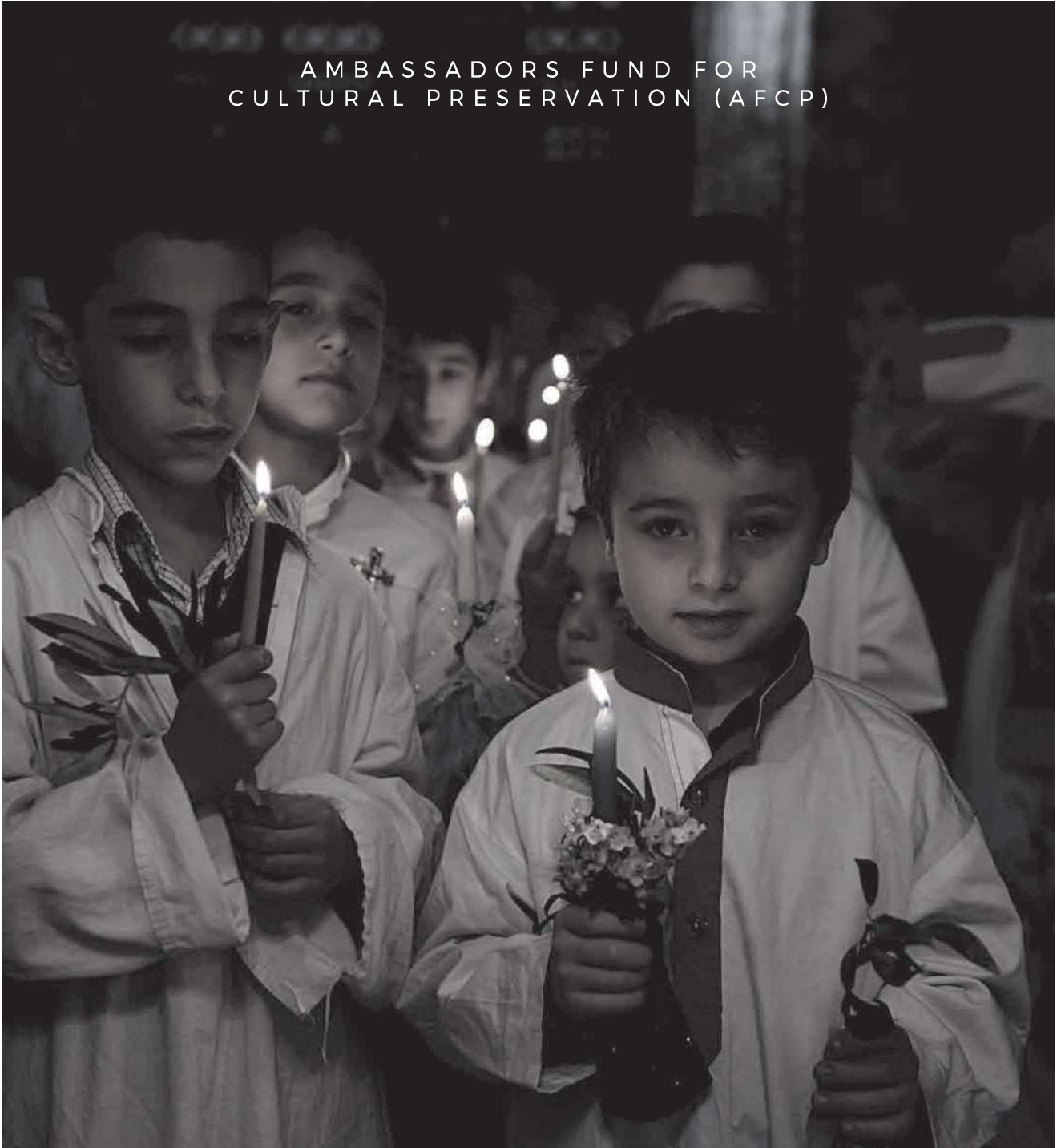
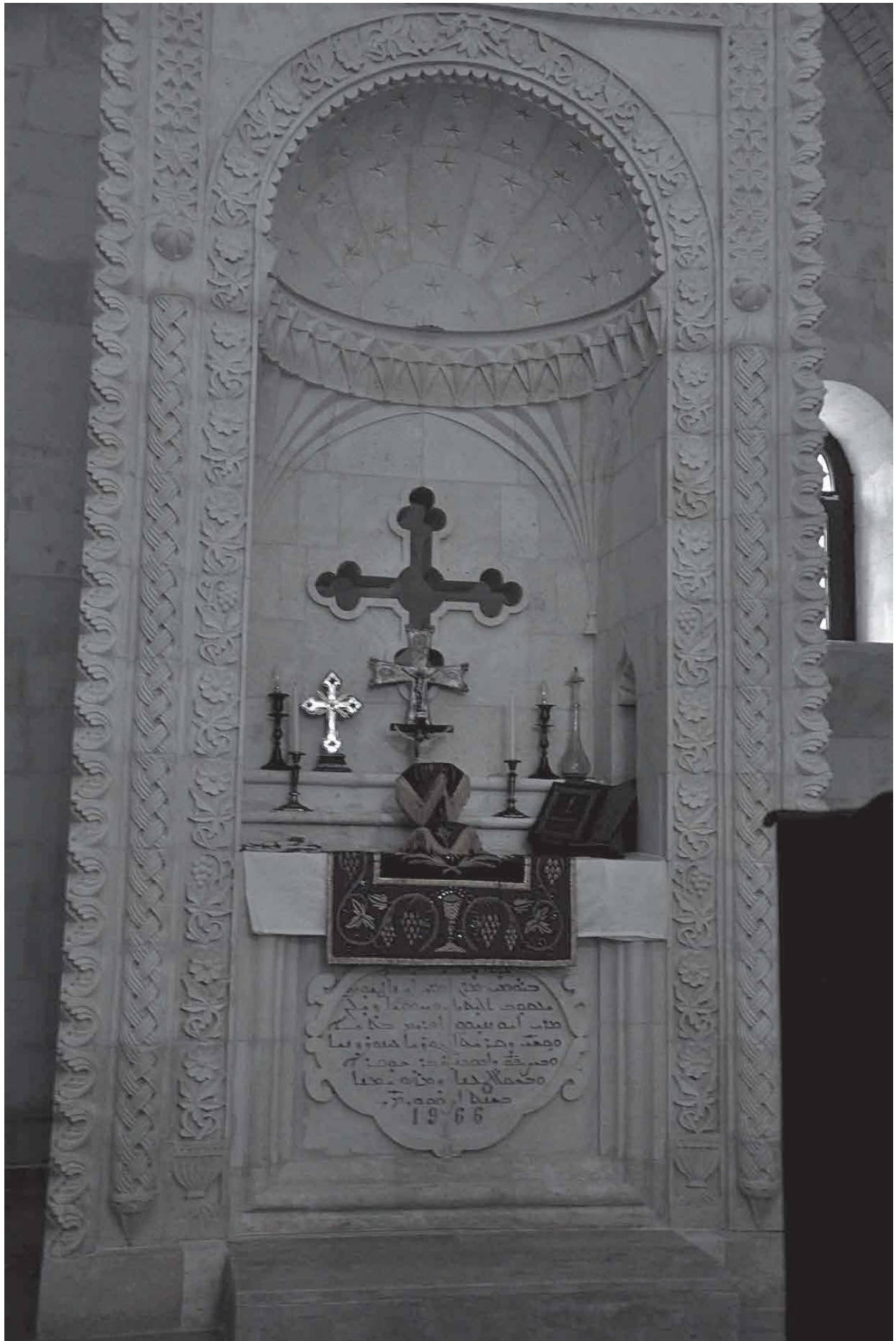


# SYRIAC

IN-TANGIBLE HERITAGE

AMBASSADORS FUND FOR  
CULTURAL PRESERVATION (AFCP)







## **AMBASSADORS FUND FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION (AFCP)**

### **Project Name**

Documentation and  
Promotion of the Syriac  
Intangible Heritage in  
Mardin Region

### **Project Coordinator**

Başak Emir

### **Local Project Coordinator**

Eliyo Eliyo

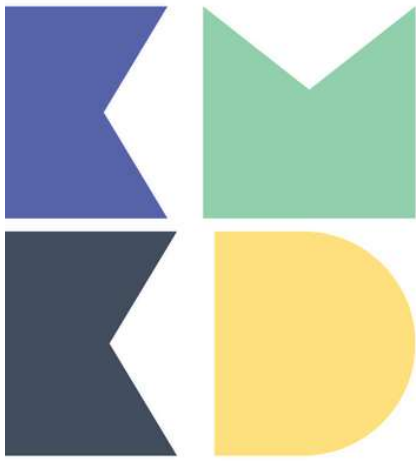
### **Project Consultants**

The Heritage Management  
Organization (HERITAGE)

Assoc. Prof. Abdül-Massih Saadi

Assoc. Prof. Marica Cassis

# THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE



The Association for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (KMKD) was founded in 2014 to document and assess cultural heritage that is abandoned, neglected and under risk of destruction. We believe that the cultural heritage created by all communities of Anatolia is the historical richness of Turkey and the shared heritage of humanity and therefore it is our common responsibility to protect it. KMKD aims at contributing to the recognition and visibility of this cultural heritage and to its transfer to future generations.

