

## MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

### LEBANON – COMMEMORATIVE STELA OF NAHR EL-KALB, MOUNT LEBANON

REF No. 2004-54

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#### PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

##### 1. SUMMARY

Highlight the nature, uniqueness and significance of the nominated documentary heritage.

The stela of Nahr el-Kalb, the Lycus or Dog River, sum up the entire history of Lebanon, from High Antiquity to the present, evoking clearly the successive advances of the Pharaonic, Assyro-Babylonian, Greek, Roman, Arab, French and British armies which braved all the obstacles surrounding this difficult and very steep crossing point to carve commemorative stela on the rocks.

The hillside where the stela are carved is, thanks to its highly distinct form, a strategic location commanding the coast road which links the south of the country to the north. From the time of the Old Kingdom the road was taken by the Pharaonic armies for two reasons:

- to ensure easy, rapid access to the timber of the Lebanese mountains (*Cedrus libanus*), an almost rare commodity in Egypt;
- to block the road to invaders from the north, in particular the Mitanni and the Hittites.

Likewise, the Assyro-Babylonians, coming from Mesopotamia, planned their incursions to gain free access to the Mediterranean in order to spread out in all directions. Later conquerors, the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Mameluks, Ottomans and others, followed suit, marking their passage with stela which remain the best evidence of their presence.

Lastly, this natural location overlooking a cross-road has always been considered a strategic obstacle that is difficult to overcome.

**Justification:** this series of commemorative stela erected at the same place in the open air gives a definite picture of all the important stages of the history of Lebanon, from High Antiquity to the present day. These vital witnesses must be safeguarded and properly maintained to be inscribed deeply and for ever in the memory of the world.

##### 2. DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

###### 2.1 Name (person or organization)

Lebanese National Memory of the World Committee

## 2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Consultative

## 2.3 Contact person(s)

Ms Salwa Baassiri

## 2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

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## **3. IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

### 3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Commemorative stela of Nahr el-Kalb, Mount Lebanon, Lebanon

### 3.2 Description

## **4. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

### **4.1 Authenticity**

The stela, carved into limestone, have retained their authenticity. Despite the ravages of time and in spite of some acts of vandalism, they relate the true history of Lebanon.

### **4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability**

The stela, written in different languages and dating from High Antiquity to the present, evoke the ancient history of Lebanon and its relations with the Middle East and the West.

### **4.3 Criteria of (a) time; (b) place; (c) people; (d) subject and theme; (e) form and style**

(a) time: they evoke several eras, ranging from the fourteenth century BC to 1946 AD

(b) place: strategic location protected by a water course and steep escarpment

(c) people: different conquerors from Ramses II to the French Mandate

(d) subject and theme, (e) form and style: Assyro-Babylonian cuneiform is mixed with Egyptian hieroglyphs, Greek, Latin, English, French and Arabic

### **4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management**

The series of stela, unique in number and style in the region, are in imminent danger of erosion, on the one hand, and vandalism on the other. That is why protection and conservation measures must be taken as a matter of necessity and urgency.

## **5. LEGAL INFORMATION**

### 5.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Lebanese State/General Directorate of Antiquities  
Rue du Musée  
Beirut  
Lebanon

Stele No. 1 is in survey plot No. 35, which comes under the municipality of Zouk Mosbeh.

Stela Nos. 2-22 are located in plot No. 98, which belongs to the Antonine Order (Waqf St. Joseph – Municipality of Dbayeh)

### 5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

### 5.3 Legal status:

- (a) category of ownership: public (private property of public utility)
- (b) accessibility: open
- (c) copyright status: none
- (d) responsible administration: General Directorate of Antiquities
- (e) other factors: none

## **6. MANAGEMENT PLAN**

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage? NO. Other than a few, infrequent cleaning campaigns, no management plan has been developed.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Lebanese National Memory of the World Committee is nominating these historic, rare and varied stela.

## **PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION**

## **8. ASSESSMENT OF RISK**

8.1 The stela, carved in soft, chalky limestone and at the mercy of nature in the open air, remain exposed to the effects of erosion and the vicissitudes of the weather and people, without any system of protection.

**9. ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION**

9.1

- Create around the stela a protective zone accessible only to the public;
- Strengthen their rock framework and consolidate support against crumbling;
- Develop a system of protection, in metal or Plexiglas, based on the old wooden casing fitted for them;
- Develop a system of regular cleaning especially to protect them from wild plants.

**PART C – LODGEMENT**

This nomination is lodged by:  
The Lebanese National Memory of the World Committee

(Please print name).....

(Signature)..... (Date).....