural and educational heritage. The draft law was discussed with the ministries concerned (namely the Local Administration, Tourism, Justice, Endowments) in the hope to be approved very soon.

The new draft law provides a higher level of legal protection for the sites inscribed on the World Heritage List and also provides the necessary ground to apply an institutional and administrative reform to the authorities in charge of safeguarding the heritage which will enable them to function in a better way. In addition, it ensures the active participation of local communities in protecting, managing and investing in heritage, and it enables Syria to make better use of the international conventions it ratified.

The preparation for this draft law has coincided with the preparation for another draft law on introducing a public body for the Syrian archaeological heritage with wider powers and additional tasks in order to be able to better protect and manage Syria's heritage.

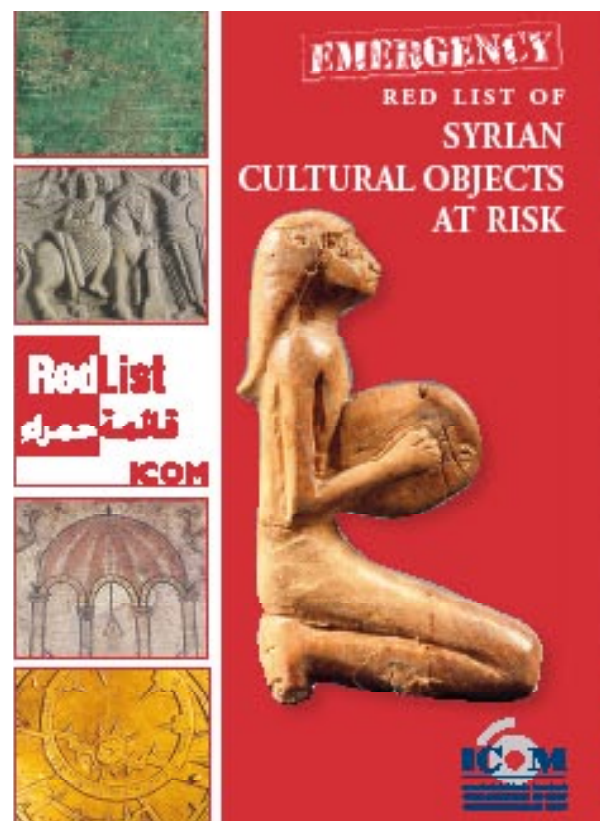


INTERNATIONALLY:

1. The DGAM is currently coordinating with the international INTERPOL and World Customs Organization sending reports on what is lost or found in neighboring countries or even published such as photos believed to be of Syrian archaeological finds which thieves of antiquities have got hold of by means of illegal excavation at remote sites. As a result, cooperation with the INTERPOL, WCO and the Lebanese archaeological institution has been successful in fighting trafficking in Syrian antiquities. For example, 18 Syrian mosaic panels were confiscated at the Lebanese borders, and 73 Syrian artifacts smuggled to Lebanon to be sold by antique dealers were confiscated, as well.
2. The DGAM is cooperating with the international organizations in exchanging visions and information. The beginning of such cooperation was manifested by two e-learning courses organized by ICOMOS on «Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict», followed by an international workshop held in Amman «to address the issue of illicit trafficking» which was initiated by UNESCO/Amman Office with the participation of representatives of archaeological authorities in the neighboring countries and international organizations that proposed a number of recommendations, one of which was completing the Emergency Red List on Syrian cultural objects.
3. On 3rd July 2013, the DGAM called upon international organizations, members and heads of foreign archaeological missions, archaeologists and world intellectuals to act at once and search for efficient mechanisms that ensure putting pressure on all parties participating in destroying, looting and smuggling Syria's antiquities to stop this lamentable loss. The DGAM also asked the UNESCO to put pressure on neighboring countries to reinforce their security measures, control the borders in face of antiquities smugglers to fight trafficking in our archaeological property and combat illegal excavation to avoid the same tragedy witnessed by other Syrian archaeological sites.
4. The archaeological authorities are still working on signing the Second Protocol to the Hague

Convention and UNIDROIT Convention.

5. UNESCO placed the six World Heritage sites of the Syrian Arab Republic on the List of World Heritage in Danger at the 37th annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee, held between 16-24 June in Cambodia, to draw attention to the risks befalling these sites that enjoy outstanding universal value. This inscription of the sites was the result of communication between the DGAM and UNESCO as regards determining the process to address the imminent danger threatening the Syrian cultural heritage. Consequently, Syria is committed to rebuilding and restoring these sites in the future in accordance with international standards. For its part, UNESCO urges financiers and experts to support Syrian archaeologists in carrying out their future tasks in safeguarding and protecting Syrian antiquities.
6. In cooperation with the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) in Syria, UNESCO has



published The Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk. Moreover,

33 archaeological artifacts, which belong to different sites and historical periods in Syria and shed light on the types of the Syrian cultural heritage, are listed so as to assist police officers and customs in their work, as well as other professionals concerned with the protection of cultural property at the international level, seeing that it helps in identifying Syrian objects and in illustrating the categories of Syrian cultural items that are severely subjected to illicit trafficking.

