Towards a protection of the Syrian cultural heritage: A summary of the international responses (March 2011 - March 2014)

by
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in association with

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Introduction[1] [2]

Since the Syrian uprising of March 2011, the Syrian archaeological heritage has been suffering. Many articles and photos have been published and disseminated online to inform and document the damage to the Syrian cultural heritage, emphasising not only the importance that ancient sites and historic buildings have assumed in the history of Syria, but how their protection is now crucial to preserve the cultural identity of the Syrian people.

This report offers a summary of the actions that have been undertaken by different bodies and organisations towards the protection and the conservation of the tangible cultural heritage from the beginning of the Syrian uprising up until March 2014. International acknowledgement of the crisis has been expressed and responses launched through actions such as documenting and updating information involving social media (i.e. Facebook, YouTube, websites, blogs, etc.), and short-term (i.e. petitions, statements, press releases, etc.) and long-term projects (i.e. lectures, exhibitions, workshops, training, etc.).

It is necessary to provide a summary of these actions to increase international awareness, strengthen collaborations between scholars, and establish contacts between individuals, organisations and stakeholders interested in this matter. International responses are presented in alphabetical order according to the name of the organisations or stakeholders involved. The organisations that have been newly founded specifically to help the protection of the Syrian cultural heritage are characterised in this report by an asterisk (*) located after the name. Further details about the type of response and project organisers can be found by following the links.

This compendium does not provide a comprehensive discussion of those carrying out these actions, their intentions or their methodology, but it gives links where such information can be found and further analysed. This contribution focuses only on organisations which either deal exclusively with heritage, or which have specific projects addressed to it. However, the contribution of citizen journalists, such as the Young Lens organisations, bloggers, and other groups, to awareness raising must be acknowledged, although they are not specifically devoted to heritage protection. Bibliographical references, and press articles are not included in this report.

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[1] Silvia Perini recently completed her PhD in Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. Her thesis explored vessel function and composition of ceramic assemblages from two stratified contexts at Tell Ahmar (North Syria) investigating economic activities and ceramic production in Northern Mesopotamia and Syria during the Middle Bronze Age II (c. 1800–1600 BC). During her time as a PhD student, she took part in several archaeological excavations and survey projects in Syria (i.e. Til Barsip/Tell Ahmar, Qatna/Tell Mishrifeh, Tell Mohammed Diyab, and Land of Carchemish Project). She is currently working on developing an electronic database of the movable artefacts conserved at the National Museum of Aleppo. She is a volunteer member of *Heritage for Peace.*

[2] I wish to thank Dr Emma Cunliffe for her comments and suggestions during the draft of this report.

Groups working to protect Syria's Archaeological Heritage

(The star indicates groups which were founded as a response to the crisis)

Aleppo Archaeology*
- *Location and date founded:* Aleppo (Syria), 2012.
- *Description:* Aleppo Archaeology dedicated a Facebook page on the current status of the World Heritage city of Aleppo.
- *Team:* Syrian.
- *Information and contact:*
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Aleppo-Archaeology/459668177425042?sk=timeline

Alliance for the Restoration of Cultural Heritage (ARCH) International
- *Location and date founded:* Washington D.C., 2013.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2013.
- *Description:* ARCH is a non-profit organisation which aims to raise awareness about the protection of the world cultural heritage threatened by wars. In collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution and the Blue Shield, ARCH International has created a group named *The Working Group to Protect Syrian Heritage in Crisis,* which include experts in the preservation of heritage, media, diplomacy, history, archaeology and other fields. ARCH International has dedicated a page of its website to this group and they have uploaded a video which promotes the safeguarding and the protection of the ancient historic buildings of Syria, as well as the country World Heritage Sites.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.archinternational.org/index.html
  YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmETOeOCxmM
  Project: http://www.archinternational.org/syria.html

American Institute of Archaeology (AIA)
- *Location and date founded:* Boston (USA), 1879.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* AIA is a non-for profit organisation devoted to word archaeology. AIA is formed by professional full-time staff, as well as several thousands of members including archaeologists, students, and non-professional archaeologists. In terms of the AIA involvement in the protection of the Syrian cultural heritage, two actions have been undertaken:
  a) in August 2012 and then again in September 2012, AIA renewed its support of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield's statement towards the protection of the Syrian cultural heritage. Moreover, in December 2013,
  b) AIA promoted a conference at the Princeton University (New Jersey) that gathered a group of Syrian heritage and history scholars, cultural property law, and preservation to discuss possible solution to improve the situation in Syria.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.archaeological.org/

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Archaeological.Institute
Projects:
a) http://www.archaeological.org/news/advocacy/10181
   http://www.archaeological.org/news/aianews/10011
b) http://www.archaeological.org/events/14130

