

NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

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SPECIAL ISSUE: THE CULTURAL HERITAGE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

132 **Ground-Based Observations of Cultural Heritage Incidents in Syria and Iraq**

~ *Michael D. Danti*

ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives (ASOR CHI) uses a wide range of ground-based observations to report on the cultural heritage situation in Syria and northern Iraq. Coupled with analyses of high-resolution satellite imagery, these sources of information provide a powerful method for quickly and accurately assessing the ongoing crisis for the US Department of State and alerting the public to the woeful loss of Near Eastern cultural heritage. Looting, combat damage, deliberate destructions of heritage places, vandalism, and uncontrolled development are all taking terrible tolls on heritage throughout the region. While all major combatants and populations are linked to the destruction, non-state Jihadi-Salafi groups such as ISIL, Al Qaeda-affiliates such as Jabhat al-Nusra, and other Islamist extremists are by far the most brazen and egregious offenders with overt policies of destroying and liquidating cultural assets to support terrorism and to conduct cultural cleansing on a scale and intensity tantamount to a global war on culture.

142 **Satellite Imagery-Based Analysis of Archaeological Looting in Syria**

~ *Jesse Casana*

Most efforts to evaluate the impact of the war in Syria on the country's cultural heritage have struggled with the highly politicized nature of reporting and the total absence of evidence from many regions. As part of ASOR's Cultural Heritage Initiative, this study documents patterns of looting and other forms of damage at more than 1,200

archaeological sites using recent, high-resolution satellite imagery. Analysis focuses on generating quantifiable data regarding the scope and severity of looting across Syria. Results suggest that more than 25% of archaeological sites in Syria have been impacted by looting since the war began, an order of magnitude increase over pre-war levels, but that the frequency and severity of looting varies significantly across areas held by different factions in the conflict.

154 **Responding to a Cultural Heritage Crisis: The Example of the Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria and Iraq Project**

~ *Salam Al Quntar, Katharyn Hanson,
Brian I. Daniels, and Corine Wegener*

Considerable attention has been given to the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage as part of the current crisis in Syria and Iraq. While many academic responses have started the important work of documenting the extent and scale of the damage to cultural sites in both countries, there have been fewer attempts to work within a humanitarian framework in order to support Syrians and Iraqis who are undertaking emergency efforts to protect heritage at risk. This article discusses the strategies employed by the Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria and Iraq (SHOSI) Project to assist in-country professionals and civil society activists in their attempts to protect key heritage sites. The approach combines the empowerment of Syrians and Iraqis in decision-making about their heritage while supporting them with the logistics and resources necessary to carry out emergency efforts. It demonstrates one case study of how on-the-ground protection can be achieved.

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162 Mapping the Heart of Mesopotamia: A Bittersweet Legacy in the Landscape of War

~ Suzanne E. Bott

With the destruction of significant portions of the heritage sites in Iraq and Syria, scholars are working to document and assess the damage. It may be years before security allows onsite evaluation; in the meantime, satellite imagery and limited visual confirmation are the only methods available, often resulting in delays in reporting and misinformation. One tool being used for analysis of several key sites in northern Iraq is a set of surveys and photos created between 2008 and 2010 by members of the joint military-civilian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), the Iraq Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the State Board of Antiquities and Tourism, and representatives from UNESCO in Erbil and Amman, Jordan. These joint efforts, along with other activities conducted various partners, are presented as a model for future cooperative conservation efforts when conditions allow.

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170 ISIS, Heritage, and the Spectacles of Destruction in the Global Media

~ Ömür Harmanşah

This paper focuses on ISIS's recent destruction of archaeological heritage in Iraq and its (self-) representation in the global media. It is argued that the Islamic State's destruction of archaeological sites and museums as well as historical monuments and local shrines can be seen as a form of place-based violence that aims to annihilate the local sense of belonging, and the collective sense of memory among local communities, to whom the heritage belongs. It is also suggested that the Islamic State coordinates and choreographs these destructions as mediatic spectacles of violence aimed at objects and sites of heritage, which take place as re-enactments or historical performances that are communicated to us through ISIS's own image-making apparatus that utilizes advanced technologies of visualization and communication.

