

2nd International Conference of Lausanne on Palmyra

29-30 October 2025

University of Lausanne – Amphimax salle MAX-414

The conference will be livestreamed. A maximum of 500 viewers can be accommodated. Unfortunately, while you are welcome to follow the sessions live, it will not be possible to submit questions or actively participate during the event. Link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83213373793>

Background

Recent developments in Syria, along with the partial easing of international sanctions, have opened new opportunities for collaboration on the conservation and rehabilitation of the Site of Palmyra, inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2013. Building upon the First International Conference of Lausanne on Palmyra and the recommendations of the Technical meeting for the Recovery of the World Heritage Site of Palmyra, convened respectively by the University of Lausanne (UNIL) and UNESCO in 2019, UNIL and ALIPH, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAM) and UNESCO, are organizing the Second International Conference of Lausanne on Palmyra.

This Conference will bring together members of the Syrian community, academics, experts, funders, international institutions and former directors of archaeological missions to Palmyra to reinforce collaboration and reflect on the way forward and plan coordinated actions to support the removal of the Site of Palmyra from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Day 1 – Wednesday 29th October 2025

1 PM: Opening session

Welcome and Opening Remarks:

- **Dr. Patrick M. Michel** – Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Institute of Archaeology and Ancient Sciences, University of Lausanne; Member of ALIPH Scientific Committee
- **Dr. Michel Al Maqdissi** – Former director of the archaeological excavations and studies department at the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria (DGAM); Project director, Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, Louvre Museum
- **Prof. Estelle Doudet** – Vice Rector, Research, University of Lausanne
- **Ms Catherine Labouchère** – President, Foundation for the University of Lausanne
- **Prof. Danielle van Mal-Maeder** – Institute of Archaeology and Ancient Sciences, University of Lausanne
- **Prof. Othmar Jaeggi** – Associate Professor, Institute of Archaeology and Ancient Sciences, University of Lausanne

- **Mr. Vianney Basse** – *Director of Development, International alliance for the protection of heritage (ALIPH)*
- **Mr. Lazare Eloundou-Assomo** – *Director of World Heritage, UNESCO (video message)*
- **Dr. Anas Haj Zeidan** – *Director of DGAM, Syria*
- **Dr. Oliver Martin** – *Federal Office of Culture, Switzerland*
- **Dr. Ariane Thomas** – *Director of the Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, Louvre Museum*

2 PM: Recovery of the World Heritage Site of Palmyra: Assessing Actions, Needs, and Requirements

Speakers:

- **Ms. Youmna Tabet** – *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*
 - UNESCO plan and Recommendations for Palmyra. The Question of Palmyra on the List of World Heritage in Danger
- **Dr. Lina Kutiefan** – *Deputy Director, General Directorate of Antiquity and Museum in Syria*
 - Needs and Vision of the DGAM for Palmyra. Sharing the Recommendation list of 2019 (UNESCO)

2.30 PM: Keynotes: What future for Palmyra?

Introduced by Dr. Michel Al-Maqdissi

Speakers:

- **Prof. Michal Gawlikowsky** – *University of Warsaw, Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, Poland*
- **Dr. Jacques Seigne** – *National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), France*
- **Dr. Kiyohide Saito** – *Archaeological Institute of Kashiwara, Japan*

3.30 PM: Coffee break

3:45 PM: Palmyra Digital Map: Mapping National and International Documentation

Introduced by Dr. Patrick M. Michel

Speakers:

- **Mr. Waleed al-As'ad** – *Former Director of Palmyra Antiquities and National Museum, Syria*
- **Prof. Artur Obluski** – *University of Warsaw, Poland*
- **Dr. Felicia Meynersen** – *University of Berlin, Germany and Austria*
- **Dr. Wassim Alrez** – *German Archaeological Institute (DAI), Germany*
- **Dr. Emanuele Ettore Intagliata** – *University of Milan, Italy*
- **Prof. Cynthia Finlayson** – *Brigham Young University, USA*
- **Dr. Denis Genequand** – *Avenches Roman Museum, Switzerland*
- **Ms. Lynn Jabri** – *ICONEM, France*

Thematic sessions

4:45 PM: Session I – Archives and Publications: Uses, Gaps and Dissemination

What is the current state and accessibility of archival materials related to Palmyra?

How can archives be better utilized to support ongoing research and conservation efforts?

What are the current gaps in the available archives and publications?