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

- *Location and date founded:* Pennsylvania (USA), 1848.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* The American Association for the Advancement of Science is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to advancing science for the benefit of all people. In September 2012, Amnesty International, USA requested that the Geospatial Technologies and Human Rights Project of the AAAS investigate human rights-related reports stemming from the escalating conflict in Aleppo. Although the report produced focuses mainly on the localisation of military heavy artillery and the destructions of the suburban area of the city on maps, there is also some useful information about the damage to the structures within the Old City of Aleppo (see in particular the report section "IV. Destruction of Cultural Artifacts").
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.aaas.org/
  Project: http://www.aaas.org/aleppo_retrospective

Archaeologik

- *Location and date founded:* Mainz (Germany), 2010.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* Archaeologik is a blog dedicated to archaeology and conservation matters. Since 2012, Archaeologik has been sharing monthly updates of damage to the Syrian archaeological heritage, with links to the media sources. In addition, in December 2013, this blog promoted the publication of a new book *Aleppo. Ein Krieg zerstört Weltkulturerbe Geschichte, Gegenwart, Perspektiven,* edited by Mamoun Fansa. With this volume the author drawn attention to the destruction of the cultural heritage in the old city of Aleppo.
- *Author:* German.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://archaeologik.blogspot.co.uk/
  Projects: http://archaeologik.blogspot.de/search/label/Syrien

Archaeology in Syria (NETWORK)*

- *Location and date founded:* international 2012.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* The main aim of Archaeology in Syria NETWORK is "to connect those who are involved or interested in disseminating accumulated multidisciplinary knowledge through continuous archaeological excavation and research in the Near East in general and Syria in particular". This organisation promotes the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage sharing updating, interviews, articles and other type of information on its website and Facebook page.

- *Team:* Archaeology in Syria NETWORK is formed from an international team of archaeologists.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://ainsyria.net/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Archaeology.in.Syria

Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA)*

- *Location and date founded:* Strasburg (France), 2012.
- *Description:* Since 2012, APSA has documented information about damage to Syria's heritage, and released updates about it, as well as increasing awareness promoting the safeguarding and protection of the cultural heritage.
- *Team:* APSA is formed from a team of international volunteers, archaeologists and journalists from France, Belgium and Syria.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.apsa2011.com/index.php/en/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/apsa2011?fref=ts
  YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/ayazali12?feature=watch

Blue Shield – International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) and Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS)

- *Location and date founded:* worldwide, 1996 (ICBS) and 2008 (ANCBS).
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2011.
- *Description:* International Blue Shield consists of the ICBS and ANCBS. Since 2011, International Blue Shield has been working on increasing awareness and promoting the safeguarding and protection of the cultural heritage through statements and press releases.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.ancbs.org/cms/index.php/en/home
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Blue-Shield-International/249824673815
  Project: http://www.ancbs.org/cms/index.php/en/press-room/archives/syria

British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology (BANEA)

- *Location and date founded:* London (UK), 1987.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* BANEA brings together scholars interested in archaeology, ancient history and languages of the Near East. Since 2012, BANEA has supported the Syrian cause through different actions:
  a) a petition seeking protection for Syria's cultural heritage (posted in June 2012, but now closed);
  b) generating discussion about the damage to the Syrian cultural heritage during the last two annual conference meetings (2013 and 2014). The documentation of the 2014 annual general meeting has been released by Dr Emma Cunliffe.
- *Team:* British.
- *Information and contact:*

Website: http://www.banea.org/
Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/BAneareastarch
Projects:
a) https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/Save_Syrias_Cultural_Heritage_1/?cPWGUcb
b)
https://www.academia.edu/5797992/Summary_Report_on_heritage_damage_during_the_Conflict_in_Syria_given_to_the_BANEA_AGM_January_2014

Cultural Heritage in Syria in the current conflict (Heritage in Syria in Danger)*

- *Location and date founded:* Copenhagen (Denmark), 2012.
- *Description:* The University of Copenhagen, and in particular the Cultural Heritage Group (CHG) at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies (ToRS), are
  a) documenting knowledge and updating information about the damage to cultural heritage on its website. The website focuses on collecting data (text, images, and videos) related to the current conditions of heritage sites in Syria.
  b) They also organised a seminar on *Archaeology and Conflict* (May 2013).
- *Team:* Danish.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website**:** http://tors.ku.dk/forskning/kollprojekter/cultural-heritage-group/
  Project:
  a) http://hisd.tors.ku.dk/
  b) http://hisd.tors.ku.dk/news/archaeology_conflict/

Culture in Development (CiD)

- *Location and date founded:* The Netherlands, 1997.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* CiD is dedicating a special dossier on Syria on its website that focuses on updating information about the damage to cultural heritage.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/
  Project:
  http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/Culture_in_Development/News/index.php?id=130

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI)

- *Location and date founded:* Berlin (Germany), 1832.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* DAI is a federal agency within the area of responsibility of the German ministry of foreign affairs. It carries out research in the area of archaeology and in related fields. In cooperation with the Museum of Islamic Art, DAI is working on increasing awareness and promoting the safeguarding and protection of the cultural heritage through two projects:
  a) organising a series of lectures titled *Syrien – eine bedrohte Kulturlandschaft* to be held in Berlin from April 2014;
  b) in November 2013, it launched a joint project called *Syrian Heritage Archive Project* with the aim to digitise the sites' inventories.
- *Team:* Museum of Islamic Art (Berlin) and DAI.
- *Information and contact:*

