



Damage to Syria's Heritage

23 February 2014

This newsletter provides a summary of the reports on the damage to Syria's heritage from the past week. It should be stressed that much of this data cannot be verified, but it is hoped that it will assist in the documentation of the damage occurring, and help raise awareness.

Updates on Damage



Fighting near Tell Brak

- There has been fighting at the town of Tell Brak near the major archaeological site of Tell Brak. The condition of the site is unknown. Read an article on the fighting in the New York Times [here](#).



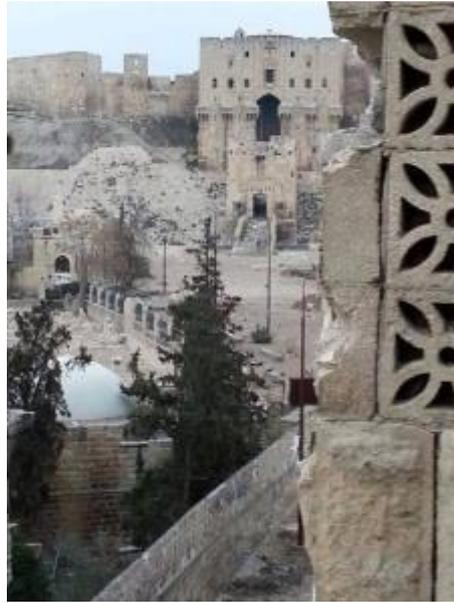
Possible shelling of the Palace of Hisham at Resafa

- According to an unverified report the palace of Hisham at Resafa has been shelled.
(However, the image with the report is of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi: it is not possible to confirm which site is affected, if either).
Read the original report [here...](#)



Reports of further damage to World Heritage Crac des Chevaliers

- A video released onto You-Tube on the 5th March showed shelling of the castle is continuing. See the video [here](#).
- Abu Marwan spoke with Syria Direct to discuss the attacks on the castle and the situation in the besieged town around it. Read the interview [here](#)



View of damage to the Aleppo World Heritage Site

New view across Aleppo plaza to the citadel, taken by Youth Caucus and the scholars of the Renaissance (translation uncertain). To see the full image on Facebook, click [here](#) .

Reports and Updates from the [Syrian Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums](#)

Looting damage limited at Tentative World Heritage Site of Ebla, but illegal construction increases

- Looting was stopped with the cooperation of the local people around the site. However, an armed group have now opened a training camp within the fence of the site, near the gates, and built a camp and bathrooms. the camp covers over 100 x 100m. They group have also drilled on the top of the wall in four places. Read the DGAM report (in arabic) [here](#).

The DGAM have seized 9 reliefs looted from Palmyra

- The seized limestone reliefs are clearly looted from tombs. They

depict 4 men and 5 women, and date to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. To read the DGAM report and see pictures, click [here](#).

Policy Changes and Updates from Syria

National Framework developed to protect sites from illegal construction

- UNESCO and the DGAM have reported that illegal construction is an increasing problem on Syria's heritage sites. A memorandum of understanding was signed <date> between the Syrian DGAM and the planning Dept to look for ways to address this.

Further to this a National Framework of ongoing cooperation has been agreed between Regional Planning Commission and the DGAM. It is intended to protect heritage from abuses by private investment. Read the press release by the Regional Planning Commission [here](#).

Syrian Minister of Culture meets with UNESCO

- The Minister of Culture met with Dr Hamad al-Hammami, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut as part of a series of meetings to discuss the joint project to protect Syrian heritage and discuss post-crisis documentation and reconstruction. They discussed the action plan of the project funded by the EU (2.5 million Euros), which aims at combating illicit trafficking in Syrian cultural property, retrieving pillaged and smuggled Syrian artefacts, documenting the damage and raising awareness of the looting and deterioration locally and internationally, in addition to coordinating national and international initiatives to protect and restore the heritage, and setting future plans for restoration and rehabilitation in the post crisis era.. Courses will be organised in three areas of protection – documentation for repair and future plans for the restoration and rehabilitation post-crisis. To reach these goals, efforts will focus on capacity

training to include cross-training of border police and customs in Syria and neighbouring countries to combat illicit trafficking, training of museum professionals in moveable heritage to reduce damage; awareness raising of importance of cultural heritage of Syria and attempting to create a positive image to heritage among Syrians.

According to the timetable agreed upon, March 2014 will see the start of the project, which contains medium and long term goals. In addition, experts from the DGAM and specialists in archaeology from international organisations will hold a meeting at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris in the Spring to promote the protection of Syrian antiquities.

The press release in English is available [here](#), and a more detailed report in Arabic is available [here](#).

International Activity

German DAI lends support to Italian heritage preservation efforts

- In support of the recent Italian [initiative](#), the German DAI is now cooperating with the Foreign Office and, as of April, a series of lectures will be held on the topic of "Syria - A threatened cultural landscape" to raise awareness. Read the press release [here](#).

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