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Violence Against Architecture: The Lost Cultural Heritage of Syria and Iraq

Heidi James Fisher

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VIOLENCE AGAINST ARCHITECTURE: THE LOST CULTURAL HERITAGE OF SYRIA AND IRAQ

by

HEIDI JAMES-FISHER

A master’s thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in the Liberal Studies Program in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in the Liberal Studies Program in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Violence Against Architecture: The Lost Cultural Heritage of Syria and Iraq

by

Heidi James-Fisher

Advisor: Professor Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis

This thesis examines ancient architecture within Syria and Iraq that has been deliberately destroyed by violence. The act of destroying architecture and monuments in both Syria and Iraq, which is often-historical UNESCO protected, will invariably violate various laws, such as the 1954 Hague Convention or the Rome Statute. Since post-2011 Syria, all of humanity has been shocked by continuous warfare that, in addition to causing untold loss of human life and suffering, has included a series of episodes of violence against architecture, all of which is so egregious that foreign governments and non government organizations are constantly engaged in efforts to identify new approaches to contain the Syrian war and the Iraqi conflict.

Palmyra and its ancient art and architecture are located within the Syrian steppe. The city historically, over the past two thousand years, has been both admired and disdained by diverse elements of Syria’s population. A recent cogent example is when Palmyra dominated the news on March 28, 2016. Powerful images of demolished ancient architecture and monuments told a story of ideological hatred as two ancient temples (Baalshamin and Ba’al), ancient monumental arches and other monuments were blown up in a war rife with atrocities inflicted on the civilian population. Through architectural stillness and ruin, the damaged remains focused the public’s attention on the destruction of an ancient civilization and its memory.
This thesis considers the grave devastation of architecture that has occurred in Palmyra, Syria and Mosul, Iraq, whose archeological sites have been aggressively attacked by the group that will be referred to in this paper as Da’esh (also known as IS, ISIS, ISIL or the Islamic State). The damaged buildings or monuments that will be discussed include the following:

1) The Great Temple of Ba’al, Palmyra
2) Sanctuary of Baal-Shamin, Palmyra
3) Monumental Arch, Palmyra
4) Tower Tombs, Palmyra
5) Nimrud, (Mosul) Iraq
6) Nineveh Archaeological Site, Nergal Gate, Shrine of Jonah, Nineveh (Mosul), Iraq

I will argue that the destruction of architecture by Da’esh and other militant organizations represents the conduct of criminal and immoral warmongers. The destruction by Da’esh of some of Palmyra’s archeological remains, the Shrine of Jonah and the ancient sites of Nineveh and Nimrud is intrinsic to their effort to achieve power in the region, and articulates their intention to create an Islamic State in Syria and Iraq by purging the region of those they reject as apostates, infidels, idol worshipers, Yazidis and Shi’a Muslims.

Not only are the citizens of Syria at war with unceasing sectarian divisions, but the significance of cultural heritage is also under attack in both Syria and Iraq. Buildings and monuments have political and symbolic meanings, and I will argue that violence against architecture in Syria and Iraq by Da’esh is part of its effort to erase history and cast off memories of ancient rule in order to create a new historical memory. The meaning of new and old wars will assist in analyzing the causes of such purposeful violence against architecture and its effect of unraveling cultures and eradicating past civilizations.
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Introduction

This thesis examines ancient architecture within Syria and Iraq that has been deliberately destroyed by violence. The act of destroying architecture and monuments in both Syria and Iraq, which is often-historical UNESCO protected, will invariably violate various laws, such as the 1954 Hague Convention or the Rome Statute. Since post-2011 Syria, all of humanity has been shocked by continuous warfare that, in addition to causing untold loss of human life and suffering, has included a series of episodes of violence against architecture, all of which is so egregious that foreign governments and non government organizations are constantly engaged in efforts to identify new approaches to contain the Syrian war and the Iraqi conflict.

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This thesis considers the grave devastation of architecture that has occurred in Palmyra, Syria and Mosul, Iraq, whose archeological sites have been aggressively attacked by the group that will be referred to in this paper as Da’esh (also known as IS, ISIS, ISIL or the Islamic State). The damaged buildings or monuments that will be discussed include the following:

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Not only are the citizens of Syria at war with unceasing sectarian divisions, but the significance of cultural heritage is also under attack in both Syria and Iraq. Buildings and monuments have political and symbolic meanings, and I will argue that violence against architecture in Syria and Iraq by Da’esh is part of its effort to erase history and cast off memories of ancient rule in order to create a new historical memory. The meaning of new and old wars will assist in analyzing the causes of such purposeful violence against architecture and its effect of unraveling cultures and eradicating past civilizations.
An Overview of Cultural Heritage and Preservation

Cultural Heritage and Preservation

*Humanitas*, for Vitruvius, begins with building.¹

To best understand the current destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, an historical analysis of cultural heritage is essential. Cultural heritage is broadly defined as including items both portable (paintings, sculpture, coins) and permanent (archaeological sites, monuments, underwater ruins) and some aspects of the natural environment. Cultural heritage, however, is not solely objects or places; it is also the legacy of our past, our human history, our memories and unique cultural traditions that ultimately inform our collective human identity.

UNESCO World Heritage (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) generally defines cultural heritage as architectural works, monumental sculpture and painting, structures of an archeological nature, cave dwellings, inscriptions and certain features in landscapes.² All must represent outstanding universal value from the viewpoint of science, art and history. Natural heritage is referred to as physical and biological formations, geological and physiographical formations or habitats of threatened species. When issues of cultural heritage are identified publicly, it is mostly heritage that is included in the 1,052 worldwide sites that UNESCO approves as The World Heritage List.

Conservation and preservation matters belong to scientific and technical organizations with experts that develop operational methods of counteracting dangers that threaten cultural and natural heritage. The Getty Conservation Institute,³ for example, works to advance conservation initiatives within fieldwork and practice. Conservation and preservation professionals identify problems relating to how best to protect, conserve, represent and rehabilitate heritage. The Getty Institute is not the only such conservation program, but it is an authority on matters of cultural
heritage and its research has allowed for innovative approaches and high quality sustainable conservation work.

While this paper is principally concerned with the loss of cultural heritage within Syria and Iraq due to recent violent extremism and wars, an important development in the protection of heritage occurred when the International Criminal Court (ICC) in September of 2016 found Ahmad al-Faqi al-Mahdi guilty of war crimes. He was accused of the war crime of directly attacking historic cultural heritage and religious buildings in Timbuktu, Mali, including mausoleums and a mosque. His prosecution and guilty verdict, a first by the court, has created a legal precedent for future matters concerning malicious destructive attacks against cultural heritage. Violent or wartime destruction of common cultural heritage in any country is devastating for all human civilization, but its effect is especially profound in regions such as Syria and Iraq where human civilization truly emerged. Attacks against humanity, including ethnic cleansing and indiscriminant killing, compounded with violent heritage destruction in Syria and Iraq, threaten to erase the early history of humankind.

Cultural heritage is a modern concept with an ancient past and has evolved along with the developments of civilizations. Cultural heritage and preservation was originally thought of as mainly a concern of Europeans and Americans in the United States following the French and Industrial Revolutions. Professor Miles Glendinning, Director of the Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies, authored the book, The Conservation Movement, A History of Architectural Preservation. In it he states that the care and reverence of ancient structures and old buildings has now been energized into a forceful, dynamic ideology about historic loss, historical destiny, and global heritage commercialism, which he refers to as The Conservation Movement:
Architectural conservation, in fact, is something that embraces not just architecture in all its various forms, but a vast range of other subjects—environmental politics, urban planning, housing, urban economics, and tourism, and even wartime destruction and renewal. (author’s emphasis)

Glendinning reasons that the conservation movement has been mostly a “Western” story because it is strongly bound up with the Western drive for a codified, rational, secular exercise of power and knowledge. Yet concerned individuals have navigated the cause to conserve historic architecture all over the world with the intention to advance civil society and commemorate their own past. Our heritage is our past, and with ongoing preservation initiatives we honor the past with stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction. When heritage is attacked collective memory and tradition are attacked. It is an attempt to delegitimize a culture, devalue its heritage and simply erase the past identity of a community.

Practical-hands-on preservation itself actually dates to classical Greece and Rome. They reused and restored architecture in part to pay tribute to their past. Classical Greece and the Hellenistic world were also polytheistic societies and Greek monumental buildings (temples) were associated with religion that was intertwined with the necessity that the community respect and honor the Gods while simultaneously honoring their ancestors by maintaining their shrines. For example, the temple we know as the Parthenon in Athens, Greece was built (447—432 B.C.) to the south of an earlier temple destroyed by the Persians. Pericles, the Athenian leader and military general initiated the acropolis-building program. The Parthenon was intentionally not built directly over the demolished temple. The earlier destroyed temple was purposefully left in ruin as a memory of wartime destruction. This building program was purposeful and exerted Athenian and Periclean authority in the region after the Persian wars of 480—490 B.C. At that moment in time, Classical Greek civilization was rapidly developing, and monuments were
powerful and prestigious. Cultural heritage is considered a “Western” idea conceptually because of the fifth-century B.C. development of the notion of *demokratia* (rule by the people) or Athenian democracy. The United States and certain European states much later embraced the concept of democracy, albeit in different forms:

In pre-classical civilizations, the Middle East, India or China, there was little concept of historical progression, and the combination of ingrained social hierarchies and polytheistic religions encouraged a tremendous stability, often symbolized through monumental repurposed architecture.\(^8\)

Similarly ancient Egypt’s unchanging representation of dynasties and physical presentations of pharaohs, which were reflected in monumental architecture as the Egyptians, exhibited a belief in the circular character of time. “Amun the king of Gods would return annually to be reborn in the same Luxor temples.”\(^9\) The buildings of ancient polytheistic societies were divine, and the architecture itself was invested with a divine life force. In Mesopotamian civilizations, palatial architecture was reused and buildings were cared for because Mesopotamian Ziggurats were imbued with the essence of the gods. In certain cultures within Mesopotamia sacred and everyday life was tightly intertwined with the worship of deities who were the sources of all authority.

In the Roman world entire cities were viewed as the Emperor’s property. The monumentality of buildings in Imperial Rome implied not only enduring and imposing structures capable of evoking the past, but also of architecture that was designed purposefully with a degree of excess and intentional luxury that perpetuated the memory or presence of the patron (often the Emperor). The powers of empires and of emperors were bound together with their gods and architecture. The destruction of temples was universally seen as a violation of morality.\(^10\) UNESCO today maintains that it is an absolute moral imperative to defend heritage.
There are ongoing initiatives monitoring the destruction of significant architecture from both warfare and the purposeful destruction of architecture in Syria and Iraq due to current hostilities and violent differing religious ideologies. Among the agencies monitoring the destruction is UNESCO, which has organized multiple conferences (July 2016 Istanbul, October 2016 Paris) concerning the protection of world cultural heritage and natural heritage that is at risk, or previously damaged or destroyed. UNESCO officials themselves, however, do recognize that their organization is virtually powerless in most regions of Syria, as they must organize through the sovereign government and President Bashar Al-Assad who is also responsible for destruction of cities and architecture.

