

# In Harm's Way

Aspects of cultural heritage protection



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*Burning books is not the same as burning bodies, but when one intervenes... against mass destruction of churches and books, one arrives just in time to prevent the burning of bodies.*

**Raphael Lemkin, 1948**

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*Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.*

**Attributed to both Thomas More and Gustav Mahler**

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# In Harm's Way

Aspects of cultural heritage protection

Essays

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# FOREWORD

**TRACEY CROUCH**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport,  
Tourism and Heritage**

The world is becoming painfully aware of something that cultural heritage experts have known for a long time: that museums, books, sculptures and archaeological sites are among the first and easiest victims of conflict; and their destruction often a sign of worse to come.

A large element of our shock at seeing film of a man destroying a 3,000-year-old sculpture with a sledgehammer is the knowledge that his ideology treats societies and individuals in the same way.

In a joint declaration, issued after their meeting of March 2017, the Ministers of Culture of the G7 nations expressed their 'deep concern about the destruction of cultural heritage sites, as such actions obliterate irreplaceable patrimony, extinguish the identity of targeted communities and erase any evidence of past diversity or religious pluralism...' and called upon all states 'to take steps to increase their safeguarding and preservation of cultural heritage'.

Conflict is the most pressing threat to cultural heritage, but others include climate change, industrial development and pollution.

There is a growing perception that cultural destruction, wherever and however it happens, diminishes all of us. Our shared cultural heritage is in harm's way as never before.

Along with this new appreciation of the value of cultural heritage, our ability to accurately record – and re-create – cultural artefacts has never been greater. The application of new technologies to the field of cultural protection offers huge opportunities for the preservation, repair, re-materialisation, and sharing of objects.

This is the context in which the United Kingdom has ratified\* the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and created the associated £30 million Cultural Protection Fund.

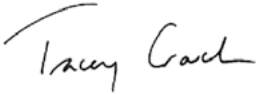
This publication aims to offer a brief introduction to current thinking within the field of cultural protection, and a guide to some of the work already taking place.

Cultural protection is a dynamic and complex field. The contributors to this booklet work in a range of institutions and disciplines, and hold a

\*Ratification of the Convention and its two Protocols is expected to take place in the parliamentary session following the election of 8 June 2017.

variety of views. Where they all agree – and where I hope readers will agree – is on the urgent need to act in the face of the continued threat to our shared heritage.

I believe the Cultural Protection Fund, and the UK's ratification of the Hague Convention, are important steps on that road.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey Crouch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Tracey Crouch MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage



# The Origins of Cultural Protection

## ROBERT BEVAN

### Author, *The Destruction of Memory*

Raphael Lemkin is something of a forgotten hero. He coined the term 'Genocide' in the 1930s and dedicated his life to the adoption by the United Nations of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Convention made intentional attempts to eradicate groups, in whole or in part, the 'crime of crimes'.

The learned Polish Jewish lawyer had been outraged by the mass murder of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, and had written passionately about the systematic erasure of Aborigines from Tasmania. Lemkin fled the Nazis in the wake of Kristallnacht and the invasion of Poland the following year.

His work stands in an honourable legal tradition: the promotion of international human rights and the various measures that aim to rein in the worst excesses of warfare such as the Geneva Conventions.

He knew that the destruction of groups of people (as opposed to individuals) was a particular horror, a crime against humanity that needed a specific name.

What is almost always overlooked, however, is that Lemkin was also deeply concerned with the fate of culture, especially the consequences of targeted attacks on culture during conflicts. Lemkin wrote: 'It takes centuries and sometimes thousands of years to create a culture, but genocide can destroy a culture instantly, like a fire can destroy a building'.

That his efforts to protect culture have largely been forgotten is still having ramifications in today's troubled world.

The monuments of conquered nations have always been in the firing line, whether from simple collateral damage or more focused efforts; in the ancient world for instance, temples were destroyed that linked a vanquished ruler to deities. And doctrinal differences have also caused bouts of religious iconoclasm, such as the Byzantine Quarrel of the Images or during the Reformation. But increasingly over the last century the aim of destruction can also be to eliminate a people or group: not only killing or expelling them in the present, but erasing their very identity and history, any memory of their ever belonging in a place. The destruction of culture in such circumstances is not collateral damage – it is the intended target.