KMKD emphasizes the necessity of prompt action to be taken for our cultural heritage at risk. KMKD's risk assessment reports prepared by an interdisciplinary team composed of conservation architectures, civil engineers, archeologists, art historians as well as architectural historians serve this purpose. These reports rely on archival research complemented by field studies conducted on site, and the resulting analyses aim at developing the most appropriate methods for heritage protection.

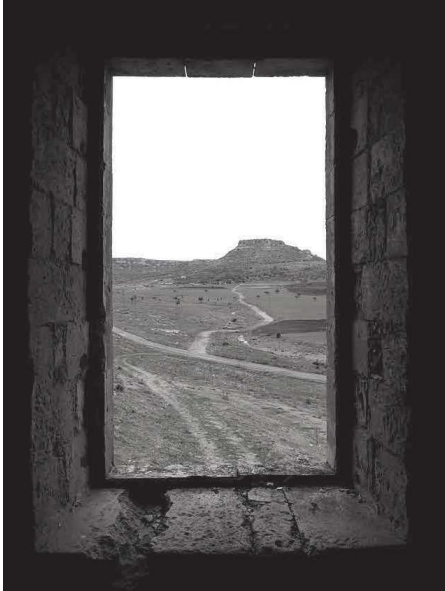
KMKD carries out joint projects with national and international institutions to enhance the knowledge, skill and proficiency for the protection and awareness of cultural heritage at risk, to develop educational content and to provide heritage interpretation and management.

# PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Our project named “Documentation and Promotion of the Syriac Intangible Heritage in Mardin Region” is funded by the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP).

The main purpose of the project is safeguarding the intangible values through the documentation and dissemination of the information on the cultural practices of the Syriac community in the Mardin region and assessing the risks exposed to the tangible heritage of the same community. This project presents a model case that intangible heritage is conceived as integral to the tangible heritage and that the preservation of it requires a strategy that is developed/accepted by the successors of that heritage.



As the main goal of the project, taking initiative for the safeguarding of the intangible Syriac heritage is an urgent need not only for the community itself, but also for the whole region. The region, that is called Turabdin (Mountain of the Gods) in Syriac tradition, has housed a culture with a multilingual, multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious character. The communities of this culture included Muslims, Christians, and Ezidis; and the Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, and Syriac languages have been spoken throughout the history. Our main goal was to sustain this diverse character.



In order to do that we aimed to documenting and promoting the Syriac community’s cultural practices (including their language), extending the networks of the Syriac heritage activists, NGOs, and initiatives, supporting and promoting their activities, and preparing the risk assessment reports for the architectural and urban heritage through the outputs of the project. Three booklets, a website, and a risk assessment report were aimed to disseminate the results of project activities. A child book was also prepared to directly communicate with the next generation. This child book was prepared in Turkish and Syriac language. The contents of these publications were determined by the experts.




# PROJECT DURATION

- September onwards 2018: The preliminary research
- November 2018: The first site visit to Mardin with the expert group
- March 2019: The second site visit to Mardin with the expert group
- April 2019: The third site visit to Mardin with the expert group
- May 2019: Istanbul Workshop on Syriac Intangible Heritage
- June 2019 onwards: three booklets, risk assessment reports and the child-book
- September 2019: Additional visit to Mardin for digitization of the selected edifices
- November 2019 onwards: Website construction
- December 2019: Mardin Workshop on Tangible Heritage
- December 2019-March 2020: Publications (printing)




# PROJECT OBJECTIVES


## STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES



The objectives will be achieved through three booklets, a child book, a website, and a risk assessment report.



A team of experts will oversee a road map for developing a strategy for the conservation of the Syriac heritage in the Mardin region. The members of the expert team will include architects, art historians, conservation specialists, architectural historians, historians, activists, and members of the Syriac community.



An international meeting will be organized in Istanbul to openly discuss about the values, threats, and opportunities related with the Syriac intangible heritage. The key issues highlighted during this international meeting will provide some key aspects that must be issued in the following workshops that will be conducted by experts. The outcomes of the workshops will be disseminated through 3 booklets. The content of these booklets will be determined by the intellectual community that KMKD will bring together for the workshops. These booklets will cover the Syriac heritage from various aspects; They will define the significance of the intangible values of the Syriac community, the problems related with it, and a future roadmap to safeguard this heritage.

## RESULTS

Three booklets, a child book, a website, and a risk assessment report are prepared and being published.

In 3 site visits we documented a total of 60 edifices, some of which had no prior architectural record/documentation, with 3 different multi-disciplinary teams composed of 20 experts such as architects, art historians, conservation specialists, architectural historians, historians, activists, and members of the Syriac community.

We organized a workshop with selected heritage experts on May 25-26, 2019. This international meeting took place at ANAMED (Anatolian Civilizations Center of Koç University) in Istanbul. It aimed to discuss openly the values, threats, and opportunities related to the Syriac intangible heritage. The highlighted key issues provided materials for the publications. The outcomes of the workshops disseminated through 3 booklets. The content of the booklets determined by the participants themselves. These booklets cover the Syriac heritage from various aspects; they identify the significance of the intangible values of the Syriac community, the problems related with it, and a future roadmap to safeguarding this heritage.

## STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● As the engagement of the young generations with historic preservation is a vital aspect of the sustainability of any effort for safeguarding the heritage, a child book will also be prepared. This child book will be prepared in Syriac language (or dual language).

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● The risk assessment will have a broad context that will include traditional civil architecture, and landscapes that have significance for the Syriac community. Through the risk assessment reports, the project will provide a comprehensive guideline with the priorities of the implementations that any future restoration project should consider. Moreover, these reports will be presented and discussed with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the local authorities.

## RESULTS

A child book was also prepared to directly communicate with the next generation. This child book was prepared in Turkish and Syriac language. The specific content of this child book was determined by the experts. This book was designed to be a resource for Syriac culture for children.

The monuments included to the risk assessments show great variety in scale and cover a wide span chronologically.

Suggestions such as disseminating information, considering the buildings in an integrated way with their surroundings, including these buildings into tourism routes, become prominent. We specifically draw attention to urgent protection measures, and restoration of some buildings is also proposed.





# STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES



Two workshops (international meetings), and three site surveys will be the main activities. These activities will be conducted by the expert team which will have cordially operating two sub-committees. The committees will conduct their research separately but operate cordially. The process of these workshops and site studies will be as follows:

a) Preliminary research: A preliminary research will be done to identify the historic heritage structures built by Syriac community in the project region. As a result of this activity, the project team will prepare a plan of assessment visits. At the same time, the project team will gather local knowledge of the region from local sources to facilitate the visits.

b) Assessment visits and preparation of reports: Once the preliminary research is completed, the project team will bring together an interdisciplinary group of international experts who will conduct site visits to document and assess the condition of the historic structures and cultural heritage sites. The sites will be assessed according to various characteristics, such as their exact location, overall condition, and vulnerability to outdoor conditions, while, at the same time, an exact description of the actions that need to be taken will be developed. The information collected will be categorized per variables such as historical data and will result in specific suggestions regarding the protection and preservation of the individual structures.

c) Workshops in Mardin and in Istanbul: Upon the completion of site visits, the first workshop will be organized in Mardin together with the local stakeholders such as the Municipality, the Governorship, related NGO's from the region as well as Mardin Artuklu University to disseminate the site visit results and to discuss the future steps to preserve the Syriac Heritage in the region. The workshop in Istanbul will be organized with the contribution of cultural heritage institutions and academics. The workshop aims to open up the discussion to some of the historical and conceptual issues surrounding Syriac heritage such as architectural and intangible cultural heritage assets such as language, music, food, dances. The questions of preservation, with a particular focus on effective means of public outreach, education, and awareness will be discussed.

d) Briefing and Advocacy: Upon the completion of the assessment studies, briefings will be planned in order to realize the advocacy activities. The assessment reports will be used for briefing the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Ankara and related local authorities.

e) Dissemination of Knowledge: In order to disseminate the knowledge about the risks facing the cultural heritage, aside from the workshops, booklets will be produced, and a website will be designed. They will be used to publicize the results of the project and make the collected material (i.e. photographs, history of the sites, descriptions, condition) accessible to the public. The booklets and the website will be based on the reports and the visual material of the structures collected during the preliminary studies and the field visits.



# RESULTS

We have prepared a project brief and have contacted to intellectuals who have either had academic studies on Syriac heritage or completed successful projects, and by doing so, we have created a network of individuals. The preliminary research was done through inputs of the experts from this network.

Accordingly, selected monuments were visited between November 1-6, 2018, March 8-14, 2019, and April 1-8 2019, within the knowledge of the project's stakeholders and the Governorships of Mardin, Şırnak and Batman, and the Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism, and with the permission of the Deyrulzafaran Monastery and Churches Foundation, Midyat Syriac Deyrulumur Mor Gabriel Monastery Foundation and Mardin Syriac Catholic Church Foundation.

We organized a workshop with selected heritage experts on May 25-26, 2019. This workshop aimed to open up the discussion to some of the historical and conceptual issues surrounding Syriac heritage such as architectural and intangible cultural heritage assets such as language, music, food, dances. The questions of preservation, with a particular focus on effective means of public outreach, education, and awareness were discussed.

We organized the second workshop in Mardin on December 13-14, 2019 together with the local stakeholders in order to present our project results and to discuss the future steps to preserve the Syriac Heritage in the region with the attendance of US Embassy staff.

Three booklets, a child book, a website, and a risk assessment report were aimed to disseminate the outputs of the main project activities. Moreover, in order to present the architectural and intangible aspects together, we already aimed to add further impact to the project by applying digital technology. 3D models of the most endangered edifices, and 360-degree visuals of some of these edifices are published on the website in order to present their current state to a wider audience and also to academicians who study on Syriac architectural history, and conservation.





# THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

# ASSESSMENT VISITS

Over 3 site visits we documented a total of 60 edifices, some of which had no prior architectural record/documentation, with 3 multi-disciplinary teams composed of 20 different experts. We believe that these endangered edifices' documentation and risk assessment reports are some of the most crucial works that have been done for the Syriac heritage in the area. In addition, we engaged with the local communities as well as national and international stakeholders in order to have a higher impact.

The team of experts designed a road map for developing strategy for the conservation of the Syriac heritage in the Mardin region.

The members of the expert team included architects, art historians, conservation specialists, architectural historians, historians, activists, and members of the Syriac community.

The sites were assessed according to various characteristics, such as their exact location, overall condition, and vulnerability to outdoor conditions, while, at the same time, an exact description of the actions that need to be taken was developed. Finally, the information collected were categorized per variables such as historical data and resulted in specific suggestions regarding the protection and preservation of the individual structures.





# ASSESSMENT VISIT I

NOVEMBER 1-6, 2018

After contacting the stakeholders and some of the important members of the Syriac Community in Mardin in September 2018, the preparations for the site visits were accelerated. Therefore, during September and October the main focus was to organize the first site visit. We formed a group of professionals who have the expertise to assess Syriac monuments on-site and write reports to highlight both values of these monuments and risks threatening them.

The team experts can be seen below:

1. Assoc. Prof. Elif Keser – Kayaalp (Art and Architectural Historian, 9 Eylul University)
2. Dr. Mesut Dinler (Conservation Architect, Politecnico di Torino)
3. Dr. Banu Pekol (Art and Architectural Historian, KMKD)
4. Dr. Lory Zakar (Conservation Architect, Mimar Sinan University, KMKD)
5. Baris Altan (Conservation Architect KMKD, Koç University GABAM)
6. Suna Kabasakal Coutignies (Conservation Specialist)
7. Seher Ivrendi (Art Historian – Mardin Museum)
8. Mihayel Akyuz (Syriac Language and History Expert, Mardin Artuklu University)
9. Eliyo Eliyo (The Project Local Research Coordinator)

Assoc. Prof. Elif Keser-Kayaalp teaches at 9 Eylul University in Izmir. Her expertise is on Christian religious monuments in the East Anatolia. Furthermore, she has various academic works about the religious monuments in the Turabdin region. She is the editor of the Syriac Heritage at Risk publication as well.

Dr. Mesut Dinler, Conservation Architect, and Dr. Banu Pekol, Art and Architectural Historian are members of KMKD. Suna Kabasakal Coutignies is also a Conservation Specialist. All three attended similar projects of the organization before and their experience in similar projects and their expertise were enabled the consistency of the risk assessment reports prepared previously.

Baris Altan and Dr. Lory Zakar are Conservation Architects and they are KMKD Board members as well. Seher Ivrendi is an art historian who works at the Mardin Museum and has wide field experience in the region. Mihayel Akyuz is an expert on Syriac Language and instructor in the Department of Syriac Language and Culture at Mardin Artuklu University.

Additionally, just before this visit, we were granted a drone as an in-kind contribution to the project and recorded a considerable number of aerial photographs and videos.

The monuments we visited are:

1. Mor Abay Monastery, Savur District, Killit, Qellet (Dereiçi) Village, Andıddeyr Locale
2. Church of Ambar, Mardin, Central District, Ambar village
3. Church of Mort Mariana, Kızıltepe District, Kleybin (Halkalı) neighborhood
4. Monastery of Mor Ya'kup of Serugh (Suruç), Mardin, Bülbül Village
5. Monastery of Virgin Mary, Dayro d-Notfo (Dripping Monastery), Mardin central district, Kal'at al-mara (Eskikale) locale
6. Church of Mor Gevargis, Deyra Meshkok, Kızıltepe district, Meshkok (Büyükayrık) neighborhood
7. Church of Deame (Sürekli), Mardin, Kızıltepe, Sürekli
8. Çel Bira (Kırk Kuyu), Mardin Central District, Nur neighborhood, İzzetpaşa locale
9. Monastery of Mor Doniyel (Dayr Matina), Mardin, Mazıdağı, Tilbisim, Gümüşyuva Köyü
10. Monastery of Mor Afrem, Mardin, Artuklu District, Diyarbakır Kapı neighborhood
11. Monastery of Mor Teodute, Mardin, Savur District, Killit (Dereiçi) village
12. The monastery of Mor Behnam and the Enkleistra of Mor Yusuf, Mardin, Benabil (Bülbül)Village
13. The rock-cut chapel of Mor Behnam, Mardin, Benabil (Bülbül) Village
14. Monastery of Mor 'Azozoyel (İzozoel), Mardin, Kal'at al-mara (Eskikale) Village
15. Monastery of Mor Dimet, Mardin, Savur, Killit (Dereiçi) Village, Iskak Derrih Locale





# ASSESSMENT VISIT II

MARCH 8-14, 2019

Right after the first site visit in November, we started to organize the second and third site visits. In the meantime, we launched a social media campaign to publicize the Syriac monuments using the records of the first site visit. In parallel, the monuments list was revised, and the bibliographical resources were extended.

From December 2018 onwards we started to reach out to new experts especially from abroad to avoid any short-notice problem and indeed it resulted with international participations for the forthcoming project actions.

We specifically worked with a number of same experts due to their experience in similar projects and the area in order to enable the consistency of the risk assessment reports prepared previously.