Website: http://www.dainst.org/en/
Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/dainst?fref=ts
Project:
a) http://www.dainst.org/de/pressrelease/deutsches-arch%C3%A4ologisches-institut-unterst%C3%BCtzt-appell-zum-schutz-der-kulturg%C3%BCter-syrien?ft=all
b) http://www.dainst.org/en/project/syrian-heritage-archive-project?ft=all

Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM)
- *Location and date founded:* Syria, 1946.
- *Description:* The DGAM is a Syrian government organisation responsible for the protection, promotion and excavation activities of all sites in Syria. Since 2011, the DGAM has been involved in many actions to safeguard and protect the cultural heritage, which include:
  a) online publication of annual reports;
  b) a book titled *Archaeological Heritage in Syria during the Crisis 2011-2013* on the damage to the archaeological heritage;
  c) The *Syria: My Homeland* initiative, which aims to raise awareness amongst local communities about the great value of their national heritage, to encourage them to take pride in its constituents and to protect it from theft and sabotage using multiple forms of advertising and campaigning;
  d) an electronic database of the Syrian archaeological sites (completed in November 2013);
  e) In June 2013, the DGAM published maps documenting the damage to Syrian archaeological sites;
  f) the creation of a .kmz layer detailing damage to the cities of Homs and Aleppo (for Google Earth);
  g) the formation of a committee in charge of the restoration of the old city of Aleppo (September 2013);
  h) in collaboration with UNESCO, the DGAM is engaged in a project called *Save Syria's History*. This project aims to combat illicit trafficking by running courses to enhance staff capacity in the fields of protection, documentation (i.e. posters and other audio-visual material widely disseminated around Syria), restoration and setting future plans for restoration and rehabilitation;
  i) in collaboration with the UNESCO's offices in Beirut and Amman, DGAM is involved in a project against illicit trafficking of archaeological objects (see also UNESCO);
  j) in collaboration with the Minister of Culture and with Dr Hamad al-Hammami (director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut), in February 2014 the DGAM announced the launch of a project to protect the Syrian cultural heritage which will start in March 2014 for three years (see also UNESCO);
  k) the restoration of the mosaics of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus;
  l) the completion of a draft new law for the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage;
  m) a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the DGAM and the Regional Planning Commission to help prevent illegal building on archaeological sites;
  n) the digitalisation of hundreds of rare drawings of historical buildings and significant archaeological sites in Aleppo;
  o) in collaboration with ICOMOS, ICCROM and INTERPOL, the DGAM is involved in a project for the protection of the old city of Damascus (Jan 2014).
- *Team:* Syrian and international collaborations.
- *Information and contact:*

Website: http://www.dgam.gov.sy/
Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/dgam.syria
Projects:
a) http://dgam.gov.sy/archive/docs/File/downloads/dgam_report_2013_en.pdf and http://dgam.gov.sy/archive/docs/File/damage_table_en.pdf
b) http://www.dgam.gov.sy/archive/docs/File/downloads/cult_heritage_crisis_en2.pdf
c) http://syriatimes.sy/index.php/archaeology/248-national-campaign-engaging-local-communities-in-protecting-syria-s-cultural-heritage
d) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1108
e) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1026
f) http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=1097
g) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1008
h) http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-traffic-of-cultural-property/emergency-actions/national-campaign/
i) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1103
http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=990
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-traffic-of-cultural-property/capacity-building/arab-states/syria-workshop-on-the-fight-against-illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/
j) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1165
http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=239&id=1149
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kra3e0DL5sA
k) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=1140
l) http://www.dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=177&id=1100
m) http://rpc.gov.sy/rpc2/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AB%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B6%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7/
n) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=1156
o) http://dgam.gov.sy/index.php?d=314&id=113

Division of Antiquities of the Free Council of Aleppo*

- *Location and date founded:* Syria, 2012.
- *Description:* The Antiquities Department of the Free Council of Aleppo is a division of the Office of Education and Culture. It is dedicated to protecting, preserving and documenting the monuments in Aleppo province. Notable work include assisting with sandbagging and walling up the sundial in the courtyard of the Great Umayyad Mosque, assisting with bricking up the shrine of the Prophet Zachariah and dismantling then removing the mihrab for safety.
- *Team:* Syrian.
- *Information and contact:*
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Department.Archaeology
  Project: https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.54230849917 and https://www.facebook.com/Department.Archaeology/photos/pb.479127952160531.-2207520000.1395852034./543123442427648/?type=3&src=https%3A%2F%2Fscontent-a-lhr.xx.fbcdn.net%2Fhphotos-ash3%2Ft31.0-

8%2F1262857_543123442427648_1117653135_o.jpg&smallsrc=https%3A%2F%2Fscontent-a-lhr.xx.fbcdn.net%2Fhphotos-ash3%2Ft1.0-9%2F563506_543123442427648_1117653135_n.jpg&size=1152%2C768&fbid=543123442427648