Challenges to such destruction emerged from the Enlightenment and the growth in concepts such as universal rights and values. During the French Revolution, Henri Grégoire popularised the term 'vandalism', and

argued against the then prevalent attacks on cultural property. In 1794, he called on the National Convention to protect artworks, architecture and books, and is seen as one of the founders of the concept of cultural preservation and its protection during conflicts.

*During the American Civil War, the Lieber Code, commissioned by Abraham Lincoln and published as a pocket pamphlet for Union soldiers, aimed to put places of worship, monuments and artworks off-limits to battling armies.*

Almost a century later, during the American Civil War, the Lieber Code, commissioned by Abraham Lincoln and published as a pocket pamphlet for Union soldiers, aimed to put places of worship, monuments and artworks off-limits to battling armies. But as calls for protection mounted, so too did the capacity for industrial-scale armed destruction, notably through aerial bombing and artillery. The subsequent 1874 Brussels Declaration and the Hague Conventions of 1899 and

1907, that were partially based on the Lieber Code, were responses to these new threats.

Notorious episodes during the First World War such as the shelling of Reims cathedral and the destruction of the historic university library at Louvain caused outrage, but it was only in the wake of the massive destruction of the Second World War that a comprehensive international cultural law emerged – the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

Even at Nuremberg, although leading Nazis were prosecuted for crimes against culture under the 1907 version of The Hague Convention – for the plunder and destruction that swept Eastern Europe – the connection between the devastation of monuments and the fate of people was only touched on at the trials. In part, this was because the Allies could, with some justification, have found themselves in the dock for their aerial bombing of historic civilian centres in Germany that had little or no military value.

The 1954 Hague Convention requires state parties to take protection measures during peace time and to respect cultural property in times of war in their own and foreign territory. It says that armies shouldn't

endanger monuments by the siting of weaponry, but includes the infamous 'military necessity waiver' by which a power can argue that its destruction of a cultural site was unavoidable if it was to successfully prosecute its war. Many nations have signed the Convention – but a large number have not gone on to ratify it.

In the 1970s, additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions reinforced the 1954 law, but in reality these legal instruments lay idle until the systematic destruction of well over 1,000 religious and cultural monuments in the 1990s wars in the former Yugoslavia.

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*There was a new phrase to take in: ethnic cleansing – the often murderous expulsion of entire communities and the calculated eradication of any memory that these people had lived in a place.*

That conflict saw the shelling of libraries, the dynamiting of mosques, and arson attacks on Ottoman-style market buildings and homes. And there was a new phrase to take in: ethnic cleansing – the often murderous expulsion of entire communities and the calculated eradication of any memory that these people had lived in a place.

In August 2004, investigators searching the Cehotina River in Bosnia discovered the

decomposed bodies of Muslim men and women from the nearby town of Foca who had been missing for 12 years. They were buried under bulldozed debris from the 1551 Aladza Dzamija – the elegant, multi-coloured mosque that had been one of the most important Ottoman buildings in former Yugoslavia. It had been built by Christian masons from Dubrovnik, and deliberately destroyed in 1992 by Serbian forces along with 20 other mosques in and around the historic town.

This was like the night of 9th November 1938 again – Kristallnacht. Then the Nazis had attempted to rid their cities of the visible, architectural evidence of Jewish presence in the community. It presaged the Holocaust. It was part of the same process; the destruction of symbolic architecture, of a group's material culture as part of rendering the group a segregated 'other', less than human and easier to kill. And in attacking businesses, they also undermined the basic conditions of life for Jews. Which takes us back to Lemkin. He recognized that such an attack was a warning bell, presaging mass killings. The night of broken glass was a step on the path to genocide.

As originally drafted by Lemkin, the Genocide Convention incorporated two vital concepts; barbarity (attacks on people), and vandalism (attacks

on culture). Vandalism, he wrote, 'means the destruction of the cultural pattern of a group, such as the language, the traditions, the monuments, archives, libraries, churches. In brief: the shrines of the soul of a nation'.

As eventually adopted by the United Nations, however, the Convention omitted Lemkin's concept of cultural vandalism as genocide. Only attacks on the human body – killings and reproductive rights, principally – were accepted as genocide. This was mainly because of Cold War diplomatic hostilities and the fear among New World governments that their indigenous peoples and former slaves could apply the law against their own governments.