The team experts can be seen at right:

- Assoc. Prof. Elif Keser – Kayaalp (Art and Architectural Historian, 9 Eylül University)
- Assoc. Prof. Abdül-Massih Saadi (Syriac Language Expert– Baylor University, Texas, USA)
  1. Assoc. Prof. Jorge Manuel Simão Alves Correia (Architect – Minho University, Braga, Portugal)
- Assoc. Prof. Marica Cassis (Archaeologist specialized in Byzantine and Syriac Christian history and archaeology - Calgary University, Calgary, Canada)
  2. Dr. Banu Pekol (Art and Architectural Historian, KMKD)
- Dr. Elmon Hançer (Art Historian, KMKD)
- Dr. Pınar Aykaç Leidholm (Conservation Architect – METU)
- Dr. Zekai Erdal (Art Historian – Mardin Artuklu University)
  3. Baris Altan (Conservation Architect - KMKD, Koç University GABAM)
- Eliyo Eliyo (Local Research Coordinator)

Assoc. Prof. Elif Keser-Kayaalp is the editor of the Syriac Heritage at Risk publication and therefore her attendance to all site visits was crucial. Dr. Banu Pekol and Barış Altan are in the team also for the same reason for keeping the consistency. Furthermore, in addition to his professional expertise, he used the drone that we were granted as an in-kind contribution to the project. These considerable number of aerial photographs and video records had an impact also in our social media activities for the promotion of the Project which will be explained in detail in the related section.

Dr. Elmon Hançer, Art Historian from KMKD Board and Dr. Pınar Aykaç Leidholm, Conservation Architect from the Middle East Technical University were invited to this site visit also due to their experience in similar projects of KMKD. Furthermore, to be able to include experts from Mardin as also one of the stakeholders of this heritage, we invited Dr. Zekai Erdal, an art historian from Mardin Artuklu University who has also extensive expertise in the area.

Assoc. Prof. Abdül-Massih Saadi from Baylor University, Syriac and Arabic Language Expert who also known as the translator of “the New Testament for the first time into Arabic directly from what most scholars believe was Jesus' primary language”, Dr. Marica Cassis from Calgary University, Archaeologist specialized in Byzantine and Syriac Christian history and archaeology, and Dr. Jorge Manuel Simão Alves Correia from Minho University, Braga, Portugal, Architect, are invited due to their expertise that fit with our Project perfectly. All their responses were very positive and their enthusiasm to contribute to this Project was remarkable.

The monuments we visited are:

1. Church of Mor Sobo, Mardin, Midyat, Hah (Anıtlı) Village
2. Yoldat Aloho (Virgin Mary), Batman, Beşiri District, Kfarzo (Yenipınar) Village
3. Monastery of Mor Barsaumo, Mardin, Midyat, Salah
4. Dayro d-Mor Aho, Batman, Hasankeyf, Difne (Üçyol)
5. Monastery of Mor Yuhannon, Mardin, Midyat ilçesi, Hah (Anıtlı) village
6. Monastery of Mor Kuryakos, Batman, Zargel (Ayrancı) Village
7. Monastery of Mart Maryam Magdloyto, Mardin, Midyat, Hah (Anıtlı)
8. Dayro d-Il, Batman, Gerçüş, Derdil (Gönüllü)
9. Church of Mor Antonios, Mardin, Midyat, Salah/ Shiluh (Barıştepe)
10. Dayro d-Mor Mushe, Mardin, Midyat, Kfarze (Altıntaş)
11. Yoldat Aloho church, Midyat, Der Kubbe (Karagöl), Sarhavdana
12. Dayro d-Mor Yuhannon d-Kfone, Batman, Gerçüş, Derikfan (Nurlu)
13. Church of Mort Saro, Mardin, Dargeçit, Kismetli Village
14. Church of Mor Gewargis, Mardin, Dargeçit, Alayurt (Arbaye) village
15. Church of Mor Sobo, Mardin, Dargeçit, Alayurt (Arbaye) village
16. Church of Mort Shem'uni, Mardin, Dargeçit, Asit (Altıyol) Village
17. Church of Mort Shem'uni, Mardin, Midyat, Baksıyan/ Beth Kustan (Alagöz)
18. Monastery of Mor Barsaumo, Gercüş District, Kafro 'Eloyto (Arıca) Village
19. Church of Mor Barsaumo, Mardin, Midyat, Baksıyan/ Beth Kustan (Alagöz)
20. Dera Bübe, Mardin, Dargeçit, Baskil
21. Church of Mor Shem'un, Batman, Gercüş, Bin Kalbe (Çukuryurt) village
22. Church of Sardef, Mardin, Dargeçit, Altıyol Village



# ASSESSMENT VISIT III

APRIL 1-8, 2019

Following the completion of the second site visit, the preparations for the third site visit were accelerated. Our research team for the third site visit is listed below:

1. Assoc. Prof. Elif Keser – Kayaalp (Art and Architectural Historian, 9 Eylul University)
2. Dr. Banu Pekol (Art and Architectural Historian, KMKD)
3. Dr. Stuart Blaylock (Archaeologist and Architectural Historian)
4. Dr. Mesut Dinler (Conservation Architect, Politecnico di Torino)
5. Dr. Nicholas Al-Jeloo (Historian specialized in Syriac Studies, Kadir Has University)
6. Baris Altan (Conservation Architect - KMKD, Koç University GABAM)
7. Theocharis Katrakazis (Conservator)
8. Süreyya Topaloğlu (Conservation Architect, KMKD)
9. Sena Kayasu (Conservation Architect, KMKD)
10. Eliyo Eliyo (Local Research Coordinator)



The monuments we visited are:

1. Dayro d-Mor Yoret Alexandroyo, Mardin, Nusaybin, M'arre (Eskihisar)
2. Mor Lo'ozor Monastery, Midyat district, Habsenus (Mercimekli) village
3. Monastery of Mor Yuhannon Tayoyo/ Monastery of John the Arab or Beduin, Mardin, Nusaybin district
4. Dayro d-Moshok, Mardin, Nusaybin, Nawale/Nabula (Beyazsu)
5. Dayro d-Mor Abrohom d-Kashkar, Mardin, Nusaybin, M'arre (Eskihisar)
6. Dayro d-Mor Aho, Der Pue, Mardin, Nusaybin, Beth Man'em Village
7. Church of Mor Barsaumo, Midyat District, 'Ayn Wardo (Gülgöze Village)
8. Church of Mor Adai, Şırnak, İdil District, Beth Ishak (Başakköy) Village
9. Church of Kundel, Mardin, Midyat, 'Ayn Wardo (Gülgöze) Village
10. Dayro d-Mor Aho, Mardin, Midyat, Urdnus (Arnas, Bağlabası)
11. Monastery of Mor Abay, Nusaybin, Beth Man'em (Taşköy)
12. Dera Village Church, Camili Church, Şırnak, İdil District, Dera (Topraklı) Village
13. Church of Forty Martyrs, Mardin, Nusaybin, M'arre (Eskihisar)
14. Dayro d-Mor Sham'un, (Der Bazizke), Şırnak, İdil, Rowen (Karalar)
15. Dayro d-Shumrin (Monastery of Shumrin), Mardin, Nusaybin
16. Monastery of Mor Shem'un, Nusaybin District, Arbo Village (Taşköy)
17. Church of Mor Sobo (Church of Mor Barsavmo and Luqianos?), Mardin, Nusaybin District, Beth Man'em Village (Taşköy)
18. Church of Mor Bobi (Babai), Mardin, Nusaybin, Marbobo (Günyurdu) köyü
19. Deyr Kubbuk, Kubekke
20. Church of Yoldat Aloho (Mother of God), Mardin, Nusaybin, M'arre (Eskihisar)
21. Church of Mor Melke





# ADDITIONAL VISIT FOR DIGITIZATION

SEPTEMBER 17-29, 2019

Recently, the use of technology and digital tools in preservation of cultural heritage became prominent especially in the representation of architectural heritage. The importance of technology in heritage conservation derives from several reasons. First of all, digital tools, like photogrammetry, give more accurate and faster results in comparison to traditional documentation techniques. Photogrammetry also enhances collaborations among experts, since it ensures speedier and more accurate deployment of resources and enables easier access to information. These facilities assign digital technologies as the future of the representation of the existing and destroyed architectural heritage which is also mandated by UNESCO with the Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Cultural Heritage. Digitalization in heritage preservation is not only a way to understand the asset better; it also is essential in cases where it may be impossible to physically reconstruct a lost asset. There are exemplary applications for 3D virtual reconstructions of such heritage buildings, in other words, digital restoration of heritage assets such as rebuilding after the demolition of the antique city of Palmyra in Syria by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) in 2005. The need for digital records (and the accuracy they provide) showed its urgency lately with the fires in Notre Dame Cathedral and in Brazil's National Museum. In such occasions, digital reconstruction provides a striking opportunity for experts to reconstruct these assets and enable their sustainable transmission to the future.