Documenting the Injured Archaeological Sites of Homs*
- *Location and date founded:* Syria, 2012.
- *Description:* The group created a Facebook page to bring attention to the ongoing destruction in the old city of Homs. However, the last post from this group was 11 July 2013, raising concerns for the group.
- *Team:* Syrian.
- *Information and contact:*
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Archaeological.Sites.of.Homs

Etilaf (a.k.a National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces)
- *Location and date founded:* Syria, 2012 (now in Turkey).
- *Description:* The Minister for Culture for the Syrian National Coalition worked with the NGO Heritage for Peace to accept a Resolution for discussion at the Geneva Peace Talks (January 2014) requesting all warring parties to protect the Syrian cultural heritage during the present conflict. They are also interested in training the Free Syrian Army in cultural heritage protection.
- *Team:* Syrian.
- *Information and contact:*
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/SyrianInterimGovernment

Eyes to protect Syrian Heritage (a.k.a. Eyes on Heritage)*
- *Location and date founded:* Syria, 2012.
- *Description:* Eyes on Heritage is formed by a group of people interested in Syrian cultural heritage. The main aim of this organisation is to document and update information about the damage to cultural heritage.
- *Team:* Syrian.
- *Information and contact:*
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/eyesonheritage

Fides News Agency (Fides)
- *Location and date founded:* Vatican City State, 1927.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* Fides is a Catholic agency part of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and it promotes missionary activity via the press. In October 2012, Christian churches of Syria appealed to "Save the religious, historical and cultural heritage of the country".
- *Team:* Roman Catholic international commission.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.fides.org/en
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Agenzia-Fides/166937210010364

Project: http://www.fides.org/en/news/32343?idnews=32343&lan=eng#.Uy1YkPl_v-Q

Global Heritage Fund (GHF)
- *Location and date founded:* California (USA), 2002.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* GHF is a non-profit international organisation that works to protect and preserve significant endangered cultural heritage. GHF documented information about the damage to the Syrian cultural heritage though publication and updated this through its blog. It was the first publically released collation of the damage to Syria's heritage.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://globalheritagefund.org/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/GlobalHeritageFund?fref=ts
  Project and publications:
  http://globalheritagefund.org/onthewire/taglist/Syria
  http://globalheritagefund.org/onthewire/blog/emma_cunliffe_syria

Heritage for Peace (HfP)*
- *Location and date founded:* Girona (Spain), 2013.
- *Description:* HfP is a non-governmental organisation formed from an international group of heritage workers and volunteers. HfP is engaged in several projects towards the safeguarding and protection of the Syrian cultural heritage, such as:
  a) organising workshops and training (e.g. *Basic Tools to Protect Cultural Heritage in Syria Now* (28 April – 1 May 2013) for the DGAM staff and non-state heritage workers);
  b) facilitating the participation of Syrian museum staff at a conference of Arab Museums in Beirut organized by the American University of Beirut at the end of May 2013;
  c) helping to establish a Crisis Team in Damascus (completed in June 2013);
  d) the creation of an electronic platform with hands-on information for heritage workers (completed in March 2013);
  e) In 2013, and in association with UK National Committee of the Blue Shield, HfP released a "no-strike list" of archaeological sites in Aleppo (no longer on the website)
  f) organising a symposium (e.g. *Lessons learned to safeguard cultural heritage in conflict situations,* co-organised with the Spanish National Research Council, to be held on 23rd and 24th April 2014, Santander, Barcelona).
  Team: international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.heritageforpeace.org/
  Projects:
  a) - c) http://www.heritageforpeace.org/about-us/plan-of-work/
  d) www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/
  e) Available on request from Blue Shield (contact@ancbs.org).
  f) Webpage not yet available. Information available from Heritage for Peace.

Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD) (1) and Italian Priorità Cultura (2)*
- *Location and date founded:* (1) Berlin (Germany), 1999; (2) Rome (Italy), 2012
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2014.

Description: On the 11 of February 2014, Berlin-based Institute for ICD and Italian Priorità Cultura organised a press conference titled *The forgotten victim in Syria: The Cultural Heritage*, launching a campaign for the salvation of the Cultural Heritage in Syria. This campaign includes an exhibition to be held in Rome titled *Syria: Splendors and Dramas* and establishing an award to the courageous who struggle every day to save Syria's cultural heritage. They also raise money for this cause.

- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website:
  http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en
  http://www.diplomaziaculturale.it/priorita-cultura/
  Project: http://www.diplomaziaculturale.it/?attachment_id=437

International Centre for the Study and the Preservation and restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)

- *Location and date founded:* Rome (Italy), 1956.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2013.
- *Description:* ICCROM is an intergovernmental organisation dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and restoration of cultural heritage worldwide and to raising awareness of the importance and fragility of cultural heritage through training, information, research, cooperation and advocacy programmes. Since 2013, ICCROM has been devoted to the protection of the Syrian cultural heritage and it is involved in several projects, including:
  a) e-learning courses for Syrian cultural heritage professionals in collaboration with ICOMOS (January 2013).
  b) In collaboration with the European Union UNESCO, they contributed to the launch of the *Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Heritage* project (see also UNESCO).
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.iccrom.org/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/iccrom?fref=ts
  Projects:
  a) http://www.icomos.org/en/home-doc/569-protection-of-syria-s-cultural-heritage-in-times-of-armed-conflict-icomos-iccrom-e-learning-course-for-syrian-cultural-heritage-professionals
  b) http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/emergency-actions/emergency-safeguarding-of-the-syria-heritage-progect/

ICCROM and Architectural-Archaeological Tangible Heritage in the Arab Region (ATHAR)

- *Location and date founded:* UAE, 2012.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2013.
- *Description:* ATHAR is a regional conservation centre founded by ICCROM and the Government of the Emirate of Sharjah to protect the cultural heritage in the Arab region. (For the projects see ICCROM).
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://athar-centre.org/

Projects:
http://athar-centre.org/?p=2524

International Council of Museums (ICOM)
- *Location and date founded:* Paris (France), 1946.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2013.
- *Description:* ICOM is an organisation created by and for museum professionals. In order to tackle illegal export, ICOM published the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk*, which illustrates the types of artefacts that are most likely to be illegally bought and sold. The completed list was presented at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on 25 September 2013.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://icom.museum/
  Projects:
  http://icom.museum/resources/red-lists-database/red-list/syria/context/L/0/
  http://icom.museum/resources/red-lists-database/red-list/syria/

International Council on Museums and Sites (ICOMOS)
- *Location and date founded:* Paris (France), 1964.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* ICOMOS is a global non-government organisation which works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places. Since 2012, ICOMOS has been involved in several projects aimed to increase awareness and promoting the safeguarding and protection of the Syrian cultural heritage, such as:
  a) a press release focused on the city of Aleppo (July 2012);
  b) in cooperation with the International Centre for the Study and the Preservation and restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the DGAM, ICOMOS held an e-learning course for Syrian cultural heritage professionals (7 - 8 January 2013, Damascus National Museum);
  c) in cooperation with ICCROM and the DGAM, ICOMOS held a new e-learning course for the Syrian cultural heritage professionals of Idlib (21 August 2013).
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
- Website:
  http://www.icomos.org/en/
  Projects:
  a) http://www.icomos.org/en/what-we-do/disseminating-knowledge/newsletters/499-icomos-warns-on-aleppo-s-cultural-heritage
  b) http://www.icomos.org/en/home-doc/569-protection-of-syria-s-cultural-heritage-in-times-of-armed-conflict-icomos-iccrom-e-learning-course-for-syrian-cultural-heritage-professionals
  c) http://www.icomos.org/en/what-we-do/disseminating-knowledge/newsletters/649-protection-of-cultural-heritage-in-idlib-governorate-syria-icomos-iccrom-e-learning-course-for-syrian-cultural-heritage-professionals-in-times-of-armed-conflict

INTERPOL

- *Location and date founded:* Lyon (France), 1914.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* Interpol is the world's largest international police organization, with 190 member countries. In May 2012, Interpol called for vigilance on the looting of the Syrian cultural heritage, with particular focus on statue looted from the Hama museum (December 2011) and the mosaics stolen from the ruins of Afamia (May 2012).
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.interpol.int/en
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/InterpolHQ?fref=ts
  Project: http://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-media/News/2012/N20120521

Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
- *Location and date founded:* Morocco, 1979.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* ISESCO was established by the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). ISESCO objectives include promoting and consolidating cooperation among OIC in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, and contributing to the achievement of world peace and security. Since 2012, ISESCO has denounced
  a) the destruction of mosques and Islamic monuments in Syria (July 2013) and
  b) the burning of the Umayyad Grand Mosque in Aleppo (October 2012).
  c) In addition, in August 2012, ISESCO called upon international community to put pressure to stop the shelling of the city of Aleppo and its historical and religious monuments.
  d) They also held an Emergency Meeting for Protecting Cultural Heritage to "to set up an interventional program to safeguard the endangered heritage in Aleppo, whether through reconstruction and maintenance or through documentation and inventory of the historical sites that were demolished"
- *Team:* predominantly Arabic countries.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.isesco.org.ma/index.php?lang=en
  Projects:
  a) http://www.isesco.org.ma/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=9237%3Aisesco-denounces-the-destruction-of-mosques-and-islamic-monuments-in-syria&Itemid=28&lang=en
  b) http://www.isesco.org.ma/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=7751%3Aisesco-condemns-the-burning-of-the-umayyad-grand-mosque-in-aleppo&Itemid=28&lang=en
  c) http://www.isesco.org.ma/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=7525%3Aisesco-calls-upon-international-community-to-ensure-protection-for-universal-cultural-heritage-in-aleppo-syria&Itemid=28&lang=en
  d) http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2013/04/aleppo-cultural-damage-syria-conflict-markets.html

Le patrimoine archéologique syrien en danger (LPASD) - خطر فـي السـورية الآثـار -The Syrian archaeological heritage under threat - El patrimonio arqueológico sirio en peligro*
- *Location and date founded:* France, 2011.