The trials held at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the wake of the Balkan wars helped revive recognition of cultural crimes and the role of the Hague Convention. Attacks on built heritage such as those at Mostar and Dubrovnik were successfully tried – although more often as a secondary component to other war crimes. But, as at Nuremberg, the connection between genocide and cultural destruction was barely touched upon, despite evidence gathered by ICTY field workers that demonstrated the linkages between the two – such as the ease with which destroyed Bosnian mosques can be mapped against attacks on, and expulsions of, Muslim populations.

In one case, the question of cultural genocide was raised only to dismiss it: noting the attack on Srebrenica's principal mosque, which took place alongside the extermination of thousands of Bosnian men and boys, ICTY judge Shahabuddeen warned: 'It is established that the mere destruction of a culture of a group is not genocide... but there is a need for care. The destruction of culture may serve evidentially to confirm an intent... to destroy a group as such'.

That is, under the Genocide Convention as adopted in 1948, cultural destruction cannot by itself be regarded as an aspect of genocide; but such vandalism can be used as evidence to support an argument that widespread murder formed part of an intentional pattern of genocidal acts rather than simply random, heat of the moment killings or collateral damage.

That such ideas were even being discussed once more looked like progress. And in the wake of the Bosnian war, a Second Protocol to the Hague Convention was formulated that sought, to some degree, to tighten up the 'military necessity waiver' loophole.

For a moment it looked like cultural protection had reached a turning point; that the world was going to go beyond isolated episodes of concern such as the famous US Monuments Men art squads of the Second World War, to a comprehensive cultural protection framework internationally. But this calm after the Balkan fury was an interlude before

an even bigger storm, a destructive whirlwind that was to encompass 9/11, the 2001 Taliban obliteration of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the emergence of Daesh within its sweep.

Before he was killed in a US air-strike in 2006, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the 'Emir' of al-Qaeda in Iraq, escalated inter-communal violence between Shia and Sunni using the calculated bombing of Iraqi mosques such as that at the al-Askari Shrine in Samarra – one of the holiest in Shia Islam. After his death, al-Zarqawi's Sunni organization morphed into Daesh, which has inherited the Taliban and al-Zarqawi's brutal way with heritage, demonstrating its keen understanding of the uses and abuses of architecture. For Daesh, destruction of cultural sites can serve many purposes: terror, propaganda, conquest or genocide of minority groups such as the Yazidis. The tactics favoured by al-Zarqawi have spiralled out of control across Syria and Iraq and other countries that went through the Arab Spring.

While this destruction is informed superficially by an iconoclastic religious doctrine, this iconoclasm is essentially political in nature, part of an ideology that seeks to challenge the post-colonial settlement – the illogical, externally imposed national boundaries and the corrupt, repressive regimes backed by the West and Russia that have followed.

In this latest interpretation, iconoclasm is about forging a new Islamic identity that rejects the hegemony of the West. This attitude is encapsulated in the name of Nigeria's Boko Haram, often translated as 'Western education is forbidden' or 'Westernisation is sacrilege'. In their failure, the revolutions of the Arab Spring helped form the vacuum that such ideas rushed to fill, aided by the prior elimination of secular left oppositions in various countries – often with the connivance of the West.

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*Scholars and custodians have been shot, hanged and beheaded. The response in the West has been to reassert the universal value of culture – a shared inheritance.*

From Timbuktu to Pakistan and beyond, identities are now being asserted that are uncompromisingly hostile to churches, Shia shrines, Sufi tombs, cemeteries, secular archaeology, museums or world heritage sites. Scholars and custodians have been shot, hanged and beheaded. The response in the West has been to reassert the universal

value of culture – a shared inheritance. But to some anti-Western Islamists, the very idea of a universal heritage as espoused by Western museums and UNESCO is itself an externally imposed notion.

In 2001, the Taliban's Mullah Omar accused the West of caring more about the Bamiyan Buddhas than it did about the Afghan people suffering in poverty. And indeed, why should extreme Islamists be expected to trust in such universalism, when the West's Enlightenment project brought subjugation to their regions in the guise of colonialism? The latest bout of cultural destruction has led to ill-thought-out suggestions of armed intervention to protect historic sites, and proposals to fly out valuable artefacts for safe-keeping in Western museum stores, leaving persecuted populations behind to suffer the horrors of war or drown in the Mediterranean while trying to escape.