The Syrian Heritage Initiative, which is part of the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives11), has an agreement with the U.S. Department of State as of 2015 to document, monitor and report on cultural heritage incidents specifically in Syria. This initiative is part of an international collaboration to monitor and work together with other interested agencies to protect heritage. ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiative’s mission, for example, is to promote global awareness, provide in-country photographic documentation, facilitate satellite imagery, inventory cultural heritage, respond to emergencies (when possible), develop long-term preservation projects and complete a bibliographic database of cultural heritage sites within Syria. This is a complex mission. However, a planned comprehensive map of cultural heritage in both Syria and Iraq is crucial to analyze heritage protection and current damage in order to make decisions regarding preservation and restoration of archeological sites and artifacts.

Ross Burns, Ph.D., served in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs for thirty-seven years, and notably was the Ambassador to Syria and Lebanon from 1984 to 1987. Burns is
the author of three books, *Damascus* (2004), *Monuments of Syria* (3rd edition 2009), and *Aleppo, A History* (2017). Burns has also authored and published a website called Monuments of Syria. The website includes an essential workbook that documents important monuments and sites all over Syria. He has documented the destruction in Syria and has created a list of damaged sites, and provides the reader with historical relevance and maps.

Shirin International is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is composed of scholars and archeologists. These are primarily professionals who worked in Syria before 2011 and have knowledge and expertise concerning its architecture and monuments. Shirin was created to support governments and other non-governmental organizations with established protocol to preserve and support safeguarding cultural heritage of Syria. It is an organization of experts that can supplement assistance at the local level and be prepared to prioritize heritage protection at the end of the Syrian war. They document and access current damage to sites, incorporate data to existing excavation archeological data, and record the topography of sites.

The Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology (APSA) provides on-the-ground updates of damage to architecture and of looted sites and documents purposeful destruction of cultural heritage distributed via a YouTube channel and Facebook page. APSA highlights risks to monuments during bombing raids; they have also documented protective measures that Syrian groups and individuals have implemented by filming sites and uploading videos, much at their own peril. APSA emphasizes that Da’esh has not alone perpetrated the destruction, but so has the Syrian Arab Armed Forces of the regime, the Russian military and other coalition members, which are also responsible for massive architectural destruction. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is also a non-governmental organization that is associated with UNESCO. ICOMOS was created in 1965 and promotes
conservation, protection and enhancement of monuments and sites. Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East\(^{18}\) (EAMENA) monitors endangered archaeology by aerial expeditions and creates an aerial record of site conditions, trains regional experts to defend heritage and raises awareness of important sites in the Middle East and Africa.

All of these agencies and their documentation, along with other work, will be essential for archeologists and conservationists in the future, particularly in Syria and Iraq where remarkable devastation has occurred. Maamoun Abdulkarim, Syria’s Director General of Antiquities and Museums in Damascus (DGAM), has vowed that Palmyra in particular would be rebuilt, a debated and politicized effort that will be discussed in Section V, below.

Managing cultural preservation is more problematic than it seems. There are significant differences between private, academic and state initiatives to manage and develop effective cultural heritage initiatives. Ongoing political regime change in areas considered at risk is particularly problematic.

Before 1945 considerations involving cultural heritage was divided between intense predominantly socialist and communist governmental differences in Europe. In post-World War II the dialogue changed because of imperative to rebuild cities and not necessarily reinvent them. UNESCO was founded in 1945 to address these problems and established the idea of World Heritage to “protect sites of outstanding universal value with strong beliefs that political and economic agreements are not enough to build lasting peace.”\(^{19}\) Previously the Roberts Commission (or The American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas) had been established by President Roosevelt on June 23, 1943, and was charged with promoting preservation of cultural properties in war regions, provided the mission did not interfere with military operations.\(^{20}\) The Commission’s intention
was to create lists and reports to document known cultural property in a given city and catalogue important architecture deemed at risk. These reports were specifically made for military use during wartime. This commission helped to establish the group known as the Monuments Men, or men of the MFAA (Monuments, Fine Arts, Archives). The MFAA officers were primarily dealing with Hitler’s aggressive policy of looting artwork in German occupied territories. The MFAA group helped publicize the need for protecting important cultural heritage and guarding the world’s treasures particularly during armed conflict where buildings, artwork and monuments have symbolic political value and are especially at risk.

The U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield (USCBS) was formed in 2006 and coordinates with the U.S. military and government to help protect cultural heritage worldwide. USCBS mission is to raise public awareness, provide emergency planning and promote U.S. legal protections and follow the 1954 Hague Convention protocols while firmly committed to the importance of cultural heritage. William H. Laird Professor of Classics at Carleton College, Nancy C. Wilkie, who is on the board of the USCBS, also serves as a member of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee (CPAC) within the U.S. Department of State.

UNESCO in December of 2016 held a high level panel entitled, “Targeting Heritage: In Search of New Paradigms-Save Heritage Through Dialogue,” that provided a first of its kind training tool manual specifically for military use. UNESCO recognizes that cultural heritage is on the frontline of current wars, and acknowledges the importance of training local militaries and security forces to protect and build respect for cultural heritage. Most often it is only the military or security forces that have access to cultural heritage sites in war torn regions; the promotion, education and respect of cultural understanding among military forces is believed to minimize the devastation of cultural heritage under siege.


Cultural Heritage Under Siege

Political, ethnic, and military violence often targets civilians along with cultural property. Political violence in 2016 within Syria and Iraq has continued to directly tyrannize and kill civilians and actively destroy architecture. The targeted architectural violence in Syria and Iraq is commonly directed at cultural heritage sites, which are mostly UNESCO protected. This directed destructive violence creates powerful media coverage in the U.S and Europe thus offering an anti-west narrative to jihadists.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the Sunni leader of Da’esh, spoke at the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul on June 28, 2014, announcing the beginning of the Caliphate of the Islamic State and stating Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis.\textsuperscript{24} The world no longer existed to al-Baghdadi and only the Islamic State did. Da’esh had emerged from al-Qaeda following the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by U.S Forces. The Sunni Ba’ath party of Iraq was removed from power in 2003 and former members merged to form al-Qaeda or AQI with Osama bin Laden. Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi became head of al-Qaeda in Iraq and was killed in 2006. These were brutal forces that aimed to keep Sunni governments in place across the region. Al-Baghdadi rebranded Da’esh in 2014 after the group broke allegiance with al-Qaeda. Al-Baghdadi’s speech was his assertion of authority that was eleven years in the making.\textsuperscript{25}

Da’esh follows a form of Islamic theological purity primarily known as Salafism or more strictly defined as Wahhabism, which determines that modern democracy, and modernity in general, is contradictory with Islam. The ideology of the group is multifaceted, however, and as political historian Hassan Hassan has argued, Da’esh presents itself as the representative of authentic Islam.\textsuperscript{26} We are primarily concerned with terrorist group Da’esh in this thesis because of the intense satisfaction the organization expresses concerning the deliberate destruction of
ancient cultural heritage and Shi’a Muslim cultural heritage. Al–Baghdadi is understood as a native-born Iraqi and ironically it is his own cultural heritage and region he seeks to destroy. Da’esh practices *takfirism* (excommunication) that allows a Muslim to declare another Muslim an infidel or apostate, and it is the same Islamic principal that allows the group to destroy important Muslim sites and shrines. The legacy evolved out of the *takfiri* schools and ideas that emerged from al-Qaeda, but Da’esh embodies an ideological rigidity that departs from mainstream Islam. However, it is important to understand that Da’esh is not the only group destroying Syrian and Iraqi cities and architecture. The difference is that Da’esh is purposefully destroying ancient sites and shrines and coalition forces destroy architecture because the city is a wartime target.

Da’esh has been involved in Syria since the beginning of the war in 2011 and Hassan argues Da’esh is adept at exploiting preexisting sectarian fissures in the Middle East. Al-Baghdadi had Sunni operatives in Syria since 2011, along with other terrorist groups, including al- Nusra Front or Jabhat Fateh al Sham, PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and al-Qaeda. The destruction of heritage in both Syria and Iraq is but a small part of the terrorist organization’s grand scheme. Political analysts consider the 2014 speech a warning to all, including cultural heritage experts in Iraq and Syria who understood that Da’esh planned to destroy any heritage that predated Islam or was particular to Shi’a Muslims.

Andrew Herscher, Architectural Historian at University of Michigan, argued, “the communities that identify and claim this heritage can assume that the enemy recognizes the community, as well as the targeted architecture as “the other” or as a collective enemy. Herscher states, this type of recognition guides the targeting of destruction.” In Syria and Iraq it is Sunni forces directly attacking “the other” or anyone in their way. The UNESCO World Heritage
Center at present only protects six areas in Syria, including the ancient city of Damascus, the ancient city of Bosra, the archeological site of Palmyra, the ancient city of Aleppo, Krak des Chevaliers and Qal’at Salah El-Din, and ancient villages in Northern Syria. In Iraq even fewer cities are protected. They include Hatra, Ashur (Qal’at Sherqat), the Samarra archeological site, Erbil Citadel and the Ahwar of Southern Iraq. Da’esh has directly targeted most of these sites listed above. It appears obvious that Da’esh targets UNESCO protected sites for propaganda purposes and because these sites are of great value by foreign governments and foreigners alike.

Protection of heritage as a modern construct involves the type of heritage considered worthy of protection and that is found in locations that started to develop rapidly along with the modernizations of cultures. The importance of heritage as a concept is within a select theory of modernization because not all histories or places modernize. One classification of such heritage theory that Herscher refers to is termed “counter-heritage,” a category of heritage that somehow remains unrecognized as valuable.\textsuperscript{29} This type of heritage is not usually acknowledged by the particular hegemonic powers within a given community. Some cultural heritage is preserved post war or during war. Counter-heritage that is destroyed during wartime is usually not rebuilt. Herscher argues that it is usually a type of cultural heritage that is a signifier of a despised history and ultimately through destruction “counter-heritage” thus preserves a different history. For example, destruction of Ottoman era buildings and historic mosques in Prishtina, Kosovo during the 1950s attempted to completely remove the Ottoman past\textsuperscript{30}. During World War II a tremendous number of Jewish synagogues were targeted in Germany and Poland, destroyed and never rebuilt. More recently, there has been the decimation of entire neighborhoods in rebel held eastern Aleppo that were bombarded and demolished by the Syrian regime and Russian forces. This type of destruction allows for rebuilding as defined by the victors.
Looting During Wartime

Looting by jihadists or extremists represents a specific type of destruction to ancient archaeology and cultural institutions. Looting is stealing and not necessarily specific to wartime periods, however during wartime archaeological sites and cultural institutions are further vulnerable and are deemed highly at risk. Da’esh is adept at targeting certain cultural heritage to plunder for economic gain and to cause destruction to a site or an institutional infrastructure. Not only do the jihadists steal goods from institutions they often batter the architecture and destroy art or artifacts they consider less valuable in the process. Looted cultural property includes artifacts and antiquities that have been stolen from museums, libraries, archives, archeological sites, manuscript collections, or burial tombs. Da’esh in particular has been accused of selling looted antiquities to help finance its organization, but al-Qaeda and other like entities also stand accused of also selling stolen artifacts.

