



Damascus, 13 April 2016

The Road to Resurrecting Palmyra

The archaeological site of Palmyra is considered the jewel of Syria's exquisite collection of ruins and a significant icon of the cultural heritage of humanity. Palmyra, which was overtaken by ISIS in May 2015, resulting in the demolition and destruction of numerous monuments (the sella of Temple of Bel and the Temple of Baalshamin, the Triumph of Arc, some tower tombs and Palmyra Museum, in addition to clandestine excavations), was liberated on March 27, 2016, in a highly professional manner which protected the city from any further damage. That has been confirmed through our field visits.

The Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums at the Syrian Ministry of Culture is currently assessing the damage inflicted on the ancient city along with its museum in order to be able to set plans and visions for emergency and urgent intervention through adopting a clear and scientific method (the castle of Palmyra, the gate of the Temple of Bel, the structure of the museum, the damaged statues). In addition, the DGAM is preparing the architectural and constructional plans for our future restoration works within definite deadlines; this is because a large part of the architectural elements of the damaged monuments can be reused in restoration so as to retain the city's originality and identity.

Meanwhile, some speculations and statements, made by some who do not belong to our institution, speak of our intention to rebuild the city utilizing 3D technologies as well as constructing modern buildings. These, unquestionably, are in complete contrast to our vision at the DGAM, which has been well-reputed for its scientific professionalism for almost 100 years since it was established. It has helped rescue the majority of artifacts under such exceptional circumstances in the past five years of war. It also carried out emergency restoration works in a number of Syrian ancient cities between 2014 and 2015, including the Ancient City of Homs, Maaloula, the Ancient City of Damascus, Krak des Chevaliers (after its liberation) and a number of other castles on the Syrian coast. Hence, we would like to emphasize that our plans and visions will be devised and designed in cooperation with our national and international partners taking into account international standards and conventions applicable worldwide.



Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the local and international efforts, particularly those exerted by the DGAM's employees who spare nothing in order to safeguard their cultural heritage and Syrian identity. We would also like to thank UNESCO and all the interested countries, organizations, experts and financiers aiming at resurrecting Palmyra, which is seen as a global responsibility.

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