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## Press Release

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For Immediate Release: 16.00 PM, CET, 17 January 2014

Contact: [contact@heritageforpeace.org](mailto:contact@heritageforpeace.org)

# SAVE THE 'HYMN TO NIKKAL' TABLET

## The world's first written music

**Girona, January 16, 2014:** Syria's cultural heritage is in crisis, a heritage that goes well beyond national importance. Proof of the universal value of Syria's heritage is found, for example, in the world's first piece of written music known to history (Hymn to Nikkal, 12<sup>th</sup> cent. BC). It was only discovered in the 1950s in Ugarit. It is dedicated to the Great Goddess Nikkal and written in Ugaritic cuneiform, the first ever alphabetical script. Other great examples of the universality of Syria's cultural heritage are: the ancient Roman city of Apamea (3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC); the great Umayyad mosque of Damascus (705-715 A.D.); the biggest Crusader fortress - Crac des Chevaliers (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent.); the early Ottoman shrine of Shaikh Muhi al-Din ibn Arabi (1517 A.D.). Some of these treasures have already been damaged or are under serious threat today. With the loss of Syria's significant heritage the world will lose an important chapter of their history. That is why we need to act now and not wait till the conflict is over!

### **Syria: Protect Cultural Heritage – Enter Cultural Dialogue – Increase the Chance for Peace!**

A new non-governmental organization has been founded by a small group of heritage experts, both from Syria and elsewhere, who decided to act *during* the Syrian crisis for *all* parties involved. Heritage *for* Peace believes that heritage can be used as a tool to bring people together, 'meet the other' and enter into a dialogue. This will enhance the chance for peace, needed so much now in Syria. As the Geneva Peace Talks are approaching Heritage *for* Peace is trying to convince the participants to accept a resolution to stop the destruction and plunder of their rich heritage, and to adhere to international law that prohibits the willful destruction of cultural heritage in times of war.

**Support our new campaigns for Syria's heritage!** January 2014 is the launch date for four Heritage *for* Peace initiatives for all involved:

- 1) Convince the participants of the Geneva Peace Talks to accept a resolution to stop the destruction of Syria's heritage and to adhere to the international law;
- 2) Training on documenting damage to sites and monuments;
- 3) Workshop: 'Packaging, Handling and Storage for Evacuation' of cultural objects;
- 4) Workshop for military parties to explain the legal obligations to protect cultural heritage during conflict.

**Go to our [website](http://www.heritageforpeace.org/) to read more about Heritage *for* Peace and to see what we have accomplished already (<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/>)**

**Donate Now!** Heritage *for* Peace is unique in offering assistance during conflicts, not only in post-war reconstruction. Because we believe that sustainable solutions must come from Syrians themselves, all of our programs are focused on local capacity-building, coordination, and awareness-raising. As an independent NGO, **we need your help**. Please make a donation and find out more at our [website](http://www.heritageforpeace.org/).

**Our website: resource center and educational tool.** Our new website contains practical, hands-on information for heritage workers working to protect their cultural heritage during violent conflict ([Resources](#)). The website also presents information about the risks faced by [cultural heritage in war](#), and highlights [Syria's rich cultural heritage](#).

**If you would like more information on our program, possibilities for donation or schedule an interview please mail us at: [contact@heritageforpeace.org](mailto:contact@heritageforpeace.org)**

(For obvious reasons (individual circumstances, the sensitivity of the subject and that we work during the conflict with all parties), we prefer to remain anonymous. However, you can always contact us through our general email and we will get in touch with you directly.)

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