The lesson is this: you can't successfully care for cultural heritage – especially in conflicts – unless you also care about human rights. It is only now that this fundamental equation, forgotten along with Lemkin, is tentatively being recognized once more. Today, UNESCO director general Irina Bokova repeatedly links the two in speeches and statements to the press, while in late 2016 the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights delivered a report to the General Assembly that made the connections between cultural protection and human rights explicit.

Disappointingly, devising effective outcomes from these fine words remains elusive. UNESCO's latest action plan for protecting cultural pluralism in conflicts, for instance, is notable for dwelling on education, research and evaluation rather than action in the field. Likewise, the UN Special Rapporteur's report has excellent analysis, but its recommendations lack conviction and are essentially toothless. In some ways this is understandable – there are no easy solutions. There is no appetite (as yet) within the international community for changes to international law that would see, for example, Lemkin's vandalism clauses in an updated Genocide Convention. Meanwhile, culture barely figures in the many genocide early warning systems being modeled internationally.

In part, this is because there remains a problem of perception as to the seriousness of crimes against culture: the sneering view that only an aesthete with a warped sense of priorities would put such crimes on a par with crimes against people.

This attitude resurfaced in 2016 with the war crimes conviction at the International Criminal Court (ICC) of Al Faqi Al Mahdi for the destruction of shrines in Timbuktu, the first trial devoted solely to cultural destruction to be held in an international forum. Although it was the ordinary citizens of Timbuktu who risked their lives to form human chains around monuments and spirit away ancient library texts (and not in the name of Western thinking either), some critics deplored the ICC for prosecuting cultural crimes as war crimes, despite cultural attacks having long been accepted as such.

These critics forget that attacks on human lives and on material culture are often inextricably linked and that it is vital to save books in order to save bodies. This should not be difficult to understand, and indeed it is a concept that long pre-dates Lemkin ('Where they burn books, so too will they in the end burn human beings,' wrote Heinrich Heine in 1821). To safeguard an artwork can be part of safeguarding the cultural memory of a group, their identity, and so their very survival as a distinct group.

This misunderstanding is fueled by a legal position where attacks on culture are dealt with solely as war crimes – for not complying with international agreements on the conduct of warfare. What is missing is the recognition that cultural attacks can also be a crime under international humanitarian law, a separate category from war crimes that remains (outside of genocide) ill-defined.

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There is a simple test for deciding if a crime against culture is a crime against humanity – intent. This is already a crucial word when determining culpability for genocide, but it could have wider application. Is, for

instance, the firebombing of a mosque during peacetime an isolated, criminally racist act – or is it part of a wider campaign of destruction of buildings that starts with culture and ends in mass murder? It might lie on the slippery slope between. Intent is key.

When an ancient temple or a museum treasure is pulverised with the intention of systematically eroding or excluding identities in the name of religion, politics or conquest, this should constitute a crime against humanity. When such attacks are part of an intent to eradicate a group in whole or part, they constitute genocide.

There is still much to do – much to debate and decide. But there is also an urgency to act, if we are to truly link human rights and heritage.



# The Cultural Protection Fund and the British Council

# STEPHEN STENNING

## Director Culture and Development, British Council

I joined the British Council in 2011 as Director Arts for the Middle East and North Africa, based in Cairo. It was an extraordinary time to be in Egypt. There was a post-revolutionary energy and excitement and the sense that a new order was being negotiated.

Although much of the focus was on the promise of a new future, there was also renewed interest in, and ownership of, the past. That link between envisioning a new future and valuing and protecting heritage was perhaps best demonstrated by the story of the attempted looting of the National Museum during the revolution.

The famous museum is located next to Tahrir Square, the hub and rallying point for the revolution. By January 28th 2011 revolutionary fervour was at its height, with hundreds of thousands of people in the streets, the police withdrawn and the army called in. It was a night of chaos in the square, providing an opportunity for a small band of looters who managed to gain access to the museum and the world's largest collection of Pharaonic antiquities, including the iconic death mask of King Tutankhamun.

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*In a vast mob of people campaigning for different visions of a changed future, there was an instinctive, shared understanding of the need to protect the cultural treasures that hold the DNA of the nation.*

It was three nights into a revolution that saw 850 people killed, yet protestors rallied to protect the treasures in the National Museum. Somehow in the midst of the chaos protestors organised a human chain to surround the museum building and block all the exits. This human cordon stayed in position, capturing the looters and returning the artefacts they had attempted to remove. In a vast mob of people campaigning for different visions of a changed

future, there was an instinctive, shared understanding of the need to protect the cultural treasures that hold the DNA of the nation.