In addition to those assessment visits, in order to present the architectural and intangible aspects together, we aimed to add further impact to the project by applying digital technology. Our plan started with the idea of having an effective display of the monuments and to make a representative inventory that could stimulate more senses which in return provide better learning and awareness for the audience. The aim was to have digital models of the monuments under most risk in the region, 3D reconstruction of these monument through photogrammetry, 360° panoramic views for the tangible aspect and with additional soundscape records of the selected monuments. We believe that this will have a great impact in raising awareness for both the heritage assets and the project itself, and therefore provide further sustainability to both. In order to reach that aim, with the permissions after the budget amendment in June for using the surplus budget to have an a new site visit for digital records (to digitalize monuments under the highest risk), and process the digitalization to be able to make the inventory of the project in the most efficient way and sustainable way, photogrammetry program (Agisoft Metashape Professional Edition Node-locked license), and training for sustainability in the region allowed us to meet the need for better recording techniques of the dense Syriac architectural heritage under high risk in Mardin.



For this, in between the September 17-29, 2019 in partnership with the Heritage Management Organization (HERITAGE), the KMKD team conducted an additional site visit in the region. The site visit was realized with an interdisciplinary team of project coordinator, Başak Emir and the local project coordinator, Eliyo Eliyo, conservation architect, Barış Altan, as well as a spatial data specialist, the director of HERITAGE-Digital, Dr. Cornelis Stal. Monuments which have been listed as the highly endangered according to the risk matrix from our previous site visits were visited.



A large series of Syriac heritage features were modeled using UAV-based imagery. For each site, a safety and feasibility assessment were performed, prior to the actual flights. Based in this assessment, combined with the determination of areas of special interest, a flight plan was calculated. For all flights, a ground sampling distance of 2 to 10 cm was taken into account, depending on the dimensions, but mainly on the importance of the site. With a maximum operation time of 20 minutes per battery, an equilibrium was obtained in terms of coverage, resolution, flying speed, without having unacceptable accuracy reduction.



After each day in the field, the data (containing large series of images), were processed the same evening. This was very important to evaluate the data acquisition based on initial results. The final processing, as well as the construction of the website, was organized after the campaign, using high-end computer capacity.

Moreover, we signed a protocol with Heritage Management Organization (HERITAGE), one of our project advisors, that will enable us to build capacity in the local community in a future program, while a member of our team attended to summer school of HERITAGE - Digital Tools for Cultural Heritage Management to be able to have the skills in-house that enabled us to reflect the impact of this valuable work onto to our project as well.

In addition to the digitization of the edifices, during this visit, we also had the chance for recording community members and some rituals in our staying in the region as the oral history records to be presented in the website. In these records, elder community members told us such as their plays when they were kids, their marriage rituals, or wine making, which are very important aspects of the Syriac Intangible Heritage, whereas members of Syriac Diaspora who were visiting the region told us how they proceed these intangible aspects in Diaspora.





# SYRIAC INTANGIBLE HERITAGE WORKSHOP

MAY 24-25, 2019

As a part of the project, this workshop aimed at opening up the discussion of the historical and conceptual issues including the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage assets such as language, music, food, craftsmanship and dance with a focus on Syriac heritage. In addition to those, a theme for community engagement for safeguarding the intangible heritage took place in the workshop with the attendance of HERITAGE's community engagement expert.

At the end of May, our workshop took place at ANAMED with the participants listed at right:

- Mor Filüksinos Saliba Özmen Metropolitan Bishop- Deyrul Zafaran Monastery,
- Assoc. Prof. Elif Keser Kayaalp - Christian Archaeology and Architectural History Expert, 9 Eylül University
- Assoc. Prof. Abdul-Massih Saadi - Syriac and Arabic Expert, Baylor University
- Assoc. Prof. Mark Soileau - Anthropologist, Hacettepe University
- Dr. George Kiraz – the President of Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute
- Dr. Aris Anagnostopoulos - The University of Kent and Heritage Management Organization
- Esra Ekşi Balcı - Protecting Intangible Heritage in the Upper Tigris Valley Project, History Foundation of Turkey
- Akkad Saadi - The director of Beth Kano Center for preserving and promoting the modern Syriac language and heritage

Participants through SKYPE:

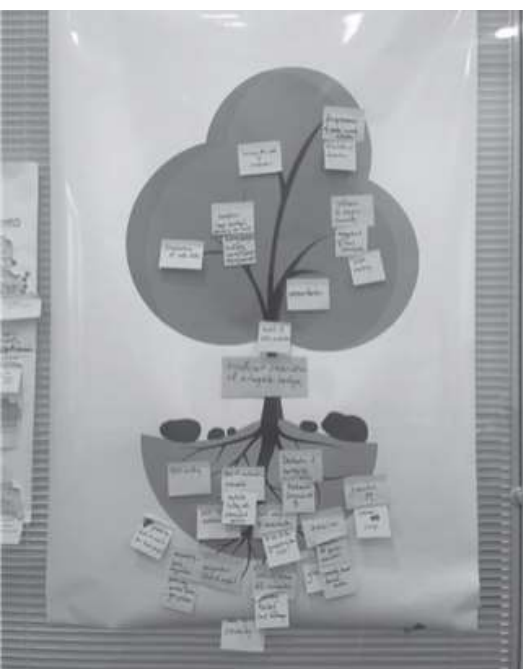
- Assoc. Prof. Andreas Önvér Cetrez - Expertise in psychology of religion, Uppsala University (Coordinator of RESPOND, a Horizon 2020 project, [www.respondmigration.com](http://www.respondmigration.com))





The following themes were discussed with all these participants:

- Intangibles of the Syriac Community
  - Cultural elements
  - Statement of significance for each element
  - Values of these elements/heritage in the community (before and now)
- Intangibles of the Syriac Community under risk
  - Problems (why?)
    - Core problem
    - Root problem
    - Effects
  - Solutions (how?)
    - What community needs
    - What community wants
    - How they can be achieved
    - Strategies
- Safeguarding methods
- Community engagement methods
- Dissemination and communication methods
- The content of the 3 booklets that will cover various aspects of Syriac heritage. The booklets define the significance of the intangible values of the Syriac community, the issues related with this heritage, and a future roadmap to safeguard this heritage



# MARDIN WORKSHOP

## STAKEHOLDERS MEETINGS

DECEMBER 13-14, 2019



The workshop in Mardin, which was planned to be organized in April according to the Project timeline was decided to be carried out after providing all reports for visited edifices as we thought that the completion of all the fields would give better and comprehensive results.

Accordingly, the workshop was held on December 13-14, 2019 with attendance of the local stakeholders and a team from the Embassy.

The first meeting was hosted by the Mardin Artuklu University Rectorate, and the second meeting was hosted by the Midyat Municipality.

Academics, students, members of the Deyrulzafaran Monastery and Churches Foundation, Midyat Syriac Deyrulumur Mor Gabriel Monastery Foundation and Mardin Syriac Catholic Church Foundation, the Bishop of the Deyrulzafaran Monastery, and the staff from the local authorities were attended to these meetings.

