

Qasr al-Mshatta

Mohammed El Khalili
Tarmeem Center for Cultural
Heritage
mohd_elkhalili@yahoo.com

Nizar Al Adarbeh
Tarmeem Center for Cultural
Heritage
nizar.aladarbeh@gmail.com

Adel Mutawi
Tarmeem Center for Cultural
Heritage
adelmutawi@gmail.com



Fig. 1. Restoration works at the throne hall. (Photo courtesy of the Tarmeem Center for the Preservation of Heritage, 2021.)

Inscribed on the World Heritage Tentative list, the Qasr al-Mshatta archaeological site is one of the most important and largest Umayyad palaces in Jordan. Dating to 743 CE, it was constructed by Walid II in the desert some 30 km south of Amman. The early death of Walid in 744 CE may have suspended building activities, which is why it is considered today to be an unfinished monument. It is believed that before 800 CE a major earthquake destroyed the palace, which then remained abandoned for several centuries. It was only in the late 19th century, in connection with the construction of the Bagdad and Hejaz railways, that travelers again took notice of this richly decorated palace. In 1903 the Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid II donated two thirds of the richly decorated main gate to the German emperor Wilhelm II so that it could be included in the newly built Pergamon Museum in Berlin. Since then, the façade has become one of the highlights of the Museum of Islamic Arts in Germany.

The Tarmeem Center for the Preservation of Heritage, a nonprofit organization, is implementing a new conservation project for Qasr al-Mshatta, funded by the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities. The project was launched in 2019 and will contribute to the full preservation, restoration, and management of Qasr al-Mshatta and will enhance its role in socioeconomic development through sustainable





Fig. 2. Consolidation works for the rooms. (Photo courtesy of the Tarmeen Center for the Preservation of Heritage, 2021.)

tourism. During its first phase, the project accomplished significant interventions at the site, including restoration of the throne hall, conservation and rehabilitation of the eastern façade, solving some of the hydrological problems in the palace, and performing other major works in the restoration of vaults and walls with cracks. This has been achieved through training and engaging more than twenty-three participants from the local communities from six nearby villages, which was key to the success of the project. The project will enhance the interpretation and presentation of the site for the visitors using advanced augmented reality and by connecting the site with Queen Alia International Airport.



Fig. 3. Clearance works of the northern walls. (Photo courtesy of the Tarmeem Center for the Preservation of Heritage, 2021.)