What are the best practices for publishing and disseminating research findings about Palmyra?

Consider the organization of an annual progress bulletin featuring brief reports and detailed articles documenting advances in archival work and publications related to previously excavated sites.

Presentation: Dr. Michel Al-Maqdissi – *Former director of the archaeological excavations and studies department at the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria*

Moderation: Dr. Patrick M. Michel – *Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Institute of Archaeology and Ancient Sciences, University of Lausanne; Member of ALIPH Scientific Committee*

6.15 PM: Closing Speech – Engaging Syrian Communities

Presentation: Dr. Mohammad Saleh – *International expert in Culture and Tourism*

6.30 PM: Closure of Day 1

8 PM – Gala Dinner at Brasserie de Montbenon

Day 2 – Thursday 30th October 2025

Thematic sessions and Recommendations Draft (continued)

8.30 AM Welcome and coffee break

9 AM: Session II – Future Perspectives for the National Museum of Palmyra

What is the current condition of the Museum and its collections, and the urgent needs related to their restoration?

How can we adapt the building to contemporary use and displays?

How can the rehabilitation of the museum adopt a holistic approach that integrates the interpretation of all values associated with the site, including those connected with traumatic events?

Speakers:

- **Mr. Hasan Ali** – Director of Palmyra Museum, DGAM, Syria
- **Dr. Joyce Nassar** – Institut National du Patrimoine (INP), France
- **Dr. Michel Chalhoub** – CEO, DiSTRUCT, France
- **Dr. Bartosz Markowski** – University of Warsaw, Poland
- **Dr. Dima Achkar** – Director of museum affairs, DGAM, Syria

Moderators: Ms. Elsa Urtizverea and Mr. David Sassine – Project Managers, ALIPH

10.30 AM: Session III – Archaeological Fieldwork in Its Wider Context

What are the current access conditions to the site, and the challenges and opportunities for conducting archaeological fieldwork in Palmyra?

In what ways can fieldwork strategies be aligned with conservation priorities and long-term site management?

How can we establish and implement standardized methodologies for documentation, assessment, conservation, restoration, and reconstruction?

Can we mutualize efforts on the ground?

How can we support the development of an integrated recovery plan for Palmyra and conservation strategies for the site and its monuments?

How do we contribute to reinstate and rehabilitate the historical and spatial relationship between the ancient city of Palmyra (Tadmor), the archaeological property, and its natural surroundings, particularly the oasis?

Speakers:

- **Dr. Dagmara Wielgosz-Rondolino** – University of Warsaw, Poland
- **Dr. Masaoud Badawi** – Director of Excavation and Archaeological Studies, DGAM, Syria

Moderator: Dr. Felicia Meynersen – University of Berlin, Germany and Austria

12 PM: Keynotes – Understanding Palmyra's Contemporary Role

Introduced by **Dr. Patrick M. Michel**

Speakers:

- **Mr. Valéry Freland** – *Executive Director of ALIPH, Switzerland*
- **Dr. Anas Haj Zeidan** – *Director of DGAM, Syria*

1 PM: Lunch break

2.30 PM: Session V – Engaging Syrian Communities

How can we engage the Syrian community, including the diaspora, in Palmyra's recovery?

How can we prioritize and support the return and reintegration of local communities, and the values they associate with the site, in recovery efforts?

What initiatives can effectively connect heritage preservation with socioeconomic resilience?

How can interpretation approaches respect diverse perspectives while fostering healing and inclusion and be integrated into broader cultural and educational programs?

- **Dr. Khaled Alsaleem** – *University of Lausanne, Switzerland*
- **Dr. Mariam Slimoun** – *Research associate at the HiSoMA laboratory, France*
- **Mr Hasan Ali** – *Director of Palmyra Museum, DGAM, Syria*

Moderator: Mr. Khaled Hiatlih – Iraq Heritage Stabilization Program (IHSP), University of Pennsylvania

4 PM: Coffee break

4.30 PM: Sharing Results and Recommendations

- **Dr. Patrick M. Michel** – *Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Institute of Archaeology and Ancient Sciences, University of Lausanne; Member of ALIPH Scientific Committee*
- **Ms. Youmna Tabet** – *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*
- **Dr. Lina Kutiefan** – *Deputy Director, General Directorate of Antiquity and Museum in Syria (DGAM)*
- **Mr. David Sassine** – *Project Manager, ALIPH*

5.30 PM: Conclusions and End of the Day