The program in both meetings were as in below:

14:30 Opening speech

14:45 Project Presentation

15:30 Break and the Digital Experience (with VR Goggles)

16:00 Preventive Conservation Methods

16:30 Q&A

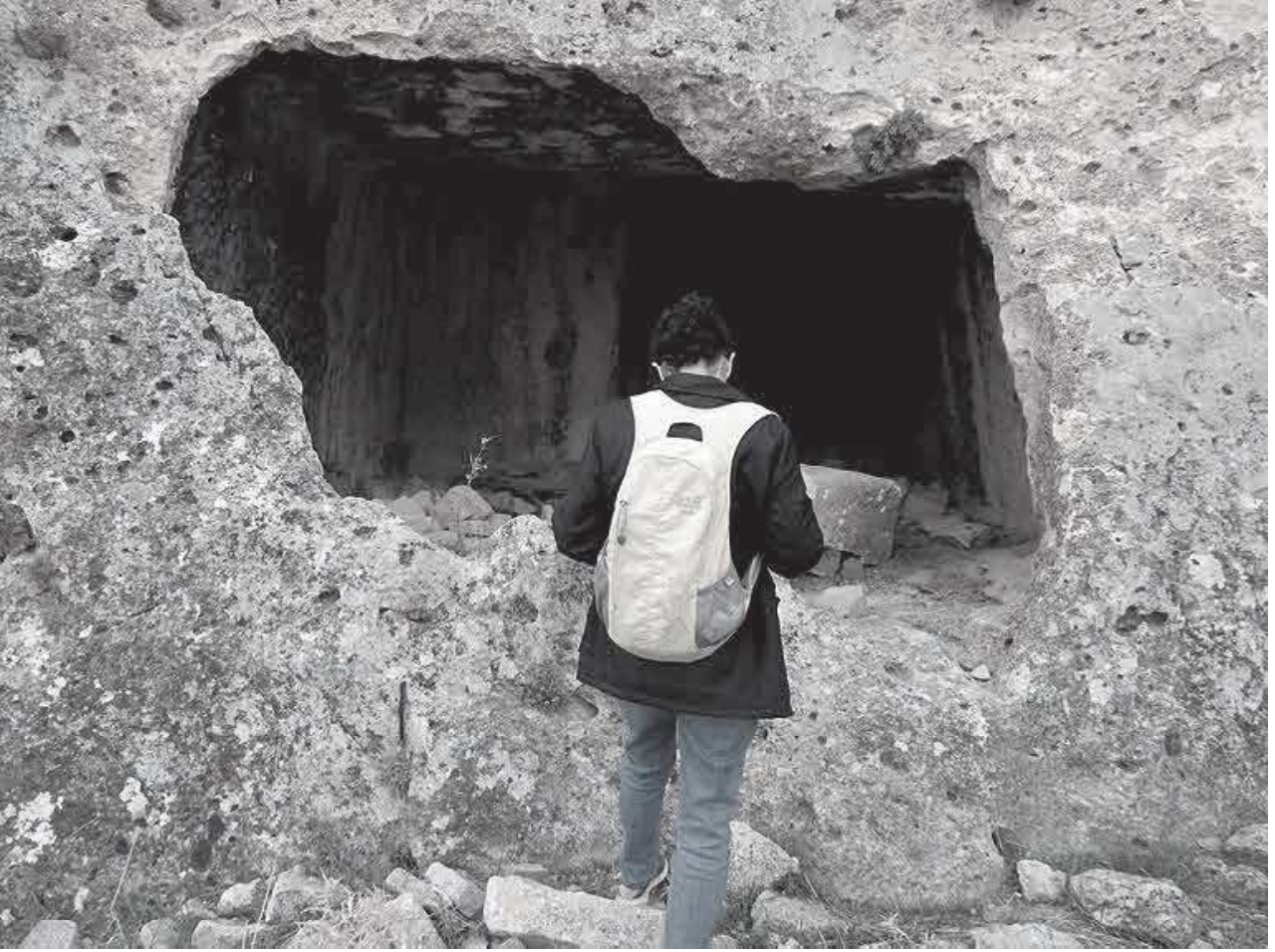






# THE PROJECT OUTPUTS

# RISK ASSESSMENT REPORTS



Editor  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Keser-Kayaalp

Translators  
Dr. Pınar Aykaç Leidholm (English from Turkish), Özgün Forta (Turkish from English)

The publication was made possible thanks to the contribution of experts including architects, architectural historians, art historians, archaeologists, and historians, aiming to examine the Syriac architectural heritage, which faces with the threat of disappearance, and to identify necessary conservation measures by determining the existing problems of the buildings.



The book focuses on the Tur 'Abdin region, which is a plateau surrounded by the Tigris River and the Southern Anatolia mountain range in the north and east, the Syrian plain in the south, and the city of Mardin in the west. Although not certain, this region, which consists of approximately ninety churches of villages or districts (more than one in many) and seventy monasteries, is a remarkable topography regarding the religious architecture of the Syriac community. Sixty buildings, determined by KMKD and local stakeholders, are included in this book. This amount represents only a limited part of the remarkable architectural heritage of the Syriac community in the region. The buildings included in the study are those under the threat of demolition or improper usage.

The buildings included in this study cover a wide span chronologically. The church in Ambar, Mor Abay Monastery in Killit, Dayr Metinan, Kaşgarlı Mor Abraham Monastery, and Mor Aho Monastery comprise construction techniques and ornaments that we can date to the 6th century. There are many other monasteries in the region that can be dated to this period. These monasteries are not only important for the early monastic architecture in Turkey but also in the world. Situated on the border of the Byzantine Empire with the Sassanids in the Late Antiquity, this region became an area of retreat for Syriacs due to discussions about the nature of Jesus. The desire to create a local and specifically different architecture in the region is mostly observed in the transverse plan type seen in the churches of monasteries, elongated on the north-south axis with a three-partite apse in the east. Gertrude Bell names this plan type as monastic type, whereas names churches with a long single nave on the east-west axis, usually found in the villafes as 'parochial', community church type. We name this second type as village type churches. Therefore, the terms of village type and monastic type used in this publication are based on Bell's classification.

The buildings we examined also show great variety in scale. Buildings of quite different sizes ranging from the Mort Shem'uni Church, which consists of a small single-space building in Beth Kustan Village (Alagöz) to the Mor Abay Monastery in Beth Man'em (Taşköy), which is almost the size of a small village, are included in this study. The dimensions of these buildings are not given in the reports, but rather approximate dimensions can be understood from the scaled sketches. As it can be understood from these reports that each of these buildings require a detailed documentation.

Most of the buildings we examined belong to the Syriac Orthodox community (Western Syriacs). The monasteries on Izlo Mountain originally belong to the eastern Syriacs (while they are referred to as Nestorians in ancient sources, this name is not preferred today), later passed to the western Syriacs. In these monasteries, we observe elongated single-nave churches on the east-west axis, which are seen in the village churches across Tur 'Abdin, instead of elongated transverse type churches on the north-south axis seen in the monasteries of western Syriacs. There are additional altars and fireplaces in the side rooms of the apses of these churches. We do not generally know how these side rooms are used. Therefore, we avoided to use the word *pastaphoria* as much as possible, but we still used some Greek words adapted to describe the architectural features of the churches. Diacritic marks are kept minimum in place and building names, and their current uses are rather taken into consideration.

As it can be seen from the reports, although the buildings are under similar risks, there are certain risks specific to buildings or areas. Suggestions such as disseminating information, considering the buildings in an integrated way with their surroundings, including these buildings into tourism routes, become prominent. We specifically draw attention to urgent protection measures, but restoration of some buildings is also proposed. We also emphasize that some building should be protected in their existing state. Some structures and their surroundings seem to be quite rich archaeologically, therefore suitable for an archaeological research. Archaeological drilling and excavations are also proposed after urgent protection measures are taken in settlements,

Each building included in this book are important parts of the Syriac cultural heritage, not only with their physical features, but also with their saints, rituals associated with religious holidays, and the importance that Syriacs attribute to these buildings. The most important reason why these buildings cannot be preserved is undoubtedly the migrations occurred at different intensities in different periods of the past century (see: Güsten, 2015 and Özmen, 2017). Approximately 1500 Syriacs live in the region at present. Problems related to the conservation of the remaining buildings are not solely due to the lack of their community. As a result of expropriations and compulsory seizures during cadastral works, the ownership of not only the private properties but also some churches and monasteries are transferred from the Syriac community. Important examples of early monastic architecture such as the church in Ambar and Deir Metinan cannot be preserved due to ownership problems.

