

Trip to Qamishli / 26 April- 28 April 2018 Report-Yasmine Mahmoud

This report is meant to inform the DGAM about my trip to Qamishli, and to express my appreciation for the DGAM's help in facilitating this trip.

The purpose of this trip was to take a look at some of the materials that will be discussed in my PhD dissertation, and to check on the situation of Tell Mozan and excavation areas, and to attend the exhibit on Urkesh in Qamishli.

The Urkesh exhibit in Qamishli

An exhibit about Urkesh was inaugurated in Qamishli on the 25th of April. It is the same exhibit that was held in Beirut in November 2017.

I went to the exhibit, where I met Dr. Suleiman Elias, Dr. Khaled Ahmo, and our workmen from Mozan.

The exhibit was a great success, and it was attended by many people, mainly students.



Father Antranik Ayvazian's visit to the exhibit was extremely important to us and to the local community.

This exhibit panels were translated into Arabic and Kurdish, in order to reach a broad public.



Expedition's house

The house of the expedition is now occupied by YBJ military soldiers, all women. These women are taking a great care of the house and its belongings. There are no changes in the house, and no items are removed. Non residential rooms (like offices, computer rooms, conservation labs) are locked and not in use.



The storage room is as we left it.

The presence of these military soldiers is key in preventing anyone from stealing or destroying the house.

There is an appointed guard by the YBJ whose job is to prevent people from going near the expedition's house.

These women soldiers were very hospitable to us and very cooperative.



The site

The site is in a perfect condition. The temple area is well preserved. The Abi is also in a good condition. Our protective methods are proving to be very effective. The dome of the Abi is very resistant to whether elements, and the rust proof paint on the dome turned out to be an optimum solution.



I took a thorough look at the mudbrick walls of the palace, to check on their condition. Our covering system is preventing all damages that could affect the integrity of the walls. I photographed the walls of a more fragile nature for a more thorough monitoring



There are some damages in the protective wall shelters. But these damages are inflicted by visitors and children who stand on them when unsupervised. These damages are easily fixed, and they are a part of our maintenance and conservation plan that will be carried out before the rain season.



The only real damage in the site is in area J1. The large section of J1 has been affected by rain water accumulating in J1 (which is a deep excavation area) causing the bottom parts of the section to crumble and dissolve in the accumulated water.

Unfortunately, there are no preventive measures that we can take to resolve this issue. The only thing that we can do is to cut back the section to reduce the risk. But this operation will result in a big amount of dirt that will need to be removed, and possible findings that will remain without a stratigraphic context. Therefore we decided to not intervene and keep a close eye on the situation regularly.

Meetings

Dr. Suleiman Elias

I had a meeting with Dr. Suleiman to talk about his Tell Sha'ir conservation project. He said that, now that they have the permit, they will start working after the harvest season.

Dr. Suleiman was very helpful in the Urkesh exhibit in Qamishli. He took the time to explain to people about the project and the excavations, and to answer all questions from the attendance.

School kids

As we had informed you before, we have a project involving school kids from Qamishli and from Domodossola in Italy. The idea is to have these student exchange letters in which they talk about the importance of history, family roots and what is home for them. There were a few exchanges between the students so far.

I met the kids in Qamishli in New horizon Language center. We talked about the project and its importance.



Brivan Younis, the head of the tourism and archaeology association

The head of the tourism and archaeology association asked to see me, to propose a project to us.

They want to establish a research center in the expedition's house or anywhere in Mozan. This center will conduct research about the history of the area and the archaeological sites. She did not give me any specific details because they are still developing the idea. But they want the expedition to give them the approval and funding, and to collaborate with them on this project. We did not give them an answer yet, and we would appreciate your advice and opinion regarding this matter.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the DGAM, especially Dr. Hammoud, for all their help and cooperation on all our projects and endeavors.