- *Description:* LPASD is a cultural heritage activist group led by several Syrian and European archaeologists, who, since the very beginning of the Syrian uprising, have been involved in documenting knowledge and updating information about the damage to the Syrian cultural heritage through social media, writing articles and giving interviews.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Archeologie.syrienne
  YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/user/SyrianArchaeological

Oriental Heritage Without Borders (OHWB)*
- *Location and date founded:* Berlin (Germany), 2012.
- *Description:* OHWB is a cultural and scientific association based in Berlin. OHWB is working on increasing awareness and promoting the safeguarding and protection of the Syrian cultural heritage through the launch of a project called *Here is Syria. The Forgotten Heritage.* The project aims to collect and share videos, messages, stories and photos about Syrian lost heritage in order to spread the word within social networks as well as hand in the message to the international organizations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, etc. and creating an exhibition in Berlin to present the different stories of Syria heritage in danger.
- *Team:* international. It is formed from a group of scholars and researchers, who share a great interest as well as concern for the rich culture and heritage of the Orient.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://ohwb.net/?page_id=9
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/ohwb.e.v?fref=ts
  Project: http://ohwb.net/?page_id=1689

Penn Cultural Heritage Center (CHC)
- *Location and date founded:* University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (USA), 2008.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* PennCHC is a research, outreach, and educational center. PennCHC is engaged in a project called *Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria Initiative* (SHOSI). This project aims to create a database to document damage sustained by archaeological sites, historical buildings and museums. SHOSI has currently identified ca. 1200 key Syrian sites of cultural importance.
- *Team:* it is formed by the faculty and students, independent scholars, and concerned activists, who work for the protection of the cultural heritage.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.pennchc.org/page/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pennchc?fref=ts
  Project: http://www.pennchc.org/page/syria

Rescue the Old city of Aleppo*
- *Location and date founded:* Syria (although this is uncertain), 2012.
- *Description:* Rescue the Old city of Aleppo is a non-governmental organisation which aims to raise awareness on the city of Aleppo documenting and sharing information about it through its Facebook page.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/rescue.aleppo

Save Muslim Heritage (SMH)*
- *Location and date founded:*UK, 2013.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2013.
- *Description:* The group was initiated after the destruction and attempted exhumation of the grave of the revered companion of Prophet Mohammed – Hujr bin Adi in Damascus, Syria in May 2013. SMH is a grass roots level campaign promoting a united stance by the Muslim population of their disapproval at the continued heritage destruction taking place particularly in Saudi Arabia, but also increasingly trending around the Middle East region. Regardless of expansion and modernity, heritage and shrines must be preserved at all cost and not deliberately destroyed or attacked. SMH have created a structured plan to actively oppose the continued destruction currently taking place. Projects include:
  a) an E-Petition;
  b) a petition letter to take to local MPs;
  c) an awareness raising campaign with speaker events, a media campaign, and lobbying;
  d) working with UNESCO to discuss how best to protect Islamic sites.
- *Team*: Primarily UK based, but with representatives in the USA, Spain and Belgium.
- Information *and contact:*
  Website: http://savemuslimheritage.org.uk/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/SaveMuslimHeritage
  Project:
  a) http://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/embassy-of-saudi-arabia-london-stop-demolishing-blessed-islamic-heritage-sites-belonging-to-our-beloved-prophet-sall-all%C4%81hu-ala%C4%AByhi-wa-%C4%81lihi-wa-sallam-restore-to-their-former-pristine-glory
  b) - d) http://savemuslimheritage.org.uk/?page_id=21

Saving Antiquities for Everyone (SAFE)
- *Location and date founded:* New York City (USA), 2003.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since 2012.
- *Description:* SAFE is a group of professionals from communications, media, advertising, academic, and law enforcement communities, who are working to raise awareness of the vulnerability of ancient cultural heritage. SAFE is working on promoting the safeguarding and protection of the Syrian cultural heritage through its network website.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.savingantiquities.org/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Savingantiquities?fref=ts
  Project: http://www.savingantiquities.org/about/a-global-concern/syria/

The American School of Oriental Research (ASOR)
- *Location and date founded:* ASOR is currently located in Boston (USA), founded 1900.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since the start of the conflict.
- *Description:* ASOR is a non-profit organisation that supports the study of the cultures and history of the Near East, from the earliest times to the present. ASOR is formed from twenty-

one institutions, including Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Columbia universities. Every year ASOR organises a scholarly conference in North America. During the next meeting (San Diego, November 19-22, 2014), the organisers of the ASOR session on the "Archaeology of Syria" will pay attention to the current threats to Syria's cultural heritage encouraging on sharing information about current news of damage to Syrian sites/regions.

