

Your Excellency

As members of the community of international and Jordanian archaeologists, we call for the immediate halt of planned mining in Jordan's Dana Biosphere Reserve. The mining would irrevocably destroy this natural jewel and its unique cultural resources. We also express our strong support of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and their outstanding efforts to protect the cultural heritage of the Wadis Dana, Guwayb, Faynan and tributaries in the Dana Biosphere Reserve. The archaeological and natural heritage of the Dana Biosphere and adjoining areas is unique to this world: it is a sparkling gem where the ancient past, nature, and traditional communities intersect, presenting a place of outstanding beauty and cultural heritage that is the pride of Jordan. The Dana Biosphere is globally recognised for its environmental importance, and is on Jordan's tentative UNESCO World Heritage site list, a position now threatened by recent developments. The Dana Biosphere is famous as an example of outstanding conservation management that has successfully linked Jordanian local communities in sustainable development. As archaeologists, we emphasize the unparalleled archaeological importance of the Dana Biosphere at its current, legally established borders, which encompasses hundreds of archaeological sites spanning the Palaeolithic to the Mamluk period, creating an archaeological landscape that extends well beyond the current Biosphere boundaries.

The record of human occupation in the Dana Biosphere and surrounding areas is remarkable – it is one of the only places in the *entire world* that witnessed the full scale of human development and innovation, from the earliest Palaeolithic when our ancestors first migrated out of Africa and through Jordan onwards, to the Neolithic when the world's earliest farming societies first planted barley seeds in Faynan and domesticated goats in Dana, to the Bronze and Iron Ages when this area played a central role in the development of mining, metallurgy, and trade, as well as in sustainable irrigated field systems to support the population. These developments continued under the control of the Jordanian Edomites, until the Roman period, when all copper reserves were exhausted leaving only their toxic waste. The only successful later copper extraction was by the Mamluks, who had to rework Roman slagheaps as no copper ore was available to mine, leaving a new signature of pollution that survives to this day. The small amounts of copper ore left by the ancients has saved the area from more recent mining, which is the reason this incredibly rich natural, historical, and cultural record has survived so far as the world's best preserved ancient mining and metallurgy landscape. Dana/Faynan was a rich ore deposit in ancient times, but in modern times has lost its importance.

This uniquely well-preserved and complete landscape created by the long-term interaction between culture and nature is at the heart of the heritage of the Wadis Dana and Faynan. Decades of national and international efforts in conservation and management have been used to create a highly sustainable long-term tourism industry and an important cultural resource for Jordanian identities, and any damage would be catastrophic. Dana is the jewel in the crown of Jordanian cultural and natural heritage.

Signed by

Dr Russell Adams, Director, Barqa Landscape Project, Adjunct Assistant Professor  
Anthropology Department, University of Waterloo, Canada

Prof. Graeme Barker CBE FBA FSA FRGS, Disney Professor of Archaeology Emeritus and Senior Fellow, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3ER

Dr Robert Bewley Chair, CBRL and Director of the Aerial Archaeology in Jordan Project.

Dr Paul Burtenshaw, Independent Cultural Heritage Consultant

Dr Alexis Dolphin, Assistant Professor & Director of the Ancient and Contemporary Environmental Bioindicators Laboratory (ACEBioLab), Department of Anthropology, University of Waterloo, Canada

Dr Sarah Elliott, British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Bournemouth University/ CBRL - Council for British Research in the Levant

Dr Bill Finlayson OBE, Director, Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA) Project, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford

Dr Pascal Flohr, Post-Doctoral Researcher, ROOTS Excellence Cluster & Institute for Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeology, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

Dr Phil Freeman, Senior Lecturer, Roman Archaeology, Archaeology, Classics & Egyptology, University of Liverpool.

Prof. John Grattan, Professor, Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth University

Prof. Dr. Andreas Hauptmann, Deutsches Bergbau-Museum, Forschungsstelle Archäologie und Materialwissenschaften

Dr Emma Jenkins, Associate Professor in Archaeology, Bournemouth University

Prof. Zeidan Kafafi, Professor Emeritus of Archaeology, Yarmouk University

Prof. Thomas E. Levy, Distinguished Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego USA

Ingolf Löffler, MA, German Mining Museum, Bochum

Prof. Cheryl Makarewicz, Professor for Archaeozoology and Isotope Research, Institute for Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeology, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

Prof. David Mattingly, Professor of Roman Archaeology, Dept of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester

Dr Alison McQuitty, former Director British Institute in Amman

Prof. Steven Mithen FBA, Professor of Early Prehistory, University of Reading

Dr Michel Mouton, General Director of the French Institut in the Near-East, Scientific Research Director at the National Centre for Scientific Research (France)

Dr Mohammad Najjar, ICOMOS-Jordan spokesperson

Dr Paul Newson, Associate Professor, Department of History and Archaeology, American University of Beirut

Dr. rer. nat. Nima Nezafati, Deputy Head of the Section Archaeometallurgy, German Mining Museum, Bochum

Dr Carol Palmer, Director CBRL – Council for British Research in the Levant

Dr Claire Rambeau, Assistant-Professor / MCF in Geography, Université de Strasbourg France

Prof. Mike Robinson, Emeritus Professor of Cultural Heritage, University of Birmingham

Prof. Alan Simmons, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada at Las Vegas

Dr Sam Smith, Reader in Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Oxford Brookes University

Prof. Dr. Thomas Stöllner, German Mining Museum, Bochum

Dr Richard Tipping, Centre for Environment, Heritage, and Policy, University of Stirling

Prof. Andrew Wade, Professor, Geography and Environmental Science, University of Reading

Prof. Graeme Warren, UCD School of Archaeology, University College Dublin, Ireland.