In one their worst “performances” of violence against architecture Da’esh attacked in the Mosul Museum in Iraq in February of 2015. Video of the attack documents militants inside the museum battering the building and what remained of the collection. The portions of the collection that were destroyed were obviously works that they could not sell easily or move. It is still unclear what works were reproductions and if Da’esh understood this but it is the performance of violence against culture that was so disturbing to watch.

In 2015 Andrew Keller of the U.S State Department addressed an audience at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York about Da’esh finances and how they raise money to support their brutality. At this lecture Keller said that in 2014 Da’esh raised over one billion dollars. The revenue was derived from oil sales, taxes, extortion, and plundering natural resources including antiquities in territories Da’esh dominates. Da’esh loots archeological sites.
to help finance terror and erase the cultural heritage of Syria and Iraq. U.S. Delta Force retrieved documents that relate to the sophisticated level of looting by Da’esh in May of 2015. The documents include detail of a twenty percent khums tax that Da’esh receives from all approved looted artifacts. It is approved because Da’esh only allows permits for certain individuals to ‘excavate,’ and thus controls the entire selling operation. (See Appendix-State Department Documents)

The U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil complaint in federal court in Washington, D.C. on December 15, 2016 seeking the forfeiture of antiquities from Da’esh. This represents the first time that the U.S. has filed an action to have Da’esh forfeit antiquities that are considered foreign assets. The U.S. filed the civil complaint based on new documents acquired from the raid mentioned above. The U.S. Delta Forces raided the location or residence of Da’esh senior leader Abu Sayyaf, who was killed during the raid. This complaint discloses that some of the retrieved documents detail antiquities that were sold or purchased in U.S. dollars. It demonstrates the U.S. government’s intent to pursue actions to limit the revenue earned by Da’esh. This particular complaint alleges the following objects are within the control of Da’esh and subject to forfeiture: a Roman era gold ring, two Roman gold coins, and a Neo-Assyrian stone stela. The civil action in an in rem proceeding in which the “defendants” are actually the four objects that the government has alleged are actual stolen goods and which it is seeking to recover.

This filed complaint might be too little too late, but any avenues to expose buyers of stolen property need to be explored to limit the market availability of stolen antiquities. The complaint is significant, in part, because the U.S. Justice Department is invoking the USA Patriot Act:
The lawsuit marks the first time that the United States has filed an action to forfeit antiquities that are foreign assets of ISIL. But of greater significance to cultural property legal watchers is the DOJ’s reliance on the PATRIOT Act. The fact that government lawyers tapped the anti-terrorism statute to form the cornerstone of their case showcases the PATRIOT Act as a promising legal tool to combat transnational antiquities trafficking, and the move concretely demonstrates that a fresh legal argument can be forged from facts on the ground showing a link between terrorist activities and antiquities trafficking. This cultural heritage law milestone cannot be overlooked.

Iraqi archaeologist Layla Salih visited the site of Nimrud in December 2016, as Da’esh forces are finally being removed from Mosul. She was there with a UNESCO official on December 14, 2016 and found that because no one is guarding the site of Nimrud, locals and plunderers keep removing artifacts from the site. The rubble remains are presently in situ but with ongoing looting the concept of reconstruction or preservation is a foreboding one. UNESCO has urged all member States to take appropriate measures to find all involved in the black market trade of cultural property. This includes monitoring the documentation of artifacts and antiquities that are purchased by art dealers, museums, private collectors and auction houses and to confirm that all laws that protect cultural heritage are being followed.

Resolutions and Destruction

On May 28, 2015 UNESCO’s current Director-General, Irina Bokova, addressed a plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly. The General Assembly at this session adopted the resolution, “Saving the Cultural Heritage of Iraq.” This resolution was presented by both Germany and Iraq and was focused on the fight against the destruction of cultural heritage and the destruction of cultural diversity in Iraq. In State Minister Böhmer introduction she stated the following:
The attacks on the cultural heritage of Iraq are a test case for all of us. Iraq is a cradle of our common civilization… Its heritage has been entrusted to the care of all of mankind. The international community must do all it can to put an end to these war crimes said State Minister Böhmer. “The destruction of cultural heritage aims to erase the multicultural history of Iraq that has been the hallmark of our country” stated Ambassador Alhakim.39

Not only does the resolution address purposeful destruction of cultural heritage, it also addresses the violent action of cultural ethnic cleansing practiced by extremists (such as Da’esh) and how they undertake slaughtering innocent people in territories they dominate. There has long been a connection between ethnic cleansing and destruction of individual heritage,40 and this type of ethnic influenced destruction has specifically been recognized as a tactic of Da’esh warfare. It is a strategy that destroys cultural diversity and principally targets built architectural expressions of religious identity (ancient temples, churches, synagogues, Shi’a shrines or mosques), or a community’s past identity, such as the monuments of Palmyra’s ancient Roman remains. However, it is not only sacred sites that are targeted: schools and cultural places (museums) are also direct targets for destruction or pillage. When heritage is attacked collective memory and tradition are attacked. It is an attempt to delegitimize a culture, devalue its heritage and simply erase. Architecture is not only what it is; it is what it does to and for a given community. Important buildings have long been infused with the soul of man.

The Saving the Cultural Heritage of Iraq resolution of May 2015 was also intended to mobilize the international community. This resolution was issued after the archaeological site of the former Assyrian capital Nimrud, Iraq was systematically destroyed.41 Maria Böhmer, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office in 2015 issued a strong statement42 regarding the barbaric destruction by Da’esh in Iraq. However, a few months later militants were still able to detonate explosives in Palmyra as documented by ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives and international journalists in October of 2015. Da’esh apparently was aware of the symbolic sway
the Greco-Roman ruins held within the global and local communities. The resolution and statements by UNESCO did nothing to stop the Palmyra destruction.

A political issue that has been discussed regarding the destruction in Palmyra revolves around the question of how Da’esh militants were initially able to occupy Palmyra so quickly. Although the 2015 UN Iraq resolution is particular to Iraq, the joint coalition military forces involved in Syria at this point should have better protected Palmyra. Da’esh had already taken control of Homs, Syria in May of 2015 and Palmyra is only roughly one hundred miles away from Homs. Russia had previously launched an anti-Da’esh air bombardment campaign in September of 2015, one month before destructive mines blew up certain remains in Palmyra.

It is ironic because the Russians did indeed aid the Syrian troops in the liberation of Palmyra from Da’esh, but the Russian assault was after the destruction of at least two remarkable temple remains. With the liberation of Palmyra the Russians managed to cast themselves as guardians of high culture, especially evident during a Russian led musical concert in the Roman theatre on May 5, 2016, which was also attended by UNESCO officials. The concert was held in honor of victims of the Syrian war and murdered Syrian archeologist Khalid al-Asaad. It was performed in the same Roman theater that Da’esh used to execute individuals and perform other atrocities. Valery Gergiev, the conductor, believed the music was a call for peace and hope. Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin spoke via satellite and was projected on a screen on stage stating the world must be rid of this terrible evil. Russian combat engineers have defused thousands of explosives around Palmyra since the city was liberated, and built a military camp. It is not clear to other foreign powers, the endgame of Putin. In December 2016, Da’esh regained control of Palmyra, but is quickly loosing territory in the region aided by Russian warplanes.
Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Jan Eliasson (2012—2016) was well aware that Da‘esh directly targets cultural heritage. In a statement on May 28, 2015, he said, “the destruction of cultural heritage bears witness to a form of violent extremism that seeks to destroy the present, past and future of human civilization.”\(^46\) The UN Resolution 2170\(^47\) of 2014, which reaffirms earlier resolutions [1267, 1373, 1618, 1624, 2083, 2129, 2133 and 2161,] continues to impose the trade ban of cultural artifacts in Iraq, and includes a trade ban of artifacts from Syria. In 2014 UN proposals were also made to “protect cultural zones” and to reduce violence around important sites. In certain areas of divisive cultural diversity, a proposal to better educate the local population about heritage was issued. UNESCO also wants to strengthen the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property. Notwithstanding all of this action in the international arena, most would agree not enough is being done, or can be done by foreigners to support the protection of cultural heritage in Iraq or Syria.

As mentioned above the ICC recently set legal precedent when a member of Ansar Dine, a Tuareg Islamic extremist group, was found guilty of war crimes. This was a successful case tried by the ICC to further connect prosecutable heritage laws to genocide, which is a war crime. To date Ahmad al-Faqi al-Mahdi is the only extremist who has been charged and found guilty of being a co-perpetrator of the crime of intentionally directing attacks against religious and historic buildings in this case, in Timbuktu, Mali in 2012.\(^48\) Alex Whiting, a professor at Harvard Law School, has observed that the ICC is a court with very limited resources, and he doubts that Da‘esh or other extremists groups will ever be tried for crimes against cultural heritage in Syria or Iraq. At present the ICC cannot pursue cases in Iraq or Syria because neither country accepts jurisdiction of the court. However, especially for cultural heritage scholars and experts the ICC case still represents a battle won against those who seek to destroy culture and humanity.
Laws to Protect Cultural Heritage

There are three main UNESCO treaties that represent the foundation for protection of cultural heritage worldwide.

1. The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was adopted at The Hague in 1954. This was the first international treaty adopted focusing on the protection of cultural heritage. A second protocol to the Hague Convention was added in 1999.

2. The 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; also The 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention that emphasizes that attacks on world heritage are attacks on humankind shared identity.

3. The UNESCO Declaration on Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage adopted in 2003 that states the intentional destruction of cultural heritage is an infringement on human dignity and human rights.

On February 12, 2015 the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 2199, which unanimously condemns the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria. (Items #15, 16, 17 of Resolution 2199) The resolution also has legal measures to combat illegal trafficking in cultural objects from both Iraq and Syria. This resolution condemns deliberate, targeted or accidental destruction. Resolution 2199 specifically extends to Syria the same protection that has been in place for Iraq since 2003 (Resolution 1483). All member nations are responsible for taking appropriate measures to prevent the trading of such goods. The tools available for meeting these obligations include Interpol’s Stolen Works of Art Database, the UNESCO Database of National Cultural Laws, and the Emergency Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk.
However, it is really up to the central players in any cultural market to act within accordance of these international provisions.