Since 2011, Culture and Development has become a global agenda for the British Council. Culture and Development is a combination of cultural and artistic responses to social and economic development

challenges. We have developed a portfolio of ambitious programmes that demonstrate a commitment to mutuality, collaboration, long-term engagement and understanding of the local context.

One of our first programmes was in response to the Syria crisis – a number of small scale projects supporting displaced communities and artists. That work revealed the importance of different forms of culture to individuals and communities during a time of crisis or conflict. When people are displaced and living as refugees, it is cultural symbols and treasured cultural heritage – everything from buildings to songs – that engender a sense of belonging and resilience.

Having gained a reputation in the field of Culture and Development, the British Council was an obvious choice as a partner when, in June 2015, the Government announced the intention to create a Cultural Protection Fund. A consultation exercise was then launched by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport with a proposal for a fund with the primary objective of ‘creating opportunities for economic and social development through building capacity to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage in conflict-affected regions overseas’.

*From its inception the Fund sought to make a link between work to conserve, restore, record, document, and share cultural heritage, and the objectives of international development.*

The Cultural Protection Fund is now up and running. From its inception the Fund sought to make a link between work to conserve, restore, record, document, and share cultural heritage, and the objectives of international development. It is a link consistent with (the UN’s) Agenda for Sustainable Development. For example one of the Sustainable Development Goals is to

‘Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable’ (Goal 11), with a target that reads ‘Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage’.

Preserved heritage sites and museums that boast wondrous cultural treasures and storehouses of knowledge can be global attractions and cultural, educational and social hubs. They can be a focus for the provision of basic goods and services and the acquiring of skills and knowledge, and thereby contribute directly to alleviating poverty and inequalities.

They also have huge symbolic significance as iconic rallying points for a collective identity and a shared sense of history. Heritage sites represent continuity through the passing of time as familiar remnants of our past. In times of conflict and upheaval that connection to different eras and to

time that passes in centuries and millennia can offer reassurance and a route to resilience.

The Cultural Protection Fund is a rare example of a culture focus addressing social and economic challenges. Applicants need to have strong partners in the target countries. Mutuality, collaboration and long-term engagement are built in to the design of the Fund. Applicants have to provide evidence of benefit and need from the perspective of the target country, and they have to address the sustainability and legacy of the project – as well as addressing the objectives of the Fund\*.

In the consultation document for the Cultural Protection Fund, that connection between cultural heritage and development was summed up by the then Secretary of State:

*'It should be recognised that during conflict the risk to cultural symbols is heightened; yet they are crucial for community and individual resilience. Protecting these objects and sites will protect potential sources of future tourism revenue, and foster economic development. This will ensure local people continue to hold a stake in their cultural heritage, which will in turn provide vital longer term prosperity and security.'*

In the first round of funding, awards went to projects in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. A number of the projects are focussing on Archaeology and Monuments, but other areas of work include Museums, Libraries, Archives and Intangible Heritage.

A few months ago, during a visit to Beirut, I had a meal with Syrian friends including a theatre director from Damascus who was taking his first weekend trip out of the country since the present conflict began. He had recently been to Aleppo and was shocked by the hideous destruction of one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. He started to list the many times through history that Aleppo has been sacked or destroyed. His compatriots enthusiastically joined in, adding the sites and buildings that had survived.

I was struck by the significance of the exercise for them. To me it sounded like a roll-call of horrific acts of barbarism. For them it was reassurance that there will be a time beyond this one. Something of their generation, and of the city as they know it, will survive.

\*More information on the funded projects can be found on the CPF website:  
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund/projects>

# The British Museum's Iraq Scheme

## JONATHAN TUBB

### Keeper, Middle East, British Museum; Director of the Iraq Scheme

In 2015, in response to the appalling destruction by Daesh of heritage sites in Iraq and Syria, the British Museum developed a scheme which, in the face of frustration and outrage, could offer something positive and constructive.

The scheme received the support of the UK Government, and last year the Museum was granted £2.9m of Official Development Assistance funding over five years from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The scheme, which became the pilot project for the Cultural Protection Fund (now managed by the British Council), has been to design, develop and deliver a programme to build capacity in the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage by training 50 of its staff in a wide variety of sophisticated techniques of retrieval and rescue archaeology.