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178 An Update on the Looting of Archaeological Sites in Iraq

~ Elizabeth C. Stone

Southern Iraq suffered an onslaught of looting of archaeological sites following the first Gulf War and especially in the immediate aftermath of the US invasion. This paper uses recent high resolution satellite imagery taken by the Digital Globe Corporation to compare data on site looting collected based on imagery from 2003 to today. The high resolution of these images makes every looting hole clearly visible. These data show that while looting continues, it is at a significantly lower level than before, especially given the more than 20 years between the two sets of imagery. Some changes can be documented in both the location of the looting and the time periods and types of sites affected. Especially noteworthy is the decrease in looting at fourth millennium and Early Islamic sites.

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187 The War-Ravaged Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan: An Overview of Projects of Assessment, Mitigation, and Preservation

~ Gil J. Stein

Afghanistan is the quintessential "crossroads of cultures" where the civilizations of the Near East, Central Asia, South Asia, and China interacted over the millennia in a constantly shifting mixture of trade, emulation, migration, imperial formations, and periodic conflict. This complex history of contacts gave rise to some of the most important archaeological, artistic, architectural, and textual treasures in world cultural heritage. Thirty five years of continuous war have devastated Afghanistan's archaeological heritage – most notably with the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the shelling and looting of the National Museum in Kabul, and large scale looting of archaeological sites such as Ai Khanoum. This paper presents an overview of the continuing threats to Afghanistan's cultural heritage – focusing mainly on archaeology – and summarizes ongoing efforts to monitor the damage,

mitigate its impacts, and develop infrastructure to preserve this priceless cultural patrimony.

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196 **Archaeological Looting in Egypt: A Geospatial View (Case Studies from Saqqara, Lisht, and el Hibeh)**

~ Sarah Parcak

While many news reports exist about archaeological site looting in Egypt following its January 2011 Revolution, no one had yet examined the issue of how looting patterns changed over time across the country or at distinct archaeological sites. This study uses rapidly tasked high resolution satellite images from 2009-2013 to assess looting at three important regions: The pyramid fields (from Abusir to Dashur), el Hibeh, and Lisht. We mapped looting pits and their areas to assess overall change in looting patterns, and noted an increase of over 500% over the three year time period. While open source tools like Google Earth are useful for longer term looting mapping projects, we suggest that rapidly tasked commercial satellite imagery can provide near real-time looting evaluation of sites. Ground truthing visits are described here, as well as potential solutions via collaborative programs in partnership with Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities.

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204 **Archaeology and Cultural Heritage in Post-Revolution Libya**

~ Susan Kane

Libya's cultural heritage is facing significant threats and damage, not only from unregulated development, but also increasing acts of civil disorder. With two de facto governments claiming authority in the country, no clearly operating constitution, contesting militias, and rising religious extremism, more damage is being done to the country's cultural heritage than was caused by the events of the 2011 Revolution. During the Gaddafi regime, Libya's cultural heritage from the pre-Arab period was seen as a reminder of Libya's colonial past and therefore neglected for political reasons. And given the many challenges facing the new

Libya, it is not surprising that cultural heritage struggles for recognition and protection. Working within this challenging environment, the Libyan Department of Antiquities continues to negotiate the protection of cultural sites in contested areas and to draw up plans for emergency inventory, crisis planning, and protection work. Despite their best efforts, it remains unclear what the future will hold for the cultural heritage of Libya.

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212 **"Why Is No One Talking about Libya's Cultural Destruction?"**

~ Neil Brodie

Since 1990, as country after country throughout West Asia and North Africa has fallen victim to civil disturbance or conflict, its cultural heritage has been looted to feed the demand of an international antiquities market. International public policy has failed to achieve any kind of hold on the problem. This paper looks at the reasons for policy failure, with a particular emphasis on recently implemented policy initiatives intended to safeguard cultural heritage in Syria. The paper is critical of the relationship between traditional and social media news reporting and policy making. It concludes by arguing that attempts to safeguard cultural heritage at its source are inappropriate for the task at hand and more needs to be done to tackle demand on the destination market.

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220 **Books to Dig Into**

Two Books of Ezekiel:
Papyrus 967 and the Masoretic Text
as Variant Literary Traditions

~ Author: Ingrid E. Lilly

~ Reviewer: Herrie F. van Rooy

Women in the Ancient Near East:
A Sourcebook

~ Editor: Mark W. Chavalas

~ Reviewer: Stephen M. Wilson