The U.S. Department of State has been a significant player in developing systems to combat the destruction and looting of cultural heritage, which include Red Lists produced by the International Council of Museums\textsuperscript{55} to which most governments, museums, auction houses and individual collectors can utilize to refer regarding illegal trade of artifacts. It is now well known that this illicit marketplace for artifacts and antiquities supports destructive cultural plundering by militants and thieves. The purpose of Red Lists is to help mobilize the arts community with lists of known objects, or heavily traded items such as coins or metal artifacts, that are understood as looted from Syria or Iraq. Antony Blinken (Deputy Secretary of State, 2016) states, “antiquities and artifacts from sites that Da’esh does not destroy, are looted and sold through a highly methodical, efficient excavation operation to finance its twisted ambitions.”\textsuperscript{56}

The State Department also has a program called Rewards for Justice, which offers rewards for information that will significantly disrupt terrorist acts or trade. It is also significant that corporate structures such as Christie’s auction house and online retailer giant eBay are refusing to buy and sell known conflict antiquities, although both have experienced provenance problems of auctioned or sold items. Sotheby’s and Bonham’s auction houses among others have had to return items that were illegally purchased or whose provenance is in conflict.\textsuperscript{57}

Italy has been long been involved with policing and managing the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq for years. The Italian Carabinieri Corps is an Armed Military Force with policing duties and is part of the Ministry of Culture in Italy. It has worked along with the Centre for Archaeological Research and Excavations of Turin, Italy and both have been reliable sources to
respond to destruction of cultural property in Iraq since 1964 and more specifically since the
2003 invasion of Iraq.

Italy sent peacekeeping units and experts stationed in Bagdad, Iraq to assist with the
recovery of objects and to protect the National Museum of Iraq in Bagdad, which was seriously
looted and practically destroyed in 2003. The Carabinieri cataloged stolen property and
attempted to create an Iraqi Interpol liaison office. They also cataloged the museum collection to
monitor items on the black market or artifacts publicly displayed at other global institutions.
They searched locally for museum objects that were stolen by local Iraqis, which were
identifiable by museum numbers. The University of Turin created a virtual Iraq Museum for the
purpose of educating locals and others, and providing documentation of the museum prior to
damage and looting.58 It is important for local populations to understand the importance of
keeping artifacts in situ and appreciate the purpose of protecting cultural heritage. Military
officials believe this type of education will support the campaign against looted antiquities.
Initially, the Carabinieri were deployed to monitor and train locals on how to protect
archaeological sites but during the first deployment the Italian group went to twenty three
archaeological sites—recovering ninety two objects and identifying fifty four not necessarily
criminal or extremist looters.59

The war and conflict in Syria and Iraq respectively has not only produced criminals who
plunder cultural heritage sites for financial gain and media propaganda, unfortunately local Iraqis
and Syrians have also looted their own archaeological cultural heritage to provide financial
support for themselves and their families. Cheikhmous Ali of APSA has documented at least
14,000 illegal excavations across Syria.60 The local population is not the looters the Carabinieri
are particularly interested in arresting, although they do want to educate the local populations on
the importance of their cultural heritage and the need to protect it. High-resolution satellite imagery used by ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives, Syrian Heritage Initiative and the U.S. Department of State, has been a most effective tool in monitoring looting patterns in Syria and Iraq while also monitoring the severity of damage to sites. Making a database and exploring methods to assess the chronology and type of site that is most commonly being targeted by looters is essential. This type of database will also help archeologists with any future work in Syria and Iraq.

During the period of April 8 to 16, 2016, the Executive Board of UNESCO voted during the 199th session to unanimously adopt the decision to safeguard and preserve Palmyra and other Syrian world heritage.61 The Board issued several significant points namely the measure for restoring Palmyra as being a priority. The type of restoration that should be implemented for the archeological site of Palmyra is a subject that will be debated by many having an interest in cultural heritage preservation and will be discussed in section V regarding preservation issues of restoration and reconstruction. To understand this debate it is necessary to understand the historical significance of important archeological sites in Syria and Iraq.
Palmyra, Syria Historical Overview

Ancient Palmyra

Palmyra, Syria (Aramaic Tedmurtā; Arabic Tadmor; Greco-Latin: Palmyra) is mentioned as a village, located in the bādiya of the Syrian steppe (Badiat ash-Sham desert), at least as far back as ancient Assyrian recorded cuneiform texts (c. 1800—2500 B.C.). As an oasis city, Palmyra eventually developed into a grand city under Roman supremacy (64 B.C.—395 A.D.), and especially once Emperor Pompey annexed it in 64 B.C. Ross Burns dates Palmyra’s Roman integration into the province of Syria to during the reign of Nero (54—68 A.D.), and Palmyra’s Roman finale was the fall of Queen Zenobia in 272 A.D. The period of architectural ruins to be studied date to the Roman period, but it is important to contextualize the development of Palmyra by reviewing its territory and its Roman past.

The Palmyrenes, once fully absorbed into the Roman Empire and under Roman patronage, still understandably did not consider themselves primarily Roman. Funerary art exceptionally displays the eastern tendencies of the Palmyrene elite in surviving reliefs. The elite did emulate certain Roman funeral practices but also added Aramaic inscriptions to reliefs or busts. Women of wealth were often portrayed as bejeweled, and particular Palmyrene hand gestures on busts were frequently conveyed. (Figure 1.) Architecture and funerary arts of this period conform to Roman, Hellenistic and Parthian elements, and on architecture the hybridity is notably demonstrated in the row of battlements or stepped pyramids, among other details incorporated on the impressive Temple of Ba’al or Temple of the Sun to be discussed below.

Palmyra was part of the Hellenistic kingdom of the Seleucids before the Romans. The Seleucids ruled territory that included Iran, Syria and Mesopotamia (c. 333 B.C.—64 A.D.)
following the Persian wars of Alexander the Great. The Seleucid Hellenistic settlement is now located south of Roman Palmyra, and was only identified by archeologists in the late 1990’s.\textsuperscript{65} The Seleucids as far as it is currently known either ignored Palmyra or did not develop as much as the Romans eventually would.

A peace treaty was signed between Rome and the Parthians \textit{c.} 20 B.C. and this initiated in Palmyra the monumental building tradition of the Romans. The Palmyra Roman building practices were linked as well to the Pax Romana (27 B.C.—14 A.D.), also known as the negotiated Augustan peace.\textsuperscript{66}

It is also relevant that the Parthian or Arsacid Empire of Iran and Iraq (247 B.C.—224 A.D.) was still in control of much of Mesopotamia during the Roman Palmyra period and the Palmyrenes succeeded in maintaining diplomatic relations with both Romans and Parthians. As a result, a cultural fusion of Palmyrene architecture included Greco-Persian–Parthian-Roman styles, in part perhaps, as a tactful approach for managing the short-term stability of Palmyra’s surrounding Empires. This fusion ultimately assisted in the creation of an expressly different Palmyrian architectural language.\textsuperscript{67}

Roman Palmyra’s architectural program developed from the wealth created by the flow of traders who were taxed once they entered the new Eastern route that traversed through Palmyra. Caravans were able to detour through the Syrian Desert by way of Palmyra on the way to the Mediterranean instead of following the older Euphrates route. “A coalition of Arab interest was formed between Homs and Tadmor [Palmyra] to secure a new short cut across the desert, as long as Arab dynasties could control the desert tribes.”\textsuperscript{68} Once Palmyra was part of the Roman Empire caravans had some protection from nomadic tribes who inhabited the Syrian desert. Because Palmyra was considered a neutral zone, lucrative trade could occur between the Parthian
Empire and the Roman Empire. Exchange of goods thrived within the Mediterranean and the East Roman Empire in the second century and Palmyra rivaled Antioch with regards to Mesopotamian territory economic importance. The new road through Palmyra was decidedly a short cut through the desert to facilitate a faster exchange of goods. Palmyra, the city, collected taxes from caravans trading luxurious items, including silks, myrrh, purple dye and spices, and this tax supplemented the finances of the Romans to build a stunning city in the desert. Once Petra was annexed by the Romans in c. 106 A.D. Palmyra became the most important trading center in the East.

Palmyra started to decline when the Sassanian dynasty (King Ardashir) was founded in 224 A.D. after a battle that effectively won Sassanian hegemony over the Parthians. The Sassanians battled to reclaim ancient Persian lands, including Roman Palmyra. King Ardashir’s son, Shapur was a sworn enemy of the Romans and attempted to regain other Roman territory including Hatra, Harran, Dura-Europos and Nisibis (Antioch). The region was consumed by battles between the Romans and Sassanians c. 257/258 A.D. and third century Palmyra was considered only a colonia of Rome. An inscription gives fragmented evidence that Septimius Odenathus (leader or chief) of Palmyra tried to cautiously communicate with Shapur around 260 A.D. because Palmyra was now located in Persian territory but still controlled by the Romans, who were adversaries of the Persians. Shapur had already destroyed Roman Dura-Europos in 256 A.D. and in 259—60 A.D. captured Roman Emperor Valerian who was later brutally murdered. (Figure 2.)

Andrew Smith argues the capture of the Roman Emperor could have encouraged Odenathus to approach Shapur on friendly terms to negotiate protection for Palmyra from a growing Persian threat. The Palmyrenes were likely economically threatened by the rise of the
Sassanians and wanted to establish diplomatic relations with them as they had with the Parthians. The Palmyrenes, however, in c. 270 A.D. existed as both Palmyrene and Roman citizens and were not allies of the Sassanians. They were dependent on the caravan trade for the economic stability of Palmyra, but peaceful co-existence with the Sassanians was impossible. Andrew Smith further argues that this failure of the offer to develop diplomatic relations was due to the perceived Palmyrene Roman character and the western tendencies of Palmyra, which were objectionable to the Sassanians.\textsuperscript{73} Odenathus proved not to be successful with Shapur and he eventually assumed the title of Governor or Consularis of Palmyra.\textsuperscript{74} He fought against the Persians for the Romans. He was successful during the 262 A.D. battles, before his own murder in 267—268 A.D. His murder gave rise to the ascendancy his wife, the Syrian heroine and famous Zenobia or Basilissa Zenobia\textsuperscript{75} as she is known.

Zenobia, a vigorous and powerful woman, went on war campaigns after the death of her husband, specifically to seize Egypt and control the regional trade and the port of the Red Sea, Antioch and Galatia, all prominent trade points in the region. The war-like aggression of Zenobia caused the Roman Emperor Aurelian to question whether Zenobia was indeed Palmyrene or Roman. Zenobia’s son Vaballathus gave further reason to question the inquiry of identity when he assumed Roman titles of authority, at odds with the Emperor, such as \textit{Vir Clarissimus} (the most illustrious ruler).\textsuperscript{76} Metal coins with portraits of both Emperor Aurelian and Vaballathus were minted in Antioch, in an effort to legitimize their equal dominance in the region and perhaps appeal to multiple cultures within Palmyra. Emperor Aurelian continuously rejected this posturing. In 272–273 A.D. the Roman army crushed Palmyrene forces and captured Zenobia. This revolt of the Palmyrenes and capture of Zenobia directly led to the decline of Palmyra in this period.
The ancient Roman history is central to the history of Palmyra, as it is part of an ancient Palmyrene culture that Da’esh has attempted to destroy. Palmyrene ancient art and architecture, military prowess and foreign relations are unique to Palmyra and one reason the important ruins remain of universal cultural value.

*Violent Attacks on Historical Sites in Palmyra*

Both Syria and Iraq are countries that have numerous archeologically important territories and sites but Palmyra is considered to have one of the most outstanding archaeological sites in the world and thus the severe violence forced upon the site by Da’esh militants is especially devastating.