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*The four-year programme prepares the State Board for the aftermath of destruction – the day when areas of the country, currently occupied by Daesh, are returned to secure governmental control.*

The four-year programme prepares the State Board for the aftermath of destruction – the day when areas of the country, currently occupied by Daesh, are returned to secure governmental control. The training is undertaken both in the UK and on specially selected archaeological sites in safe areas of Iraq. It is intended to provide participants with the expertise and skills they need to face the challenges of documenting and stabilising

severely disrupted and damaged heritage sites, in preparation for potential reconstruction.

Called the 'Iraq Emergency Heritage Management Training Scheme', or simply the 'Iraq Scheme', the programme operates in six-month cycles, with each group of six to eight participants spending three months at the British Museum, followed by three months in the field in Iraq. The first group of participants arrived at the Museum in May 2016 and completed their field training in Iraq in November; the second group arrived in January 2017.

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*These two fieldwork projects are not 'training excavations', but are fully developed, scientific excavations at which our Iraqi participants are offered instruction in the detailed techniques of field archaeology.*

The UK-based part of the programme, largely undertaken at the British Museum, introduces the participants to the challenges facing cultural heritage; legal aspects of cultural heritage protection; and the significance and value of heritage conventions in combatting the illicit trade in antiquities. Sessions are delivered by invited speakers from World Monuments Fund and Historic England, UCL's

Institute of Archaeology, as well as, of course, the British Museum.

Participants are introduced to the methods used in archaeological excavation, ranging from recording and documentation (including photography, photogrammetry, drawing and illustration) to environmental archaeology, geophysical techniques, geomatic recording (Global Positioning and Global Information Systems) and the manipulation of satellite imagery. Off-site training in surveying includes the use of state-of-the-art 'multi-stations' for recording buildings and monuments.

Another significant component for participants is the focus on conservation, including sessions on the theory and practice of remedial and preventive conservation. The final week of the course focuses on post-excavation activities, such as finds processing, packing, and transferring objects from the field to the museum. The programme also addresses communication as an essential skill in heritage management, both in the presentation and interpretation of sites and museum objects, and in wider communication with local communities and media.

Integral to the overall training programme is the fieldwork component, during which participants have the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned in theory. The British Museum has secured excavation permits for two sites in Iraq, Tello (ancient Girsu), a well-known and important Sumerian site in the South, and Darband – i Rania, a previously unexplored cluster of closely related sites in the Sulaimaniya province of Iraqi Kurdistan. These two sites will provide the fieldwork venues for the duration of the scheme.

It is important to understand that these two fieldwork projects are not 'training excavations', but are fully developed, scientific excavations at which our Iraqi participants are offered instruction in the detailed

techniques of field archaeology. In this respect, the results of the initial seasons at both sites have been highly encouraging.

The Darband – i Rania Archaeological Project is designed around a cluster of three sites – Qalatga Darband, Usu Aska and Murad Rasu – located at the northeastern corner of Lake Dokan in Sulaimaniya province of Iraqi Kurdistan. The area was flooded in the early 1960s by the construction of the Dokan Dam, and while some rescue work was carried out at that time, these sites have not been previously investigated.

All three sites have suffered severe damage from the lake and other factors, and they all have additional threats looming over them. It is therefore imperative to investigate these sites now, an objective fully in accordance with the overall aim of the Iraq Scheme.

In more detail, Qalatga Darband is a large open site which can now, with the results of the first season of fieldwork, be understood as a fortified settlement of the Parthian period (c. 238 BC – AD 224). Usu Aska is a fort dating to the time of the Assyrian empire, with overlying remains of the Ottoman period; while Murad Rasu is a multi-period mound which appears to include a sequence from the Assyrian through to the Parthian period, as well as earlier remains.

The overall aims of the project are to explore and document these sites as thoroughly as possible prior to further destruction, allowing us in the process to investigate the functioning of this strategic pass under the early empires; that is, from Assyrian through to Parthian control.

Tello, the ancient Sumerian city of Girsu, is, like Nimrud or Nineveh, a mega-site extensively excavated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a similar topographical layout shaped by huge excavation pits and spoil heaps. It also includes fragile remains of monumental architecture excavated before the Second World War.

