

## Newsletter December 2016



REUTERS

### *Next Statutory Meeting of the SHIRIN International Committee*

The next Statutory Meeting of the SHIRIN International Committee will take place at Rencontres Assyriologiques Internationales (63rd RAI) in Marburg, Germany, July 24-28th, 2017.

<http://www.rai63.org/index.php/rai/2017/announcement>

### *Planned Workshop – “Heritage in Conflict: A Review of the Situation in Syria and Iraq”*

The SHIRIN (Syria) and RASHID (Iraq) organizations are planning a workshop entitled "Heritage in Conflict: A Review of the Situation in Syria and Iraq" during the next Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (63rd RAI) in Marburg, Germany, on July 24-28th, 2017.

<http://www.rai63.org/index.php/rai/2017/announcement>.

The workshop theme fits within the RAI planned session on **Dealing with Antiquity – Past, Present, and Future**. After years of conflict, it is necessary to attempt a general vision at the Near/Middle East scale and to share experiences, actions and projects headed by local authorities, scientific organizations and NGOs primarily in these countries but also in surrounding countries welcoming refugees and displaced persons, and in foreign countries where scientific communities – including

colleagues in exile- are dealing with Near/Middle East Heritage preservation research and teaching programs.

The workshop organizers welcome talks from institutions and NGO representatives to consider the various policies in this area, and to share proposals for the future.

Send the title and the abstract of the talk you propose to [shirinrashid.raiworkshop@gmail.com](mailto:shirinrashid.raiworkshop@gmail.com) before February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### *News from the SHIRIN International Committee*

#### *Damage Assessment Files*

The 2016 campaign for updating damage assessment on excavated sites, launched on April 2016, allowed getting information from 32 directors (56 directors answered during the 2014/2015 campaign). To complement this information, a SHIRIN Norwegian volunteer, Torbjørn Preus Schou, made a systematic analysis of the 103 more or less recent satellite scenes provided by UNOSAT - following an agreement discussed between SHIRIN and UNOSAT on Nov. 2015- and a systematic analysis of scenes available on the web (Google Earth and Bing) which allows to build a chronology of sites conditions 2010-2016. Two reports were produced:

- 1) CATALOGUE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA 2010-2016: ASSESSMENTS BY SURVEY OF GOOGLE EARTH AND BING IMAGERY
- 2) CATALOGUE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA 2010-2016: ASSESSMENTS BY SURVEY OF UNOSAT IMAGERY

35 directors of damaged sites received these reports for an expertise and complementary data on their site; we received 12 answers.

UNOSAT is now planning to conduct a major update on the Syria CSH report they did back in 2014 and having the SHIRIN data for the excavated sites will be a plus for them. The plan is to provide information on excavated sites (with proper credit).

#### *Historic Environment Record for Syria*

The Shirin Historic Environment Record for Syria, which combines data from the Fragile Crescent Project and PaléoSyr/PaleoLib, with additional information supplied by excavation and survey teams that have worked in various part of Syria, has recently become a partner in the Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa project (EAMENA), which is funded by Arcadia (<http://eamena.arch.ox.ac.uk/>). The Syrian HER will now form part of the Arches database created by EAMENA, and its development will be funded for 3 years from Jan. 2017, allowing an unrivalled opportunity to create a systematic record of heritage sites in Syria.

#### *Initiatives involving Syrian colleagues and students*

SHIRIN is keen to support Syrian colleagues and students. Numerous countries have hosted or are hosting Syrian colleagues and students. In most instances, these visits allow for short term stays (a few months to a few years). The on-going situation in Syria requires us to find new initiatives for long term stays. To support Syrian colleagues and students, SHIRIN seeks the assistance of National

Committees in helping to develop a network to share information about placements, employment and grant opportunities in this area.

