

BCN'17 13TH CONFERENCE OF ICCM - BARCELONA, 15-20 OCTOBER, 2017

SAVE MOSAIC OF LALA



DISCOVERY: The mosaic was found accidentally in 1999 during foundation works for a new construction in a very small plot (60 m²) surrounded with buildings in the village of Lala at Bekaa-Lebanon. It is considered an extraordinary discovery for the entire region since it depicts beautiful ornaments and dated inscriptions related to a 6th century's Byzantine basilica. After the expropriation of the plot with the one next to it (60m² + 60m²) by the Directorate General of Antiquities in 2002, the mosaic was hastily covered in 2006, and the plot backfilled later by the municipality for its use as a parking.

REDISCOVERY- 48 hrs MISSION: MOSAICON 2014

In 2014 we took the Lala mosaic as subject to participate at the Paphos MOSAÏKON workshop. Due to winter's harsh climate and region's security conditions, we had to uncover (remove 90m³ of soil and debris), record 30m² of mosaic and rebury it on same day avoiding its exposure. Thus we carried the mission in two phases on two days with the local community's help.

1st DAY



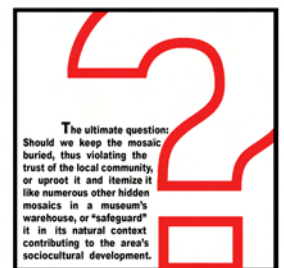
2nd DAY



CONSERVATION & PRESENTATION



Located at 1200m altitude and 3m below road level, too many challenges must be faced to keep the mosaic in situ while its hidden rest is extended under the surrounding buildings. Therefore the process of saving the mosaic of Lala requires an efficient strategy regarding its conservation and public presentation.



The ultimate question: Should we keep the mosaic buried, thus violating the trust of the local community, or uproot it and itemize it like numerous other hidden mosaics in a museum's warehouse, or "safeguard" it in its natural context contributing to the area's sociocultural development.