Robert Bevan has argued that the leveling of buildings and cities has always been an inevitable part of the hostilities of war. There is a complexity of symbols that is inherent to finished architecture, and this imbues value to buildings. Symbols can express power, wealth, ancient divinity, or even religious ideology. Symbols are often expressed through building dimensions and architectural space, including widths of entrances and raised and lowered ceilings, particularly decoration and the locations of entry and egress.

When violence and its many symbolic meanings (political or structural) are used to destroy architecture, a community’s sense of belonging and historical identity is shattered. Da’esh has directly targeted archeological sites and monuments in an attempt to destroy cities, obliterate cultural heritage, and massacre the people who inhabit these embattled societies. The following monuments or architecture have been systematically attacked by Da’esh to destroy an historical record and a memory of an ancient culture.
The Great Temple of Ba’al (Bel, Belhammon, Sun)—Palmyra, Syria.

(Figures 3—6.)

Already a ruin, The Temple of Ba’al in Palmyra was directly attacked by Da’esh in the summer of 2015. A drone video confirmed the destruction of the cella (inner chamber), columns, and western wall that were reduced to rubble from an explosive device. The monumental gateway also was partially collapsed.78 The Temple of Ba’al is an important Imperial religious building that remained in Syria. The temple was also the most imposing in Palmyra. The cella walls were considered the oldest part of the temple, and date to 32 A.D., but the construction of the temple could have started as early as 17—19 A.D. Ross Burns documents that the site had been used for other religious purposes since 2200 B.C.79

S.B. Murray believes that the cella must have originally been a Greek form as the proportions are classic.80 The cella outer columns are of the Corinthian order and Burns writes that they were originally capped with metal capitals in plated gold or silver.81 Eight columns were once on the north and south sides, and the east and west sides both had fifteen columns approximately fifty-nine feet high (or eighteen meters). The latest evidence of known building activity that enhanced the Temple of Ba’al was documented at 175 A.D., the period that the temple precinct reached its final form.82

The Imperial temple Ba’al was more than likely built over a Hellenistic temple, although only scant evidence of that has been discovered. The Palmyrenes worshipped Bel and the name is defined as lord in the Akkadian language. Bel is part of the divine triad of Palmyrene Gods, including Yarhibol (Sun) and Aglibol (Moon); Bel is also linked to the Canaanite God Baal-Shamin. The fact that multiple Gods were worshipped in this temple speaks to the importance of this architecture. Although the temple is Greek in style and elevation, the ground plan had
evidence of Eastern ritual shrines dedicated to different deities. Within the central chamber there was an indication of a ritual pool for ablutions and an altar on the left for sacrifices; these are features of Syro-Phoenician Near Eastern traditions within the temple architecture. The entrance to the temple was conspicuously off center, and is believed that at some point during construction the temple orientation was changed to face west, not typically north/south as with most Greek temples. This orientation could have been for ritual purposes, thus creating an amalgam of temple features because there were also two internal chapels within the cella.83

As referenced above, there was a notable row of Syro-Phoenician battlements or stepped pyramids atop the entablature and modillion of Temple Ba’al, a primarily classical Greek temple, but the temple battlements are not classic details and speak to the hybridity of this architecture. The courtyard was six hundred fifty seven square feet (or approximately two hundred meters square) and was originally surrounded by four porticos, a central sanctuary, a propylon (gateway) and a banquet hall. The cella of the temple was also used much later as a Mosque and Islamic inscriptions in the mihrab were visible before the explosion and dated to the eighth century. Burns emphasizes that with the mix of populations in Roman Palmyra hundreds of gods were honored in this temple. This monumental architecture demonstrated Palmyra’s prosperity. Palmyra’s surviving architecture is unique and little of this fusion temple type endures, especially architecture that emphasized hybridity of form during the Roman period and represented Greek, Near East and Roman elements.

Sanctuary (Temple) of Baal-Shamîn—Palmyra, Syria
(Figures 7—8.)

Temple of Baal-Shamîn means Lord of the Heavens, a God responsible for rain and fecundity.84 Andrew Smith posits that the early sanctuary of Baal-Shamîn appeared by 67 A.D.,
although work on the colonnade dates to 23 A.D. This represents the period that Rome had fully incorporated Palmyra into the Roman Empire. Inscriptions that integrate Latin, Greek and Palmyrene languages survive to give scholars the best information concerning the period of Roman involvement in Palmyra, and its accelerated building activities. Improvements to the temple were made under Palmyrene Odenathus in 130 A.D.; particularly work on the small cella after a visit of Roman Emperor Hadrian. The cella of the temple survived with a six columned vestibule and sidewalls, the original columns were of the Corinthian order. A Swiss team restored the temple in 1954.

Ritual banquet halls were originally part of the temple complex and there was an inscription that remained in situ before Da’esh used explosives in August of 2015 to destroy the temple. The inscription was on a bench in the cella. It was a dedication to the gods Baalshamin and Durahlun—a dedication that was fragmented and concerned both the altar of the temple and the banquet hall. Some of the other inscriptions discovered were bilingual or trilingual as Palmyra was a cross roads of civilizations. The evidence of banquet halls, and the importance of the inscriptions emphasized the communal nature of temples and the social unity within Palmyra.

Palmyra Monumental Arch—Palmyra, Syria
(Figures 9—10.)

This monumental arch was at the southeastern end of the Great Colonnade near the Temple of Nebu. The arch so happened to conceal a sharp bend in the colonnade, which was articulated due to a change of direction, or a bend in the road. To conceal the bend itself it was a feat of architectural mastery, achieved by the builders using a wedge plan that faced two directions while still preserving the traditional frontal arch. A central opening was flanked by
two smaller arched openings for slaves and animals. It was originally richly decorated in a Syro-
Phoenician Near Eastern tradition. This arch was built under Septimius Severus c. 193-211 A.D.
and represented the pinnacle of Palmyra’s prosperity. The Tetrapylon (four gates) was located
at the opposite end of the Great Colonnade and opposite the monumental arch. Da’esh destroyed
the arch in October of 2015.

*Tower Tombs—Palmyra, Syria*

(Figures 11—13.)

Burials exist all around the oasis of Palmyra and are grouped in different areas, the
southeast tombs, the southwest tombs, and the large area referred to as the Valley of the Tombs.
Different types of burials are represented, including temple or house tombs, tower tombs and
underground tombs (hypogea). The tomb type hypogea lasted into the second century. Tower
tombs, however, are the oldest burial types in Palmyra and date to the 9th Century B.C. The
tower tombs are large and some have impressive decorative detail. Tower tombs seem to
represent an indigenous tradition but continued to be built until c. 128 A.D. Schmidt – Colinet
argues the end of building Tower Tombs could have been the result of the “Romanization” of
the elite in Palmyra.

The tomb named Kithoth, which was a tower tomb and stood approximately thirty-two
feet high or ten meters, was built in c. 40 A.D. A relief of a burial feast survived on the tomb and
was carved into the façade. The Kithoth tomb was the earliest example of this type of tomb. This
tomb was one of the closest to the Damascus gate, which led into the northern direction of the
Palmyra colonnaded axis.

The tombs dedicatory or honorific inscriptions have provided historians with the most
significant information about Palmyrene society. Although we understand Palmyra from certain
influences of Roman traditions and architecture, Palmyra’s unique expression of identity and community remained deeply connected to their own Near East cultural norms which is reflected in tomb architecture. Unfortunately, many tombs have suffered from illegal looting; while the northern tombs have recently sustained tremendous damage as a result of bulldozing to build trenches by the Syrian and Russian militaries. The number of items looted, and the number of Palmyra tombs destroyed to date remains unknown.

The Syrian archeologist Cheikhmous Ali along with APSA (Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology) detailed a report for the ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives discussing damage in Palmyra 2012—June 2015. One of the main areas of significant damage due to extensive looting activity is around the tombs of Palmyra. Most of the documentation of damaged tombs has been from aerial satellite photography or drone videos. The Tomb of Kithoth had no visible damage in June of 2015 but on September 2, 2015 the tomb had been completely blown up.94 (Figure 11.)

The book, “The Ruins of Palmyra,” published in 1753 (Figure 14.) by Robert Wood and H. Dawkins, is credited as the beginning of systematic research and travelers exploration of Palmyra. A long history of excavations followed. Harald Ingolt opened an excavation starting in 1924, but inscriptions on tombs had been copied since Jean Jacques Barthelemy and John Swinton deciphered the Palmyrene alphabet in c.1754.

It is not clear whether or not Da’esh understands the depth of this hybrid culture that successfully fought to maintain its tribal orientations, traditions, and, for a time, secured a Palmyrene dominant position within a region of powerful empires. Da’esh certainly does understand the economic value of ancient antiquities and the propagandistic value of making videos showing the ruination of ancient archaeological remains. As reported by Global
Research Da’esh retook the city of Palmyra on December 12, 2016. The Biyarat, Dawah and Hayyan oil fields are also near Palmyra and were reoccupied by Da’esh militants. With over one hundred and fifty recent airstrikes reported by the Syrian Air Force and the Russian Aerospace Forces, we await additional reports on damage to the ancient city of Palmyra.

The World Heritage site of Palmyra has indeed suffered significant damage and with the reoccupation there could be still more devastation. However, Palmyra as an important historical place documented by teams of devoted heritage specialists and archaeologists will remain in our collective memory and part of our human history. The future of Palmyrene ancient ruins and the modern city of Palmyra is unknown to date, but the Syrian war will end and the history of Palmyra will continue.

Ancient Nineveh and Nimrud, Iraq Historical Overview

(Figures 15—22)

Ancient Nineveh and Nimrud

Contemporary Mosul (Arabic Al-Mawsil), capital of Nīnawā in Northwest Iraq, is on the bank of the Tigris and is the second largest city in Iraq. Mosul encircles the ancient city of Nineveh. This ancient Mesopotamian region included the cities of Uruk, Akkad, Assur, Palmyra, Babylon, Nimrud, and Nineveh and are lands often referred to as the cradle of civilization, or the region between two important rivers known as the Tigris and the Euphrates. Nineveh is located on the east bank of the Tigris River and is bisected by the Khosr River, which ran horizontally through the gated palatial structure. Mesopotamia was rich with powerful empires that controlled now modern Syrian and Iraqi lands dating back at least to the early dynastic period of 2900—2350 B.C. (Third Millennium), comprising mostly of the Akkadian and Ur III empires. Sargon of Akkad c. 2334 B.C. regarded as the world’s first empire builder, eventually unified
Mesopotamia territories into city-states. It is significant to look at early Dynastic Mesopotamia to consider a cultural connection between ancient and contemporary wartime violence, particularly one related to ancient use of violence that leaders of Assyrian Empires intended against enemy palatial architecture during wartime. Although the ancient religious ideology was different, the attacks against palatial architecture to topple an enemy remain the same. The enemy presently, however, is not only local but also a global enemy.