### *News from the SHIRIN National Committees*

#### *Australia*

The SHIRIN Australian National Committee is involved in the development of an exhibition, titled *Syria: Ancient History – Modern Conflict*, planned at the University of Melbourne's Ian Potter Museum of Art in 2017 (27 March to 27 August). The exhibition will highlight archaeological findings from the University of Melbourne research projects in north Syria (*El Qitar, Tell Ahmar and Jebel Khalid*) and draw attention to the current conflict in Syria. A symposium (11-13 August 2017) is planned as part of the exhibition.

#### *France*

Frank Braemer spoke about current actions of the international scientific community for Syrian Heritage and presented SHIRIN at the 'Hâtons-nous et dessinons vite' conference on Heritage preservation history since the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. in Bordeaux (Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

#### *Italy*

An Italian national committee will be formed soon. Our colleague Marina Pucci (University of Florence) is in charge of the official registration and creation.

#### *Switzerland*

Representative of the Swiss National Committee participated in the conference on Preparing for a Time After War: Cynthia Dunning, Mohamad Fakhro and Mohamed Alkhalid, TEDxBern

See the link <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELk2SRxUxRM&feature=share>>

And press release [http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/cultural-heritage\\_archaeologists-in-switzerland-prepare-for-post-war-syria/42500792](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/cultural-heritage_archaeologists-in-switzerland-prepare-for-post-war-syria/42500792)

#### *The Netherlands*

Olivier Nieuwenhuijse now represents The Netherlands on the SHIRIN International Committee; he replaces Peter Akkermans.

The National Committee reports that the DGAM has begun a project with the Centre for Global Heritage and Development (University Leiden, TU-Delft and Erasmus Rotterdam) to assess the

damage to the archaeological collections of the archaeological museum of Raqqa. Before the war the museum kept important finds from the broader region, charting the development of Upper Mesopotamian cultures from the earliest humans to modern times. In contrast to other museums in Syria, the collections from the Raqqa Museum were not safeguarded. After ISIS captured the town, most of the collections should be considered lost. Our project aims to construct a detailed inventory as a tool for (hopefully) future identification and recovery of the lost objects. We aim to do so by expanding the DGAM inventories of the museum with detailed information and descriptions available in excavation project archives across Europe. A funding proposal is currently being reviewed in the Netherlands. While this project focusses on the collections of the Raqqa Museum, the Centre also cooperates with the Free University of Amsterdam to create a digitised GIS application of all archaeological heritage in the Balikh Valley north of the city of Raqqa. Finally, the Centre works on reproducing lost archaeological heritage by 3D scanning of silicone moulds made of clay tablets carrying Assyrian texts in cuneiform excavated at Tell Sabi Abyad in the Balikh Valley.

### *Items of Interest*

#### *Recent selected publications*

KANJOU, Y and TSUNEKI, A. eds., 2016, *A History of Syria in One hundred Sites*, Oxford, Archaeopress.

LABABIDI, R., and QASSAR, H., 2016, Did They Really Forget How to Do It? Iraq, Syria and the International Response to Protect a Shared History, *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and History Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 314-362.

#### *Exhibitions*

##### **La Syrie et le désastre archéologique du Proche-Orient: Palmyre, cite martyre**

This exhibition features photos and documents reflecting the recent destruction of Syrian heritage as well as archaeological Palmyrian pieces from the AUB Museum. Curators: Dr. Michel al- Maqdissi & Dr. Leila Badre. <http://www.beiteddine.org/event-details.asp?eventId=401>

A catalogue was edited by Michel al-Maqdissi and Eva Ishaq.

### *Report from RASHID International Committee*

This year has been fruitful for RASHID International. The following information was provided by the RASHID executive.