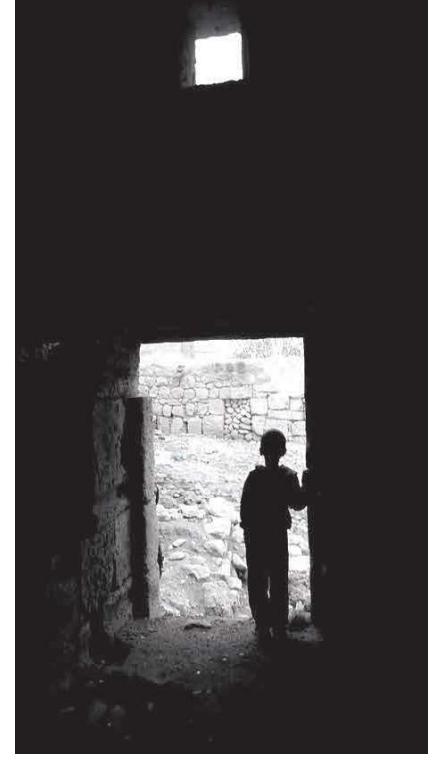


# CHILDREN'S BOOK ON SYRIAC CULTURAL HERITAGE

Author: Assoc. Prof. ıgdem Maner  
Illustrator: Meryem Tanrikulu  
Syriac Translation: İshak Ergün

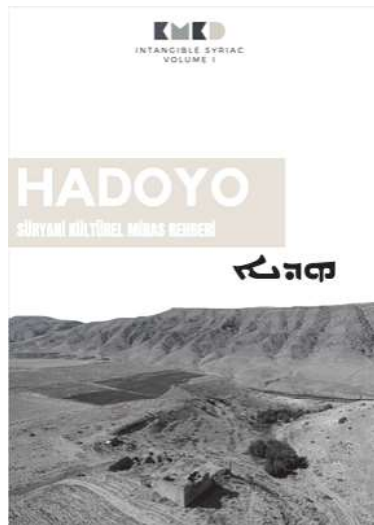
We are aware that the Syriac language is spoken by a small number of individuals. Even though the region has a rich cultural heritage where various cultures co-existed for centuries, unfortunately the locals are poorly educated, and the new generation does not see their future within the region. This situation also adds to the overall risks endangering the Syriac heritage.

Engaging the Syriac children with their own heritage is another urgent need that is highlighted by the community members, for that reason a child book prepared in the Syriac language directly targeting the younger audience. This child book was prepared in Turkish and Syriac language



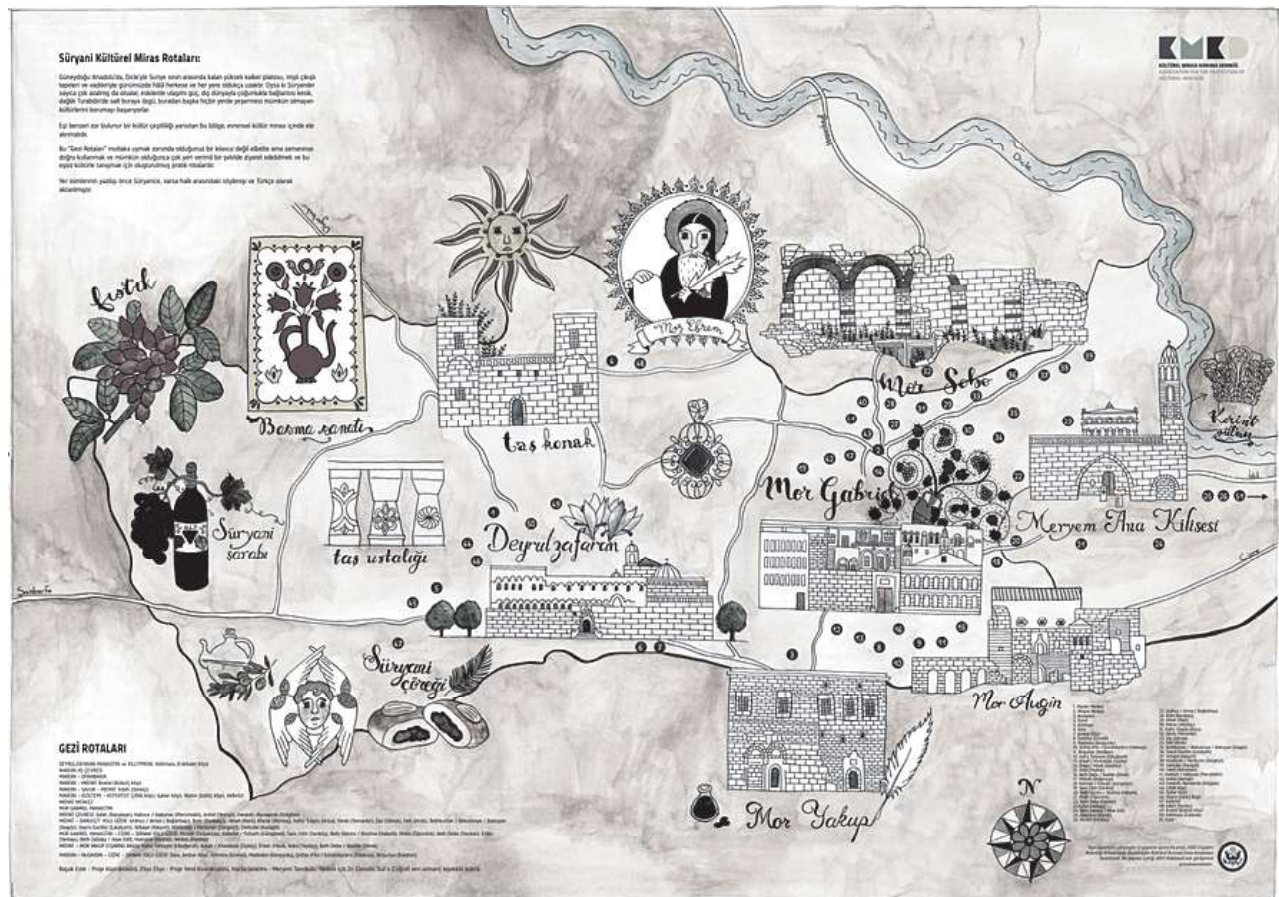
# THREE BOOKS ON SYRIAC CULTURE

The content of the 3 booklets was discussed during the Istanbul workshop. All the experts who attended the workshop will be our advisors during the editing process as well.



Booklet I: HADOYO - The Guide  
Editors: Mor Filüksinos Saliba Özmen and Nükhet Everi

Nükhet Everi, is an author and a professional tourist guide. She has various impactful works already in Mardin, and especially on the Syriac culture. She is the editor of this booklet with the support of Filüksinos Saliba Özmen. This booklet is a map with Syriac cultural routes. There are also introductory texts about intangible aspects of the Syriac culture in this map/booklet too. Moreover, there is also a special part that includes basic sentence forms in Modern Syriac Language, that hopefully may help the visitors to speak with the local community in their own language.

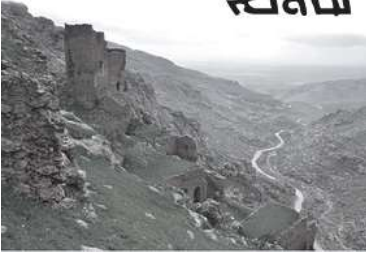


KMKO  
INTANGIBLE SYRIAC  
VOLUME II

## HEZVONE

Süryani Kilitirel Mirasından Manzaralar

ܙܘܢܐ



Booklet II: HEZVONE - Views from the Syriac Cultural Heritage  
Editors: Assoc. Prof. Mark Soileau - Hacettepe University - Anthropology and Esra Ekşi Balcı (she is designing and implementing projects in the field of cultural heritage with universities and non-governmental organizations. Her last project is: Protecting Intangible Heritage in the Upper Tigris Valley)

This booklet gives a more detailed information about the oral traditions, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional craftsfeatures of the Syriac Culture.