The early Assyrians and the Assyrian dynasty lasted from c. 2500—612 B.C. The often referred to Neo-Assyrian period dates to 911—612 B.C. This is the period of the collapse of the Assyrians after Babylonian and Median armies joined forces to defeat the Neo-Assyrian dynasty in c. 612 B.C. Ancient Nineveh and Nimrud are among the oldest and most significant sites of ancient Mesopotamia. Nineveh has had other documented human settlements dating back at least to seventh millennium B.C. and particularly around the Tell (mound) referred to as Kuyunjik. (Figure 22.) The Neo-Assyrians occupied Ashur, Babylon, and Damascus, making them the dominant power of the ancient near east, especially from 911—681 B.C. King Ashurnasirpal II 883—859 B.C. moved his palace from Ashur to Nimrud and later Neo-Assyrian King Sennacherib 704—681 B.C. relocated his palace from Nimrud (Kalhu) to the new royal capital of Nineveh (modern Mosul). The Assyrians had a presence in the region for a vast period in history and controlled multiple lands in Mesopotamia, but for this study the primary interest is the period of expansion, consolidation and loss of territory c. 1076—612 B.C. Both palaces are part of the Assyrian legacy of kingship; albeit a brutal legacy.

Nimrud occupied the equivalent of approximately eight hundred and ninety acres, which included the remains of a citadel, Ziggurat, two temples and a palace structure along with other ancient buildings. The ancient Lamassu bull creatures were prevalent in Assyrian palaces
and symbolized a protective deity that flanked the gates of Nimrud. The main temple at Nimrud was dedicated to the God of war Ninurta and the Nabu Temple was dedicated to the God of wisdom. (Figures 16—17.)

The last Assyrian Palace c. 612 B.C. was located at Nineveh (modern Mosul) and was on the equivalent of twenty-nine acres of land, with walls of reliefs expanding at least seven miles. Nineveh was understood to be the location of the Assyrian heartland. Most Assyrian palaces were built from mud brick and had stone facing on the walls. The distinctive carved reliefs on palace walls gives us the most information about Assyrian symbolism, along with cuneiform inscriptions. The carved reliefs emphasize the legitimacy of the king with official symbolism, religious rites, and protective ceremonial content. The mythological figures carved on walls and the protective gate bulls, such as the stone Lamassu, facilitated the understanding that the king ruled with divine approval.

One of the most violent images represented on palace walls, now in the collection of the British Museum, is the relief panel referred to as The Garden Party from Nineveh c. 645 B.C. (Figure 19—20.) The panel portrays the king and his consort having drinks or food in a luxurious garden setting. The king celebrates his victory while the head of his sworn enemy dangles from a tree, swinging by a metal loop in the wind. Severed heads were a part of Assyrian warfare—a trophy. Taking and counting heads are described in Assyrian annals and surviving wall reliefs that depict military campaigns of Assyrian kings where the human head was strategic and agitating to their enemies.

The Annals of Sennacherib (Figure 21.) is a baked clay panel that is approximately fourteen inches in height. There is a section that has been translated and understood to depict a
march of Sennacherib to reassert his control over Mesopotamian states. One section is replete with war rhetoric and violence:

The rebellious kings fled or were removed; the vassal rulers kissed Sennacherib’s feet and sent him heavy tribute. The Philistine city of Ekron [near Jerusalem] had summoned help from the Egyptians, but the Egyptian force was comprehensively defeated near Eltekeh. In retaliation for the treachery, the nobles of Ekron were executed, their corpses hung from the towers of their city.\textsuperscript{106}

The second important Tell (mound) on Nineveh’s grounds is referred to as Nebi Yunus, which was the smaller of the two mounds that led to the discoveries of ancient Nineveh. Nineveh is referred to in the bible multiple times and particularly in the Book of Jonah. Nebi Yunus (Figure 22.) is also the burial place of the prophet Jonah. This burial place eventually became a shrine that was situated within an ancient palace, at one time a Christian monastery, and eventually a mosque. The site was revered by the world’s monastic religions. Austen Henry Layard excavated Sennacherib’s Palace at Nineveh for the British Museum at various times during the period of 1845 to 1851. The ancient palace had seventy-one halls, chambers, and passageways with two miles of bas-reliefs depicting palace reliefs that demonstrate the power of the king in both hunting and battle. The earliest detailed existing map of Nineveh, however, is credited to Claudius James Rich of the East India Company \textit{c.} 1820. Hormuzd Rassam took over from Layard in 1852 and is credited with finding the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. In 1949 through 1963 The British School of Archaeology in Iraq (BSAI) sponsored excavations of Nimrud starting under the direction of Sir Max Mallowan.\textsuperscript{107} Excavations by others continued until 1971.

Both ancient Assyrians palaces of Nimrud and Nineveh have been dramatically altered by the devastating forces of Da’esh and listed below are some details of the deliberate destruction of this cultural heritage.
Violent Attacks on Historical Sites in Iraq

(Figures 22—27.)

Nimrud and Nineveh Palatial structures are among the oldest preserved sites in the world and the recent destruction (2015) of the archaeological site of Nimrud, and of the gate deity Lamassu by Da’esh, represents deliberate attacks upon ancient palatial architecture. Michael D. Danti, the Director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives’ Academic Director, refers to this type of destruction as *Performative Deliberate Destruction* (Figure 24.).  

A militant member of Da’esh took a pneumatic drill to the face of an ancient iconic winged bull at the Nergal gate, one of the fifteen gates leading to the ancient city of Nineveh (Kyunjik). (Figure 22.) The stone beings were powerful half man, eagle winged, half bull creatures. The curly beard and thick ringlet head hair was carved with precision on the Lamassu face, which represented male virility along with the powerful muscular structure of the body. The gate deities were carved from a single piece of limestone, and Da’esh chiseled off the face and hammered away at the body. This type of violence ironically is connected to ancient violence particularly that practiced by the Assyrians when they demolished the king’s image in order to fully topple an enemy. In drilling off the face of the ancient Lamassu, however Da’esh and leader al-Baghdadi has succeeded in only further eroding Iraqi history, part of ancient cultures that are claimed by all of mankind.

Da’esh has also destroyed the gates Mesqa and Addad of Nineveh. The Assyrian Palace of Nimrud was bulldozed and barrel bombs were mounted in the Nabu Temple and parts of the ancient palace structure. The attack on the Lamassu deity is directly related to certain Islamic beliefs that deem the gate bulls as false Gods, heretical, and no longer essential to the Islamic faith of the Iraqi people. In the Islamic faith worship of Allah is singular and no deities are
worshipped. Da’esh should understand that ancient structures and deities have no relationship to Islam or to the militants imagined 7th century Islam. The attack on the Lamassu for UNESCO, however, is the type of destruction that is a war crime and a form of cultural cleansing and genocide against the people of Iraq. This type of wartime destruction allows for more media coverage, diverts attention from Da’esh military losses and encourages more sectarian violence; however, it is excruciating to watch media savvy Da’esh militants display such exhilaration and passion while destroying history. Michael Danti has argued that Nimrud is a revealing case study for understanding the ideology behind the attacks:

On the surface Da’esh radical ideology maintains that ancient monuments and artifacts promote idolatry and undermine the unity of Islam, however this thin veneer of attempted religious justification lies in more earthly concerns of power and greed. The organization contradicts its own ideology by trafficking antiquities and other cultural property.109

A battle to retake Mosul from Da’esh commenced on October 17, 2016.

On November 6, 2016 the UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova stated regarding Iraq:

UNESCO’s Director-General condemns the destruction of Nabu Temple in Nimrud – The recent destruction of Nabu Temple is a new deliberate attack against the Iraqi people and against the shared values of humanity. Extremists cannot silence history and their attempt to erase the memory of this region can only fail. The deliberate destruction of heritage is a war crime and must be punished as such.110

Da’esh has held territory in Iraq that includes approximately 1,800 registered sites. ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives research suggests that at least 300 sites have been deliberately damaged since Da’esh has occupied the region beginning in June of 2014.111

On November 14, 2016 the Iraqi and allied forces liberated one third of Eastern Mosul from the Da’esh militants, but not before the bodies of forty civilians accused of treason were hung from poles in Mosul, among other Da’esh atrocities in Mosul.112 The ancient town is still
occupied by Da’esh, who continue to destroy ruins and monuments even though coalition forces are at present battling for their departure. The Achaemenid Book of Nahum refers to the sack of “a bloody city,” which is an ancient account of the fall of Nineveh. Currently a report about Da’esh fighters destroying more ancient ruins as they depart and attempt to sack Mosul has been recently narrated as a contemporary sack of a bloody city.¹¹³ However, the actual damage will not be known until more archeologists and UNESCO agents are allowed to access the damage to the sites surrounding Mosul.

This destruction of Iraqi identity has engaged several debates among archeologists and historians, both Iraqi and others who cherish this history. Many Iraqi’s are thankful that pieces of their own heritage exists in other countries, and in collections of other museums, because at least that heritage is safe. For most Iraqis their ancient heritage is a reminder of their formidable history and the destruction is devastating.
The Nature of Violence Against Architecture

Violent Abuse of Cities and Buildings

The destruction of a city or an attack of on cultural heritage during wartime is usually an attempt to destroy a society and erase its history, or to loot cultural property for profit, or sometimes to simply take control of and ultimately dominate an enemy. During the current Syrian and Iraqi wars ancient archeological sites and other ancient places have been battlegrounds of domination. The current U.S. Secretary of State, John F. Kerry, speaks directly when referring to the destruction of Syrian and Iraqi cultural heritage and the tragedy and loss the destruction represents for all civilized people. Kerry has argued in particular that Da’esh has no respect for life, religion or culture and that the destruction is a purposeful insult to Syrians and Iraqis whose lives and indeed souls have been stolen during the current conflicts that rage on.114

Robert Bevan has argued that the leveling of buildings and cities has always been an inevitable part of the hostilities of war.115 This type of systematic destruction is not a new idea; the Romans were particularly proficient at erasing history. They thoroughly destroyed Carthage (Tunisia) in Africa c. 146 B.C. and burned it to the ground. Bevan argues that Rome’s eradication of Carthage was an act of an urbicide—the murder of a city.116 Aleppo, Syria is in particular a contemporary version of an urbicide. Amnesty International recorded a video that chronicles Aleppo as such in ruin on October 20, 2016.117 The destruction of Aleppo has involved multiple military forces, Da’esh is a minor player in the destruction of buildings that has taken place in Aleppo; others, including the Syrian regime, Russia, and Iran militants, are all to blame for the catastrophic devastation of the city.

Michael D. Danti of the ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives has in particular called the cultural heritage destruction by Da’esh in Syria and Iraq the worst material and cultural heritage
emergency since World War II. The Allied and Axis powers of World War II were well aware of the symbolic importance of cultural property. The German Blitzkrieg of 1939 virtually destroyed Poland and the Polish population. The attack was intentional architectural destruction meant to eliminate Poland’s material culture, education, language, monuments and architecture, and ultimately enslave the surviving population. The Blitzkrieg was a planned war tactic to erase Polish culture from the collective memory of its populace. The Germans ultimately attempted to destroy many cities with their blitz tactics and Poland represents one of countries most devastated by this war strategy.