- *Team:* Primarily American
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.asor.org/
  http://www.asor.org/am/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/asor.member?fref=ts

The Syrian Association for Preserving Heritage and Ancient Landmarks*

- *Location and date founded:* Aleppo, 2013.
- *Description:* The group was founded to protect the landmarks of Aleppo. Their work has included:
  a) attempting to save the stones from the minaret of the Great Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo;
  b) removing the mihrab for its protection;
  c) walling up the sundial in the courtyard (with the Division of Antiquities of the Free Council of Aleppo).
- *Team:* Syrian.
- *Information and contact:*
  No webpage. References to their work are from :
  http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/0514/Syria-Damaged-landmarks-await-peace-restoration and
  https://www.facebook.com/Department.Archaeology/photos/pb.479127952160531.-2207520000.1395852034./543123442427648/?type=3&src=https%3A%2F%2Fscontent-a-lhr.xx.fbcdn.net%2Fhphotos-ash3%2Ft31.0-8%2F1262857_543123442427648_1117653135_o.jpg&smallsrc=https%3A%2F%2Fscontent-a-lhr.xx.fbcdn.net%2Fhphotos-ash3%2Ft1.0-9%2F563506_543123442427648_1117653135_n.jpg&size=1152%2C768&fbid=543123442427648

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- *Location and date founded:* Paris (France), 1945.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since the beginning of the conflict.
- *Description:* UNESCO is a governmental organization that aims to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture. In collaboration with other organisations, UNESCO is involved in different projects for the safeguarding of the Syrian cultural heritage, including:
  a) documenting knowledge and updating information about illicit trafficking and looting dedicating a page on its website called *Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property in Syria*;
  b) arrange a two regional training workshops entitled *National Workshop on the Fight against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property* organised by the UNESCO's Office in Amman to prevent the illicit trafficking of Syrian cultural property and to promote regional cooperation (10-13 February 2013 and 3-5 December 2013);
  c) from the funding of the European Union and in collaboration with other strategic partners

(i.e. ICOMOS and ICROM), the UNESCO's office in Beirut is promoting the launch of a project called *EU-UNESCO: Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Heritage project* (from March 2014 for a period of three years. See also the DGAM link), to contribute to restoring social cohesion, stability and sustainable development.

d) The World Heritage Committee has placed the six World Heritage sites of Syria on the List of World Heritage in Danger in order to draw attention to the risks they are facing from the situation in the country (June 2013).

e) In addition, several press releases and statements have been made by the UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova to condemn: e1) the military presence and destruction at World Heritage Sites in Syria (February 2014); e2) the escalation of violence and the damage to World Heritage in Syria (July 2013); e3) the continue destruction of ancient Aleppo, its market and the Umayyad Mosque (April 2013, March 2013, October 2012, September 2012 and July 2012); and to promote e4) the protection of Syria's cultural heritage (June 2013, March 2012).

- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://en.unesco.org/
  Projects:
  a) http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-traffic-of-cultural-property/emergency-actions/syria/
  b) http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-traffic-of-cultural-property/capacity-building/arab-states/syria-workshop-on-the-fight-against-illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kra3e0DL5sA
  http://www.unesco.org/new/en/amman/culture/illicit-traffic-of-cultural-property/
  c) http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/emergency-actions/emergency-safeguarding-of-the-syria-heritage-progect/
  d) http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1038/
  e1) http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1108/
  e2) http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1055/
  e3) http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1002/
  http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/990/
  http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/945/
  http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/940/
  http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/915/
  e4) http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1016/
  http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/862

United Nations (UN)
- *Location and date founded:* New York City (USA), 1945.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: 1972 (date of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention)
- *Description:* the UN is an intergovernmental organisation which aims to promote international cooperation. In 2013, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2139 to ease aid delivery to Syrians, and provide relief from 'chilling darkness'. Of note, one paragraph states - "Calling on all parties to immediately end all violence which

has led to human suffering in Syria, save Syria's rich societal mosaic and cultural heritage, and take appropriate steps to ensure the protection of Syria's World Heritage Sites"

- *Team:* international group formed from 193 member states.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.un.org/en/
  Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/unitednations?fref=ts
  Project: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sc11292.doc.htm

World Monument Fund (WMF)

