

PALMYRA

PALMYRA 2004

Michał Gawlikowski

The work of the mission this year (from April 15 to June 15) was conceived as a study season without excavations. It had become urgent, indeed, to address a range of tasks delayed year after year by the fieldwork. The mission worked mostly in the Palmyra Museum.¹

1 The mission included, beside the present writer, Dr. Grzegorz Majcherek, Dr. Marta Żuchowska, Dr. Dagmara Wielgosz, archaeologists; Mrs. Krystyna Gawlikowska, art historian; Ms Daria Tarara and Mr. Wojciech Terlikowski, architects; Mrs. Aleksandra Trochimowicz and Mr. Bartosz Markowski, art restorers; and Mr. Karol Juchniewicz, student of archaeology.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the ready help offered by DGAM officials in Damascus: Dr. Tammam Fakouch, Director General, Dr. Michel al-Maqdissi, Director of Excavations, and Dr. Widad al-Khoury, chargée de missions. In Palmyra, we benefited from cooperation with Mr. Walid As'ad, the new Director of Antiquities in Palmyra, and Mr. Khalil al-Hariri, Director of the Palmyra Museum.

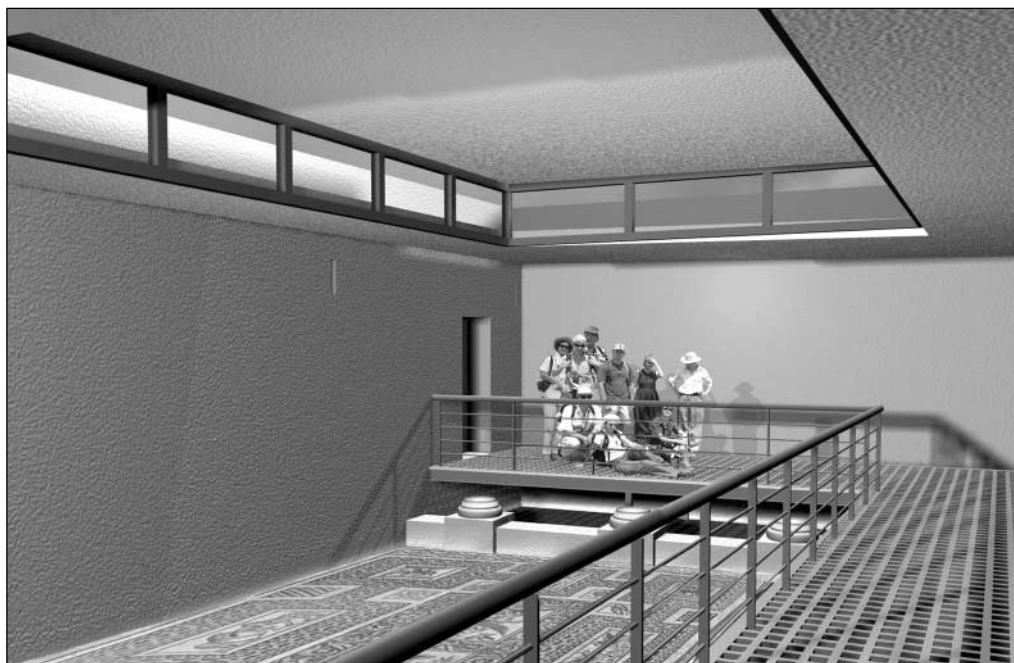


Fig. 1. The interior of the mosaic shelter in computer rendering, facing north (top) and south (Rendering D. Tarara)

The new Director of the Museum, Khalil al-Hariri, provided us with an opportunity to regroup all of the earlier and more recent finds of the mission in a single room. All sculptures and fragments found during more than forty years of excavation were now arranged on shelves installed specially for the purpose. The small finds, until now out of view in the casual cardboard boxes and containers used for packing after each season, were laid out in three showcases provided by the Museum. This much needed work was accomplished mainly by Marta Żuchowska, Dagmara Wielgosz, and later by Grzegorz Majcherek. Karol Juchniewicz assisted them, documenting objects whenever the need arose.