Historically significant architecture, predominantly palatial or religious structures, is built with a complexity of symbols that imbue buildings with meaning. Humankind does expect buildings, not people to remain permanent. Hannah Arendt, in her book “On Violence,” argued that the reality and reliability of the human world rest primarily on the fact that, “we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they were produced.” Henri Lefebvre, a French Marxist philosopher and historian has argued that buildings offer a sense of belonging to a society. When violence and its many meanings are used to destroy architecture it is intended to humiliate and extinguish the power of a given community. British Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm stated that history is the new material for nationalist, ethnic or fundamentalist ideologies—especially by terror groups—because the past legitimizes. By destroying the actual past a new past can be created, especially because most terrorist organizations do not have an historical past. The spectacles of violence created by Da’esh can be viewed as historical performances of their own image making.

Massoud Hamed states that Da’esh is implementing a scorched earth policy in north central Syria. They are demolishing towns and burning agricultural lands. The media is more
attentive to the program of cultural heritage destruction, but historical sites are not the only cultural heritage that is being wrecked. Da’esh is also burning libraries, archives, and schools, and annihilating Islamic mixed Sufi or Shi’a holy shrines within small communities. Since occupying Mosul Da’esh has taken Mosul University in Iraq as a military base and burnt down its library. Da’esh implements war tactics to dehumanize people and this is an essential step in making it acceptable to dismantle their enemy’s heritage, as well as their program to maltreat and kill people. Da’esh employs this tactic of stripping people of their humanity and their heritage along with symbolically killing community members who are in violation of Da’esh ideology.

Passions and violence that have erupted locally in Iraq and Syria have at times been flamed by the very concept of cultural heritage—Da’esh and their followers believe there has been a westernization or commodification of heritage. For Da’esh it seems a UNESCO site designation and the funded preservation of ancient cultures through foreign agencies are thought to only assert foreign values. The UNESCO world heritage list itself has provided Da’esh locations of the sites that are most valued by others. However, for local Syrians and Iraqis that have risked their own lives to try to save their heritage and who do not want this historical past simply erased by terrorists, this destruction is devastating to Syrian and Iraqi identity, economy and memory. The militants continue to betray their own people for power and to shape a new historical memory by utter ruination of the past.

The protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage does require the cooperation of nations to manage and fund cultural heritage initiatives. Recently French President François Hollande announced, on September 20, 2016, the intention of raising funds to preserve cultural heritage. It is a global fund to finance the rescue of works and ensure restoration and reconstruction. President Hollande of France and Cheikh Abdallah bin Zayed, the Minister of
Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, intend to create a $100M fund\textsuperscript{124} to safeguard threatened global heritage sites. Although a noble effort, it is unclear what sites will be protected or monitored by this fund. The motivation of such a fund is uncertain especially because of French history in the region. Funding for cultural heritage is crucial, the United States State Department also helps to fund ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives with specific purposes; monitors at risk cultural heritage, communicate the status of sites, help to mitigate damage and preserve material culture where possible now and post conflict. Although most governmental agencies also have hidden agendas during times of crisis, but the motivation to monitor destruction of the archeological record of history, which impacts all humankind and is part of the governments mission.

**Warchitecture Theory**

Andrew Herscher of Taubman College at the University of Michigan is an architect and an historian of architecture. He specifically works on spatial politics of violence. His work primarily concerns Sarajevo and Kosovo but can be applied to both Syria and Iraq. The term *warchitecture* emerged in Sarajevo as a term to refer to the catastrophic destruction of architecture from 1992—96 in Sarajevo.\textsuperscript{125} An exhibition of Sarajevo’s wartime ruin was created in 1992—1993 by the Bosnia-Herzegovina Association of Architects, which titled the exhibition *Warchitecture, Urbicide Sarajevo* and in New York *Warchitecture-Sarajevo: A Wounded City*.\textsuperscript{126} It was a multi-media exhibition with photographs, film and taped personal testimony. The Architects mapped the damage to both modern and Ottoman structures with categories that included direct hit, roof damage, partially burnt or completely destroyed.

Warchitecture and new war theories concern specific types of political violence that are proscribed by the rules of war between state and non state actors which call for the systematic
destruction of civilian architecture and cultural heritage of a besieged society. Herscher has argued that architecture through political violence or war enters the domain of violence versus the domain of culture:

The study of war architecture can throw into question perceived distinctions between war and architecture, open up new ways of examining and understanding wartime violence against architecture, and connect violence against architecture to emergent discussions of war, violence, and modernity in and across other disciplines.127

Forms of violence against architecture are often referred to as structural, symbolic, and physical. Discourse on wartime destruction can be divided into categories consisting of the city, cultural heritage, and architecture. However, the underlying assumption is that violence is typically absent from architecture, and buildings and monuments normally exist without violence. An assumption of violence that is not always true.

On March 16, 1994 five members of Das Sabih—Midhat Cesovic, Borislav Curic, Nasif Hasanbegovic, Darko Serfic and Sabahundin Spilja—escaped the city of Sarajevo with the exhibition packed in two crates. Wartime destruction of architecture had recently started to be historicized and it is connected to what some political theorists refer to as new war. Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York City presented this project in February of 1995.128

One key difference between cultural heritage destruction and architecture destruction is that with the random urbicidal destruction of a city, perpetrators do not necessarily know what buildings they are destroying. Designated cultural heritage is different as it is a known symbol of historical memory. In a targeted city such as Aleppo, and particularly in the residential neighborhoods inhabited by rebels, we are reminded of the Bosnian war. Hercher argued regarding the Bosnian war “the objects of such violence will be defined by that violence—Violence against architecture transforms, often fundamentally, the meanings, and identities of
Violence against architecture cannot be unlearned by those who inhabit such cities and it will take generations to not see and know the violence of targeted cities, buildings and residential neighborhoods. The rebuilding of residential Aleppo will likely be without the symbolism of the rebel fighters and strictly defined by the victors.
The Failure to Protect Cultural Heritage in Syria and Iraq

The Politics of Cultural Heritage Protection

Syria has the presence of multiple militias spread throughout the country with various regional interests. Syrian, Russian, Iranian and other regime-aligned forces retook Aleppo, the oldest continuously inhabited city, from the opposition on December 15, 2016. This reoccupation by the regime has been at an enormous cost of life and architectural destruction; yet the war is not over. The Syrian civil war has been called the deadliest conflict of the 21st century. The problem with multiple militias fighting in a country is the lack of any central command or government control, and for those interested in the wreckage of significant cultural heritage there is even more to be concerned about. The violence imposed by Da’esh not only targets persons not willing to be a member of the so-called Islamic State, but Da’esh directly targets and destroys cultural heritage. The extreme human suffering emphasized in the media and the ongoing atrocious violence makes it apparent that the country is being destroyed and will take generations to recover.

A recent ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives report that was posted August of 2016 primarily focused on the siege of Aleppo. The destructive types of violence toward architecture included tunnel bombings, artillery strikes and air strikes and were from all the various Syrian wartime players. Barrel bombs and cluster bombs have destroyed countless schools, mosques, hospitals and historic buildings, as well having caused injury or death to untold numbers of civilians. Humanitarian efforts are currently severely limited or non-existent in Syria, as is the flow of information regarding and from cultural assets on the ground in Aleppo or Palmyra. The bombardment and evacuation of Aleppo has cut off updates on the state of cultural heritage.
Local Syrian and Iraqi populations who are concerned about their own heritage have managed to limit to an extent the destruction of cultural heritage by removing artwork for safekeeping and following established protocols to best preserve buildings and monuments. Local curators, activists, art historians and Syrian archaeologists have emptied museums and have hidden treasures, sandbagged museums and performed true acts of bravery we will not fully be privy to until the war has ended. In Palmyra Khaled al-Asaad, a Syrian archaeologist and Director of antiquities in Palmyra, gave his life to protect what he could of Palmyra’s history. He refused to cooperate with Da’esh, who considers that one who maintains ancient monuments and sites is in apostasy of Islam and therefore against it, or has abandoned Islam. He was beheaded and his body hung in public. He simply refused to leave his home of Palmyra, and refused to betray the site to which he devoted his life. He should survive as a hero to Syrians of this brutal war and not only be honored by the Russians.

Foreigners and foreign agencies have for the most part failed at intervening on behalf of cultural heritage under threat in Syria and Iraq. There are few options available to outsiders to protect heritage during a war. The United States and others have decidedly declined to engage in this war and are only minor players. The U.S. has copious scholars, historians, architects, archaeologists and culture heritage communities that care deeply about the continuous destruction, but most individuals or groups are static due to the ongoing violence and war and can only survey what remains from afar. Few U.S. archaeologists and officials that have been able to review damaged sites. In an attempt to deal with the onslaught of the rape and devastation of cultural heritage a troubling announcement came from French President François Hollande in November 2015, who said that France would provide a refuge for Syrian artifacts. This paradoxical nature of the announcement was apparent to many; France still had mandate control
over Syria until c.1946 and now France is willing to accept artifacts but only limited numbers of human refugees.

There have been countless symposiums, colloquiums, UNESCO sanctions, military talks and scholarly papers written regarding the decimation of Syrian and Iraqi cultural heritage. On December 10, 2016 the Syrian Ministry of Culture—Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums held a colloquium organized by Maamoun Abdulkarim, General Director of Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAM), entitled “New Visions and Proposals for the Resilience of the Syrian Heritage.” It is ironic that regime forces were crushing the city of Aleppo during this colloquium and the day after the colloquium Da’esh retook Palmyra.

Few U.S. scholars were involved with this particular colloquium, but an international plan should be implemented for worldwide cultural heritage agencies, archeologists, historians, and humanitarians to help Syrian led initiatives to rebuild their country and heritage, or this is what we can hope for. It is understandable that Syrian cultural institutions want to take the lead on initiatives regarding their own cultural heritage, especially when such awkward albeit well intentioned, events outside of Syria have taken place. For example, a replica of the destroyed Monumental Arch from Palmyra was made from marble using 3D printing technology and was toured around to ‘western’ cities, including London and New York. Juliet Samuel stated “Palmyra has become a potent symbol to the west and has started to symbolize an invented history, that ancient Palmyra was a tolerant city when in fact Palmyra is not a symbol of tolerance – it is a ruin.” It seems Palmyra not only has an historical past, but an imagined one as well.

The current debates surrounding the rebuilding of Palmyra are plentiful and complex. Palmyra has already become the focus of an international repair debate being considered before
the war has even ended. The debates range from Palmyra ruins to be fully reconstructed or preservation of the archaeological site using the ancient material that remains.