Tello is therefore a site of the first order, ideal for delivering the training for our Iraqi colleagues in the context of a fully-fledged research programme. In the autumn 2016 season we opened a large-scale area excavation in the heart of the sacred complex of the ancient city, at Tell A, also known as the Mound of the Palace. Tell A was first excavated between 1877 and 1933 and yielded some of the most important artefacts of Sumerian art, including the well-known statues of the ruler Gudea. Our new excavations led to the discovery of massive mud brick walls – some ornamented with pilaster strips and inscribed magical cones – belonging to a temple constructed in the third millennium BC and renovated on multiple occasions by the rulers of the Second Dynasty of Lagash, including Ur-Bau, Ur-Ningirsu and, of course, Gudea.



This temple, dedicated to the god Ningirsu, was considered one of the most important sacred places of ancient Sumer, praised for its magnificence in many contemporary literary compositions. Among the truly unique finds of this season were a fragment of a marble foundation tablet of the ruler Ur-Bau and a cylinder-seal belonging to a deity.

Both excavation projects have provided, and will continue to provide, a wealth of experience for the participants of the British Museum's Iraq Scheme. As a measure of the impact that the scheme has already made, it is gratifying to report that one of the 2016 'graduates', on the basis of the training he has received, has been appointed by the Iraqi State Board to lead the assessment of the site of Nimrud, recently released from Daesh control.

# The Museum: Objects, Knowledge and Ideas

## VERNON RAPLEY

Director of Security, Victoria & Albert Museum; formerly head of Scotland Yard's Art and Antiques Unit

I always had an interest in art and history. I joined the police as a normal police officer, and after a couple of promotions I was recruited onto something called the SIS. A covert and intrusive surveillance vacancy came up, and at the time the Art and Antiques Unit was a very covert team. Over the next ten years I turned it from being a covert unit to being an overt unit, which was more about recruiting special constables, telling the world the problems, and trying to work with the trade.

I felt that an open and collaborative approach with academics and the trade was the way to combat art crime. I stayed there ten-and-a-bit years. I organised an exhibition at the V&A on fakes and forgeries, and then accepted an offer to come and work for the museum shortly after that. I'm a special adviser to the Cultural Protection Fund, so I look through the applications and advise the British Council on whether or not I think they're viable.

It's wonderful that Britain's done it – I think it's a great statement and a decent pot of money. It's a strong step in the right direction. However, most of these projects cost two or three million pounds, and it very quickly becomes evident that even if you're helping one area in one country, thirty million pounds could disappear very quickly. So the trick is deciding where the money should go.

One thing I think is missing from our approach to cultural protection at the moment, and something we're looking at, is that there is no internationally recognised Heritage at Danger list. There are lists for every country, and there are lists for every organisation. UNESCO has a list of objects, but no-one's graded them.

If you compare this to the world of wildlife protection, they have a very international view of conservation priorities that I don't think we have in the heritage world. The wildlife protection world would say, 'you don't think about one gorilla, or one elephant, you think about the environment in which those individual animals live'. The strategy is to conserve the environment so that we can bring those animals back into it, or they can regenerate. I think that approach could be valuable in the conversation on heritage preservation.

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*The wildlife protection world would say, 'you don't think about one gorilla, or one elephant, you think about the environment in which those individual animals live'.*

We tend to look in little silos – we're interested in Egyptian material, or Iraqi material, for example – without considering the fact that there's similar material from a similar period in a country that's less at risk.

Like every museum, the V&A has a salvage priority list. We have to decide, if there is half an hour to rescue objects, what do we prioritise? The international list I'm thinking of

could be something similar. We've always assessed our objects on their value to us, to our collection; what we hadn't done was look at where else similar objects might be.

This is why it's important to have an international understanding of where our heritage is. Where is it collected? What are the last remaining objects of a certain type? The last complete dodo specimen was burned on a fire by the Director of the Ashmolean Museum. He thought it wasn't worth anything, and got rid of it. He had no idea it was the last of its kind.

What we're asking our collections to do now is to reassess their objects, thinking about not just the potential loss to the museum, but the loss to the world. Some kind of ranking would give us a better idea of where real effort is needed.

The world of wildlife conservation could also teach us some lessons about harnessing public support. For instance, their use of 'glamorous' species (such as pandas or lions) in marketing, as supposed to more at risk but less 'emotive' animals, has proved very successful as a means of garnering public empathy and boosting funding.

The other thing that's very interesting about wildlife conservation is how they can map where impact is being felt because of environmental change. They've recorded the locations of different species, and as the climate changes, their computer model tells them which populations are becoming more at risk.