The RASHID website has been online and functional for a few weeks now and can be found at <https://rashid-international.org/>. To contribute write an informational text relating to Iraqi heritage, please contact Seán at [s.fobbe@rashid-international.org](mailto:s.fobbe@rashid-international.org)

#### *Human Rights and International Law Programme*

The Human Rights and International Law Programme works to use international law, especially human rights law and international humanitarian law, to promote the protection and preservation of Iraqi cultural heritage in Iraq and abroad. An overview of the Programme is available here:

<https://rashid-international.org/projects/human%20rights%20and%20international%20law%20programme.html>

The Programme so far has produced a report for the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights (Professor Karima Bennoune) dealing with the dangers to Iraqi cultural heritage and its human rights implications (authored by Karel Novacek, Simone Mühl, Seán Fobbe, Roger Matthews, Rafal Kolinski and Olivier Nieuwenhuys), available on the website of the United Nations at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/CulturalRights/DestructionHeritage/NGOS/RASHID.pdf>

The Programme has also produced a lengthy informational text on the international law applicable to cultural heritage in the context of Iraq (authored by Seán Fobbe), available here

<https://rashid-international.org/information/international%20law.html>

Within this Programme we have further been working tirelessly to promote cultural heritage in the context of the United Nations, and we have recently succeeded in influencing the negotiations of the first ever resolution on the protection of cultural heritage adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council. The resolution is available here:

[http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/33/L.21](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/33/L.21)

Finally, the President of RASHID International, Roger Matthews, travelled to New York in October to attend the UN General Assembly and personally advocate for cultural heritage in the heart of international diplomacy. He attended one-on-one meetings with high-ranking diplomats of several influential countries, as well as with the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights herself. He was also invited to an evening event hosted by the Special Rapporteur dealing with the intentional destruction of cultural heritage. A recording of the event is available here:

<http://webtv.un.org/watch/time-to-end-intentional-destruction-of-cultural-heritage-a-human-rights-call-to-action/5188893539001#full-text>

For further information on the RASHID Programme, contact Seán at [s.fobbe@rashid-international.org](mailto:s.fobbe@rashid-international.org)

#### *Digitization of slides*

This project is already underway at LMU in Munich, and involves digitization of photographic slides in the collections of staff at LMU from previous Iraq archaeological projects. We are considering broadening this project to include other relevant university collections across Europe, North America and the Far East. For further information on the project, please contact Simone at [s.muehl@rashid-international.org](mailto:s.muehl@rashid-international.org)

#### *GIS analysis of CORONA images*

This is an existing project involving comparison of 1960s CORONA images with current satellite imagery in order to evaluate the extent of damage to heritage sites by a range of factors, including urban expansion, agriculture and deliberate destruction.

For further information on the project, please contact Simone at [s.muehl@rashid-international.org](mailto:s.muehl@rashid-international.org)

### *Mosul*

We have been much involved in consultations and offering advice regarding the ongoing situation in and around Mosul. We have produced key documents and resources regarding the standing buildings of Old Mosul as well as the Neo-Assyrian cities of Khorsabad, Nimrud and Nineveh, all currently under severe threat. We are in close contact with a range of appropriate organizations and individuals.

### *Incorporation*

RASHID International was incorporated as an '*eingetragener Verein*' (e.V.) in Germany in April 2016. An e.V. is a membership-based not-for-profit legal entity in German law that has stood the test of time and is the preferred choice for many NGOs, including Amnesty International. The RASHID 'Charter' ('constitution') is available in both English and German:

The information above was kindly provided the RASHID Board of Directors:

Roger Matthews (President) [r.j.matthews@reading.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.matthews@reading.ac.uk), Simone Mühl (Vice-President) [Simone.Muehl@vaa.fak12.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:Simone.Muehl@vaa.fak12.uni-muenchen.de), Olivier Nieuwenhuijse (Treasurer) [o.p.nieuwenhuijse@arch.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:o.p.nieuwenhuijse@arch.leidenuniv.nl), and Rafał Koliński (Secretary) [kolinski@amu.edu.pl](mailto:kolinski@amu.edu.pl)

Information about the current Board of Directors is found here:

<https://rashid-international.org/about-2/board%20of%20directors.html>

### **SHIRIN Executive Board**

Frank Braemer (President), Hartmut Kühne (Vice President), Graham Philip (Treasurer) and Andrew Jamieson (Secretary)

<http://shirin-international.org/>

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Syrian Heritage in Danger: an International Research Initiative & Network