KMKO  
INTANGIBLE SYRIAC  
VOLUME III

## YORTHUTHO

Miras

ܝܘܪܬܘܬܘ



Booklet III: YORTHUTHO – Heritage  
Editor: The Heritage Management Organization

This booklet is a toolkit for NGOs, local organizations and researches for safeguarding the Syriac Intangible Heritage, with exemplary community engagement projects that would be helpful in Mardin region.

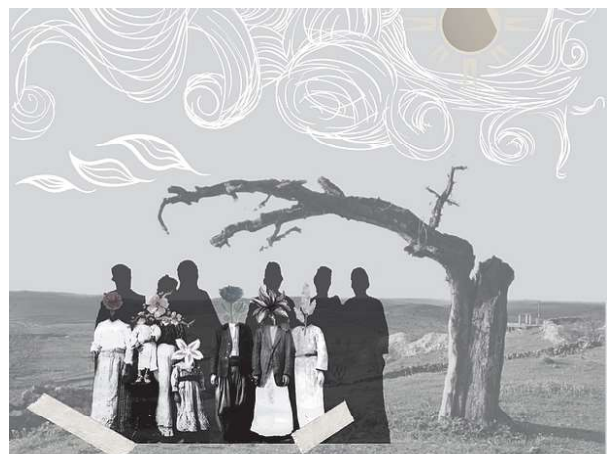
# WEBSITE

[www.intangiblesyriac.org](http://www.intangiblesyriac.org)

Community engagement has been an important aspect of the project. Hence, it was required to develop innovative, but also easily accessible means of vulgarize the data and results. In order to facilitate this process, a website has been developed, bringing together all interdisciplinary data, reports, conclusions. During the development of this website, a special focus was indeed put on accessible and attractivity. This requirement has resulted in wonderful graphics, combined with the integration of multiple interactive browser-based libraries. Regarding the 3D models, but also 360-panoramas and VR, multiple other open-source libraries are implemented in the website, allowing the user to visualize and interact with the models, without the need for additional apps or specialized software.

The project outputs are also available in this website. In this sense, this website can be seen as an online repository for this project's results

This website was designed and constructed by the Heritage Management Organization





# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY



We contacted with approximately 20 other international organizations and NGOs that are functioning for Syriac communities and for safeguarding their heritage. The main concern here was being as inclusive as we can and trying to make the impact of the project as best as possible. Eventually, we indeed had positive replies from Syriaca.org, Beth Mardutho, and Assyrians Without Borders/Assyrier Utan Gränser about their interest in the project and willingness to contribute

# THE PROJECT IMPACT

- **60 edifices visited with 20 experts from 5 different countries**
- **57 risk assessment reports were prepared**
- **10 edifices were digitally modelled**
- **5 publications were published**
- **1 international meeting were organized with attendance of 9 experts from 4 different countries**
- **2 workshops were organized**



# SPECIAL THANKS TO

- Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- The Governorship of Mardin
- The District Governorship of Midyat
- The Governorship of Şırnak
- The Governorship of Batman
- Mardin Museum
- Mardin Artuklu University
- Midyat Municipality
- Batman Archaeology Museum
- The Deyrulzafaran Monastery and Churches Foundation
- The Midyat Syriac Deyrulumur Mor Gabriel Monastery Foundation
- The Mardin Syriac Catholic Church Foundation
- ANAMED



# TESTIMONIALS

I have been working as an academic for 23 years and as a heritage management expert for 16. through the Heritage Management Organization but also through my personal experience I have worked with tens of organizations around the world, of various sizes. KMKD, and the people responsible for your project in particular, have truly struck me not only because of your professionalism but also for your true altruism when it comes to the fruition of their project. Instead of trying to control, pretend that you are able to do all tasks yourselves, you had the impressive integrity to directly collaborate with experts in the fields that you felt less comfortable with and you were excellent partners in all aspects of their project. The results are, to my mind, stunning for the amounts of resource you were supported with. We as an organization were so inspired by both the team's dedication and the importance of your project that we worked ten times harder than you could cover from your budget, in order to achieve what was needed. KMKD is a very serious organization that needs serious support from international donors to continue this work that is essential for Turkey and the world.

Dr. Evangelos Kyriakidis, fsa  
Director, the Heritage Management  
Organization [www.heritagemanagement.org](http://www.heritagemanagement.org)  
Senior Lecturer in Aegean Prehistory,  
University of Kent, Canterbury

The project brought together a large group of thematic experts, resulting in a highly interdisciplinary approach of the project. It was not only a great pleasure to work in such an environment, but this mixture of experts was also an indispensable requirement for the success of the project as a whole. Furthermore, the valorization process, in terms of a two-day workshop with a separated academic and non-academic session, has been a significant added value to the project.

Dr. Cornelis Stal  
H-Digital, the Heritage Management  
Organization <https://geo.hogent.be> Lecturer at the  
Ghent University College (Department of Real  
Estate and Land Surveying), visiting professor at  
the Ghent University (Department of Geography)

I have participated in the workshop that was organized in a very professional way by KMKD and their team. My organization, HERITAGE, participated in the discussion about community engagement and the establishment of good practices. We also co-organized a workshop with key stakeholders of the project in Istanbul. The KMKD team were not only great hosts, but also a truly creative team with a methodical approach, active rapport with stakeholders and an exemplary insistence on good practices in everything they did. I am really glad with the results of their efforts and proud to have been part of this great project.


Dr. Aris Anagnostopoulos  
H-Public, the Heritage Management  
Organization Honorary Lecturer,  
School of European Culture and Languages,  
University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

We would also like to thank you for the great workshop you conducted. It was such a wonderful experience bringing together many well-established individuals in the Syriac language and heritage from all around the world to meet and connect in one room for a condensed workshop. I was pleased to be invited as an individual with a technical background, and as a person with 7 years of experience in providing digital products for kids to learn the language.

Thank you again for the great work, and we are looking for future effective and productive outcomes.

Tawdi.


Akkad Saadi  
The President of BET KANU  
Center for preserving and promoting the  
modern Syriac language and heritage



What we saw during the third round of site visits to the Tur Abdin in the first week of April 2019 revealed the variety and richness of the surviving remains and the dire and urgent need for recording and conservation work in the region. The project to document and promote the Syriac intangible heritage in the Mardin region is making a really vital contribution to meeting these needs.

I have worked in South-east Turkey since the 1980s, specialising in the archaeology of earlier periods; but bringing expertise in the recording of historic buildings from my work in this field in the UK. As a result I have always viewed the buildings of the Tur Abdin with interest and curiosity. There have been lacunae in the systematic study of the physical fabric of monastic remains and surviving buildings, as liturgical, documentary, epigraphic, and social-history matters have (with certain notable exceptions) taken priority over the study of the structural history of the monuments. This project stands out as helping to address that imbalance.

I warmly congratulate the project team and must add that I count it a privilege to have been a part of this project, and only wish that I had been able to participate in the two earlier visits as well!



Stuart R. Blaylock, B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.  
Independent Scholar and Archaeologist

To have had the opportunity to spend a week in Tur Abdin area, working for the project “Documentation and Promotion of the Syriac Intangible Heritage in Mardin Region”, was a privilege for me at several levels. On the hand, the contact with a multidisciplinary and motivated team allowed for very productive scientific encounters and enrichment. On the other hand, field work fostered a comprehensive apprehension of the heritage emergency and social issues this region entangles. Above all, I would underline the careful methodology KMKD has put in practice, reading the architectural object as the main document to remap the extraordinary richness of the region’s historical built environment.

Jorge Correia  
Associate Professor  
School of Architecture /Lab2PT  
University of Minho  
Guimarães, Portugal

Thank you so much for including me in this project. The work that KMKD is doing is exceptional and important for the conservation and understanding of world heritage, and the significance of the Syriac project cannot be understated. This is a world culture that has been largely ignored or misunderstood, and yet is fundamental to our understanding of the early Christian and medieval Near East. Your work highlights that, and draws attention to the slow decay and disappearance of this material.

On a personal note, my experience working with you and this project was life-changing. It brought me back to material that I have not worked on consistently lately, and reminded me how important the voices of scholars are in the conservation of world heritage. I was proud to be a part of it, and grateful that you allowed me a small part in this project.

Dr. Marica Cassis  
Associate Professor and Head Department  
of Classics and Religion  
University of Calgary