- *Location and date founded:* New York City (USA), 1965.
  - Promoting the protection of the Syrian archaeological heritage: since it was founded
- *Description:* WMF is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic architecture and cultural heritage sites in the world. WMF is raising awareness and promote the safeguarding and protection of the Syrian cultural heritage through several projects:
  a) a website page called *Crisis in Syria,* where WMF updates information about the damage to the Syrian cultural heritage;
  b) a petition named *Help Ensure the Survival of Syria's Cultural Heritage;*
  c) the launch of the campaign *Heritage in the Crosshairs,* aims to collect money to ensure the protection of the Syrian cultural heritage;
  d) including the *Cultural Heritage Sites of Syria* within the *2014 World Monuments Watch,* which highlights 67 sites from 41 countries which are under threat from war, the environment, or economic development;
  e) WMF received an appeal from the Syrian authorities to help preserve three key sites: Aleppo's historic center, Krak des Chevaliers, and the medieval fortified city of Qal'at al-Mudiq. These sites are their priority. The first step will be planning, documentation and analysis of damage. A great deal of work will be conducted offsite thanks to the powerful resource of satellite imagery, radar scanning, and the monitoring that many people inside Syria are doing on the ground. From 2000 to 2010, WMF and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture worked extensively on the restoration of Aleppo Citadel. The knowledge and experience gained will guide their mobilization sometime in the future.
- *Team:* international.
- *Information and contact:*
  Website: http://www.wmf.org/
  Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/worldmonuments?fref=ts
  Projects:
  a) http://www.wmf.org/crisis-syria
  b) https://www.change.org/petitions/help-ensure-the-survival-of-syria-s-cultural-heritage-2
  c) http://www.wmf.org/give/crisis-in-syria
  d) http://www.wmf.org/project/cultural-heritage-sites-syria
  e) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bonnie-burnham/syria-cultural-sites_b_4026129.html?utm_hp_ref=tw

Conclusions

The main aim of this report is to provide a précis of the activities undertaken by 38 organisations and groups that are involved in the protection and safeguarding of the Syrian archaeological heritage. This information has been summarised in the following table (Tab. 1).

Table 1 Summary of the data presented in the report.

ID	Name	Visibility	Type of action
1	AAAS	website	maps
2	AIA	social media, website	conferences, statements
3	Aleppo Archaeology	social media	online discussion and updates
4	APSA	social media, website	online discussion and updates
5	ARCH	website	online discussion and updates; training
6	Archaeologik	social media	books, online discussion and updates
7	Archaeology in Syria (NETWORK)	social media	online discussion and updates
8	ASOR	website	lectures
9	BANEA	social media, website	petitions, press releases
10	Blue Shield: ICBS & ANCBS	website	online discussion and updates, press releases, statements
11	CHC	website	electronic database, maps
12	CiD	website	online discussion and updates
13	Cultural Heritage in Syria in the current conflict	website	conferences, online discussion and updates
14	DAI	website	electronic database, lectures
15	DGAM	website	articles, books, electronic database, maps, new draft law, online discussion and updates, press releases, restoration project, training, workshops
16	Division of Antiquities of the Free Council of Aleppo	social media	online discussion and updates, restoration project

ID	Name	Visibility	Type of action
17	Documenting the Injured Archaeological Sites of Homs	social media	online discussion and updates
18	Etilaf	social media	online discussion and updates, training
19	Eyes on Syrian Heritage	social media	online discussion and updates
20	Fides	website	petitions
21	GHF	social media, website	online discussion and updates
22	HfP	website	online discussion and updates, other, press releases, raise money, training, workshops
23	ICCROM	website	online discussion and updates, statements, training
24	ICCROM & ATHAR	website	online discussion and updates, statements, training
25	ICOM	website	illicit trafficking
26	ICOMOS	website	press releases, training, workshops
27	ICD&IPC	website	award, exhibitions, press releases
28	INTERPOL	website	illicit trafficking
29	ISESCO	website	statements
30	LPASD	social media	articles, interviews, online discussion and updates
31	OHWB	website	exhibitions, statements
32	Rescue the Old city of Aleppo	social media	online discussion and updates
33	SAFE	social media, website	online discussion and updates
34	SMH	social media, website	online discussion and updates, petitions
35	The Syrian Association for Preserving Heritage and Ancient	n/a	restoration project

ID	Name	Visibility	Type of action
	Landmarks		
36	UN	website	press releases
37	UNESCO	website	online discussion and updates, petitions, press releases, statements, training, workshops
38	WMF	website	articles, maps, online discussion and updates, petitions, raise money

Within the 38 bodies considered in this report,
- Fourteen of them have been recently founded in reaction to the Syria crisis. The majority of these are formed from volunteer members. The greater number of these bodies have a national foundation: six of them are Syrian.
- The majority of the project teams are formed from international members and collaborations (29 out of 38). The types of actions undertaken by these groups include: discussion and sharing updates online, publications (i.e. articles, books, maps), interviews, statements, press releases, petitions, lectures, conferences, workshops, training, exhibitions, electronic databases (of both archaeological sites and objects), urban restoration projects; control measures help to detect illicit trafficking of cultural objects, establishing awards, and proposing new draft laws.
- The most common actions have been carried out through online discussions (23 out of 38), while electronic databases and measures to combat the illicit traffic of cultural objects have been launched by only five groups.
- Finally, workshops and training for Syrian people have been organised by eight organisations, but they refer to similar projects undertaken in cooperation (i.e. ICOMOS, and ICCROM)

The numbers provided in this report are obviously provisional and they only refer to the groups whose information is available on the internet. It is important to emphasise this aspect and to encourage people who are not included in this list, but working toward the protection of the Syrian cultural heritage, to come and share their projects. This is essential not only for better organisation of types of activities and projects, but also to make larger international organisations aware of the need of more funding, which is essential to ensure the achievement of the teams' goals.