Da’esh retook Palmyra in December of 2016 and Director Maamoun Abdulkarim of DGAM posted on a government approved site, www.dgam.gov.sy that he and his team are fully convinced more destruction by Da’esh would occur. This was after the symposium he arranged to discuss conservation and preservation techniques along with 3D digitization. DGAM reports that to date that seven hundred and fifty eight sites and buildings have been damaged or destroyed so far in Syria. Abdulkarim has argued that Palmyra could be rebuilt in just five years after the war. With drone and digital archeology that has been developed in recent years, it is not impossible, but that timeline is not possible to preserve and rebuild using ancient material. That timeline is for a reconstruction of Palmyra using new technology. Most will agree Palmyra should not become a site like the Minoan Crete Knossos Palace and Archaeological Site. Knossos was rebuilt and literally reconstructed by Sir Arthur Evans in c. 1900—1914. However, that work is known not to be historically correct. Stefan Simon, of Yale University has stated that historian colleagues in Syria and Syrian archaeologists must be involved with this process. And most cultural heritage specialists and humans in general would agree that rebuilding heritage sites should not be prioritized over rebuilding lives and reconstructing an entire society.

Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria and Iraq (SHOSI) is a consortium of the Smithsonian, Penn Cultural Heritage Center at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Shawnee State University, The Day After Association and the U.S. Institute of Peace. These groups have all banded together to support Syrian and Iraqi museum and cultural professionals for future training and technical support of monuments and sites. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) and many international historians,
preservationists, archeologists, archivists, international museums professionals are all prepared to
be involved with all aspects of rebuilding Syria and Iraq, and are poised and ready to work.

Yet the propagandistic agenda of the destruction of heritage in Syria and Iraq has yet to
stop. Salam Al Quntar, Katharyn Hanson, Brian I. Daniels and Corine Wegener have collectively
argued the greatest conceptual challenge for the archeological community is to reimagine
heritage protection as a humanitarian action that offers direct support to populations in crisis.\(^{135}\)
This is a more community-centered approach, complex but important for the local populations
that will ultimately return. The protection of Syria and Iraq cultural heritage will eventually have
to be reviewed by emergency and disaster relief teams to determine if sites are even safe
environments in which archeologists, preservationists, and historians will be able to work.
Archeologists focus on the site damage and issues of preservation and are generally the agents
that secure permits to work on a site. With newly formed teams of disaster and emergency
management, which is a relatively new field of study, collaborations between multiple
organizations and field studies will fight for privilege to help protect and preserve heritage.

*The Problems Concerning Preservation and Conservation of Wartime Ruin*

UNESCO, in matters of conservation and reconstruction, is guided by the 1964 Venice
Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites\(^{136}\) which was written
primarily by art historians who formed the organization ICOMOS. The charter does refer to
reassembling a site by only using historical materials, which would rule out 3D model making in
order to remain a UNESCO protected site. However, authenticity is often debated. The UNESCO
Stari Most Bridge in Mostar, Herzegovina, along with the historic village in Mostar, was blown
up in the 1990’s during the Bosnian War. The bridge was the design of Mimar Sinān, the
outstanding chief Ottoman architect *c.*1539.\(^{137}\) After 2005 when the bridge was rebuilt it was
once again considered a UNESCO world heritage site, even though it was not rebuilt from historical stones or parts. The status was granted because of the exceptional and universal symbol Mostar represents in terms of the coexistence of diverse cultural groups that occupy the village.  

There is a certain fluidity that exists when rebuilding destroyed architecture. Robert Bevan has said that some conservation experts have suggested making a useful distinction between “living cities” and “dead cities or no community users” where flexible reconstruction could be an option. A twenty-first century technology such as 3D printing does present a different new dilemma to conservation and preservation experts. Although not perfect, the technology is still rapidly developing, especially in the context of larger scale architectural projects. The so-called replica of the Monumental Arch of Palmyra had many issues, including incorrect proportions, material use—resin and not stone, incorrect design and decoration and particularly the design on the capitals of the arch (Figure 28). All of these issues matter directly when a monument or artifact is referred to as a replica and not an approximate copy. Conservation and preservation techniques are always developing and new technology is useful and supplements the exchange between the community cultural heritage experts.

Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, has tried to eliminate the fear that historians, archaeologists, journalists and others have in terms of the potential of the so called disneyfication of Palmyra. He firmly states that nothing can be started until there is first a city with inhabitants. Before Da’esh recently retook Palmyra, the city was in the process of being demined, but on January 19, 2017 ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives reported extensive damage in Palmyra including the Tetrapylon and part of the Roman theater meanwhile we continue to wait for more information. (Figure 29.) We do not have new information if Da’esh
actually detonated any of the left over mines or if new explosives caused this damage. Bandarin and others cannot be sure of any other changes in of the site of Palmyra. Bandarin argues that only when Palmyra is no longer a war zone can elaborate scientific decisions will be made concerning restorations and this would unfortunately take decades.¹⁴³

It is important to understand that cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq has long been of economic value to both countries. It is well known that heritage sells and somehow is expected to sometimes financially support a village or town. French architectural historian and theorist Francoise Choay argued that in particular Greco-Roman ruins have inspired the notion of what is considered a historic monument and therefore the type of monument that should be protected:

The commodification of heritage speaks to the overarching capacity of the market economy to infiltrate all sites of human endeavor thus creating a proselytized society in which the artificial operates in place of the real. Francoise Choay refers to this in part as valuable.¹⁴⁴

If foreigners did not value Palmyra, Nimrud and Nineveh so completely would Da’esh have destroyed the sites so outrageously?
Conclusion

You have to pick the places you don’t walk away from – Joan Didion.

In conclusion, wartime adversaries use cultural heritage and violence against architecture as a pawn of war. We have documented proof from the remains of World War II, The Bosnian War, and now the Syrian War. The act of destroying historical UNESCO protected architecture and monuments in both Syria and Iraq has violated various laws. The historical record of Syria and Iraq has been virtually destroyed. Da’esh and other militants, the Syrian regime and Russia do not necessarily care about historical memory or artifacts. They are all aware of the pain the ruination of a historical memory has inflicted worldwide and yet Da’esh in particular has used cultural heritage for pillaging and destroyed it to promote their misguided ideology.

This paper has argued that the destruction of architecture by Da’esh and other militant organizations is the conduct of immoral warmongers. The destruction by Da’esh of some of Palmyra’s archeological remains, Iraq’s Nineveh and Nimrud and other important Islamic sites and shrines is intrinsic to their attempt to achieve power in the region. Da’esh articulates the intention to create an Islamic State in Syria and Iraq by purging the region of infidels, idol worshipers, and Shi’a Muslims. After a war, the urge to rebuild and reconstruct a society is strongly felt by all affected, but it is imperative that the trauma of war inflicted on an archeological site or a monument not be erased—the trauma of war becomes part of its history. The Syrian and Iraqi wartime destruction has displaced millions of people in an attempt to erase a civilization and its cultural heritage. History is heavy and both the Syrian and Iraqi wartime conflicts are rife with inhumanity by wartime actors that all want domination, territory, and financial strength. By blowing up historical monuments and mindlessly destroying artworks that have been beaten with sledgehammers, we give the jihadists agency with the attention they want.
in the European and United States media. Da’esh has produced destructive performances on the historical memory of architecture and thus given wartime violence a new narrative. (Figures 18, 26, 30.)
Notes


15. The Association for the Protection of Syrian Archaeology, youtube channel, www.youtube.com/user/ayazali12


43. “Praying for Palmyra: Russian orchestra performs concert honoring victims of Syria war.” RT utube channel, www.youtube.com/watch?v=9b0hFlf4Zaw


88. Smith II, Andrew M. Roman Palmyra, Identity, Community, and State Formation. Oxford University Press, 2013. p. 113


117. “Aleppo in Ruins as Russia Call for Evacuation [Drone Footage].” utube channel, www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyG-iIebF4E


Appendix

- State Department Documents of Civil Complaint Filed December 2016

- ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives Report on Nimrud

- UNESCO
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- Conflict Antiquities
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  www.archaeoconcept.com/en/
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  www.theconversation.com/should-we-3d-print-a-new-palmyra-57014
  www.cyark.org/
Temple of Ba’al, Palmyra, Syria.

Figure 6

Image detail of Western Wall Collapse
March 27, 2016
Photo: DGAM © www.dgam.gov.sy
Sanctuary (Temple) of Baal-Shamin

Figure 7

August 24, 2015
Photo: DGAM © www.dgam.gov.sy
Sanctuary (Temple) of Baal-Shamin

Figure 8

August 23, 2016
Photo: DGAM © www.dgam.gov.sy
Monumental Arch view from the Southside, Palmyra, Syria

Figure 9

13 April 10
Sean Leatherbury/Manar al-Athar
© http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk
Monumental Arch view from the Southside, Palmyra, Syria.

Figure 10

October 4, 2015
Photo: DGAM © www.dgam.gov.sy
Tower Tombs, Palmyra, Syria

Figure 11

Left: Satellite Imagery of Tomb of Kithoth June 26, 2015
Right: Satellite Imagery of Tomb of Kithoth September 2, 2015
©ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives, Digital Globe

Left : Tower Tomb before

Right : Tower Tomb After Reduced to Rubble
Satellite Image of Palmyra, Syria

Figure 12

Location showing Valley of the Tombs
©ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives, October 26, 2014
Palmyra – Valley of Tombs

Figure 13

14 April 10
Judith McKenzie/Manar al-Athar
© http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk
Images From Book : The Ruins of Palmyra, 1749-1751
Drawings by Robert Wood,
with John Bouverie, James Dawkins

Figure 14

Published in London, 21 inches
Detail A. Monumental Arch
B. Temple of Ba’al
Temple of Location of Ishtar and Nabu Temple at Nimrud

Figure 16

Detail with Heavy Machine Tracks
November 4, 2016
©ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives, Digital Globe
Northwest Palace at Nimrud
A wall relief with damage and missing Lamassu on entry wall

Figure 17

November 15, 2016
©ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives and Al Harith Al Shwely
Purposeful Destruction of Cultural Heritage

Figure 18

Photo credit: ©Aljazeera
Figure 19

Relief from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Iraq

©Trustees of the British Museum
The Garden Party, Detail Head on Tree

Figure 20

Relief from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Iraq
c. 645 B.C.
©Trustees of the British Museum
The Taylor Prism; The Sennacherib Prism, c. 691 B.C.

Figure 21

Hexagonal clay prism, 14 inches
Iraq (found Nebi Yunus)
© dcaster
Ancient Nineveh Map with Gates and surrounding rivers and important mounds.

Figure 22
Nimrud, Iraq

Figure 24

Destruction
©UNESCO site visit 14 December, 2016
Nimrud Palace Walls with Barrel Bombs Planted

Figure 25

©ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives, Digital Globe
Violence against Architecture: The Lost Cultural Heritage of Syria and Iraq

Figure 26

Photo credit: ©Aljazeera
Nimrud, Iraq

Figure 27

Destruction, UNESCO Site Visit
©UNESCO site visit 14 December, 2016
The Problem of 3D Printing Technology

Figure 28

IDA Palmyra Arch Copy
Left: Copy of Original Arch Capital
Right: Original Arch Capital Feature
Photograph by Daniel Demeter for Syriaphotoguide.com
Destruction by Da’esh in Palmyra, Syria.

Figure 29
Before (right) and After (left) January 19, 2017
©ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives, Digital Globe
Purposeful Destruction of Cultural Heritage

Figure 30

Performative Deliberate Destruction

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