This tidying was not without its uses. The most spectacular discovery came when fragments of four archaic honorific statues from the sanctuary of Allat were fitted together. They were immediately reassembled and installed in the museum gallery by art restorer Bartosz Markowski [Fig. 2].² Other sculptures from the Allat sanctuary were studied by Dagmara Wielgosz with a view to an upcoming publication. Aleksandra Trochimowicz reviewed the stucco fragments and prepared some of them for display.

Pottery material from previous seasons was reviewed and classified by Grzegorz Majcherek, while Krystyna Gawlikowska studied the glass fragments in preparation for an overall publication.

The present writer was busy cataloguing a hoard of Sasanian coins found in 2001.³ It consisted of silver dirhams of the later period and included 694 readable pieces and

over 50 unreadable ones, not counting minute fragments. While most of the coins were minted under Khusro II and collected during the Persian occupation of Syria (612-628), there were also a few Arab-Sasanian issues from the end of the 7th century AD. The hoard was apparently closed before the monetary reform of Abdel Malik.

Another of the season's tasks was to design a shelter to be erected over the mosaic discovered in 2002-2003.⁴ Consultations with colleagues at the DGAM led to the decision to exhibit this nearly complete



Fig. 2. Restoration work on the archaic statues in the gallery of Allat (Photo M. Gawlikowski)

2 See his and A. Trochimowicz's contribution in this volume.

3 Cf. PAM XIII, Reports 2001 (2002), 266-269.

4 Cf. PAM XV, Reports 2003 (2004), 313-324.



Fig. 3. Refurbished Museum entrance hall. To the right, sarcophagi from the 'Alaine tomb (Rendering D. Tarara)

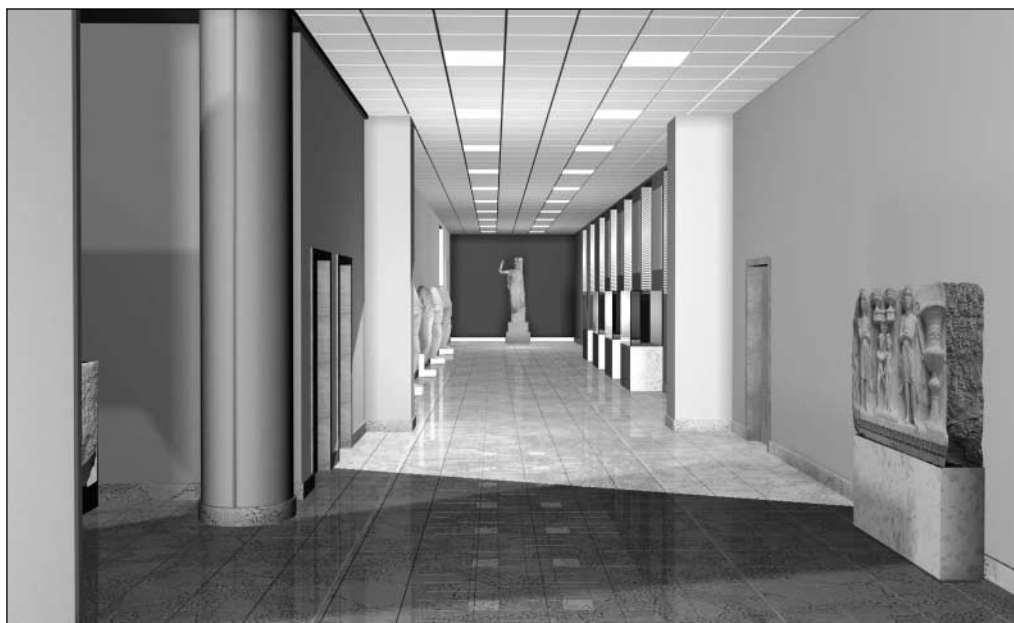


Fig. 4. The gallery of Allat in the new museum (Rendering D. Tarara)

pavement in place. Our two architects worked on it together, Wojciech Terlikowski providing the technical design and Daria Tarara the computer renderings [*Fig. 1*]. The actual building will be executed by specialists from the DGAM.

Last but not least, the mission addressed a request by the DGAM to prepare a new

exhibition of the Museum collection. The present writer wrote the actual scenario, to which all of the team members contributed in various ways. For the sake of illustration, I present a computer image of the proposed arrangement of the collection, hopefully to be implemented in the coming months [*Figs. 3-4*].