7. With the participation of the heads of international organizations concerned with the protection of cultural heritage in the world and Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, UN-Arab League envoy to Syria, a high-level meeting was held at the UNESCO's headquarters in Paris on Thursday, 29/ 08 /2013, to discuss ways to safeguard the Syrian archaeological heritage. The Director-General, Antiquities and Museums, gave a presentation supported by information, photos and maps documenting the extent and nature of the damage affecting the antiquities as well as the measures taken in order to avoid damage and protect the Syrian archaeological heritage. In addition, the presentation highlighted the vision adopted by the DGAM in dealing with the archaeological issue. Finally, they agreed on an action plan that was discussed the next day with a committee of experts. The action plan included running training courses in the field of coordinating activities aiming at safeguarding heritage in times of war; launching international campaigns to fight illicit trafficking in stolen cultural property and defending the Syrian antiquities in international forums in a way that ensures integration between international and national efforts exerted by the DGAM.
8. New York-based World Monuments Fund (WMF) included the City of Aleppo, Krak des Chevaliers and the fortress of Qal'at al Mudique, within its Watch List released on October 8th, 2013, after the DGAM had nominated these three sites to be included in the list. This inclusion will help attract financiers of cultural heritage-related projects all over the world to support and fund projects to rehabilitate these sites and restore those



subjected to damage during the crisis.

The WMF launched a campaign to collect 5000 signatures on a petition addressed to the DGAM in Ministry of Culture in support of the protection of antiquities to attract more world attention towards this cause. The campaign succeeded in collecting the target signatures in only two days after its launch. People who signed the petition are mainly those interested in the Syrian antiquities and who are willing to do their best to prevent further damage and help in the rehabilitation efforts.

9. Experts from the DGAM participated in the 2nd regional meeting of relevant authorities in the Arab Countries in the field of international heritage held in Manama. They gave a presentation on the status of the Syrian archaeological heritage,



Focal points meeting in Bahrain - Manams

inscribed on the World Heritage List and the sites registered on the Tentative List, and on the importance of the cooperation of the neighboring countries in putting an end to the smuggling of Syrian cultural objects and

in helping the Syrian authorities return them. In addition, an action plan to be adopted by the Regional Centre in 2014 that would focus on preserving the cultural heritage in countries facing internal conflicts was discussed.

10. UNESCO has dedicated a webpage in English on its official website to discuss the situation of the Syrian antiquities and the status quo of the Syrian cultural heritage in addition to the national and local activities and measures taken to reduce the damage affecting the historical landmarks and archaeological sites in Syria. UNESCO's information and photos are based on the news posted on the DGAM's



website. Moreover, this webpage provides information on the international efforts made to support the national endeavors by means of drawing the international community's attention to the dangers of trafficking in Syrian antiquities, mobilizing all energies with UNESCO's partners and other international organizations and urging Syria's neighboring countries to cooperate under the framework of 1970 Convention on the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property, particularly in the field of border control.

11. The DGAM is cooperating scientifically with most of the foreign archaeological missions working in Syria through the exchange of information, expertise and damage documentation.
12. Archaeologists from the Department of Antiquities of Old Damascus are cooperating with experts from UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS in the exchange of visions and ideas to develop a plan for the protection of Old Damascus following the escalating risks threatening its landmarks due to random shelling affecting the city lately.

CONCLUSION:

Destroying invaluable human treasures and damaging significant and pivotal sites in the history of Syria mean damage to the spirit and identity of the nation and a crime by all measures affecting all Syrians and constituting a flagrant violation against which we should not remain silent since it warns against a probable perpetual loss of some components of the Syrian archaeological heritage.

Thus, Syria's antiquities are in dire need today



Stolen artifacts returned from Lebanon

of the awareness and solidarity of all Syrians in order to protect them first and foremost, seeing that Syrian people are going to be the biggest losers if they give up on them. In addition, they are awaiting for some international action that supports the local efforts made to rescue a civilization worthy of life and respect, which has given a lot to the whole world.



Homs old city



Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums

Syrian Arab Republic
Ministry of Culture
Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums
Damascus - Qasr el Hier st
Tel: + 963 - 11 - 2234331 - 2254811
Fax: + 963 -11 - 2247983
www.dgam.gov.sy