And again that's not dissimilar to our world, where you can see Daesh spreading out and destroying certain objects. That should give us a means of prioritising those objects. So it's not only how important they are, but how at risk they are at this moment, either from natural disaster or from man-made pressures. A heritage in danger list would bring a lot of clarity.

My personal experience, from Iraq and Afghanistan, is that trafficked material was smuggled out by the ton. It was easy to identify, but nigh on

impossible to prove your case. Because an object never comes directly out of its country of origin (it comes via a transit country) it's incredibly difficult to prove that something that came out of Jordan, say, in 2006, had arrived there from Iraq three months before. Especially if the Jordanian dealer says, I've had this for thirty years.

The other thing is that modern boundaries don't correlate with ancient boundaries. Gandharan sculpture, for example, might come from either modern day Afghanistan or Pakistan. So when something comes out of Peshawar in Pakistan, they can argue that it came from there. Very rarely can you link an object to a specific excavation site.

I think there's very little doubt that looting in Daesh's homeland has always been carried out by criminals – and possibly now by insurgents and terrorists. The question is whether the money that's made here through dealers or at auction houses in the West goes back to those causes. If you look at the studies the Carabinieri do, it seems unlikely.

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*You have to look at what a man with a spade digging up objects in Iraq makes, and then the man he sells them to, and the next man in the chain, and so on.*

You have to look at what a man with a spade digging up objects in Iraq makes, and then the man he sells them to, and the next man in the chain, and so on. By the time the big numbers are made in London or New York, it's very difficult to say that any of that money goes back to the source. There is a very great disparity between the 50 pence that

the man who dug it up got, and the £50,000 that the man in London sold it for. To say that the criminal benefits by £50,000 would be quite a stretch.

The Culture in Crisis programme is run by the V&A in partnership with Yale University's Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage, and supported by UNESCO. In our current project, we've also teamed up with the National Museums of Rwanda, the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and the Natural History Museum in London. The programme is not about flying into conflict zones around the globe helping people rebuild and remake; it's about finding new ways of working, new ways of creating public awareness, and possibly finding ways of fundraising.

I think its greatest success so far has been pulling people in to new discussions and to new ways of working, as well as exploring things like reproduction as a means of conservation and preservation; an area we are very keen to develop at the V&A.

Our Director of Research and Collections is leading on an international project which aims to increase the sharing of digital data of core museum objects between institutions, in both endangered regions and those that are stable.

Culture in Crisis acts like a strategic think tank. There are thankfully other institutions, like the Smithsonian, who provide practical conservation on the ground. We see our role as less 'practical' but more about bringing people and ideas together.

There is a lot of discussion about the role of museums as 'safe havens'. We should be clear that there is a big difference between being a safe haven for material coming out of a country in conflict, and an institution holding on to disputed objects.

Nearly every museum in the world would agree that if the Iraqi government asked them to look after endangered objects because they feared they couldn't look after them themselves, they would take them in. But is it the right thing to do, or should museums be supporting storage facilities within the regions affected? I think that as internationally connected institutions we could be facilitating more of that.

Then there's the issue of whether recovered objects are actually cleared to return to their place of origin, or if they've become disputed objects by rival claimants post-conflict. There's usually very little legal clarity.

One way around this would be for the government to indemnify those who hold the objects, protecting the institutions against the legal consequences if they return them. That would make museums far more willing to return things. At the moment it's far easier – and safer – to stick a possibly-disputed object into a storage room and leave it there for ten or twenty years, than to face the risk of expensive court action.

Most of the debate about cultural protection is – not surprisingly – about what happens in conflict zones. But I'm fearful for heritage outside conflict zones too. Nowadays any museum in the world is at risk; we're all targets. We could all suffer a natural disaster; but now we could also all suffer a terrorist attack as well. We could lose our objects at any time, so it would be good to think that there might be a way we can preserve these items digitally, for all of time.

We thought, wouldn't it be great if you could walk into an empty room which might transform to allow you to experience cultural heritage from around the world? That through virtual reality technology you could instantly see the Temple of Bel, or Nimrud, or that you could look at an object in the V&A's collection, or the Louvre's, or the MET's? We see this idea as a modern day Cast Court.

We are looking at the idea of creating an international pool of digitized objects that would give public access to the museum's treasures. We need to be willing to share that information openly, not just storing it on inaccessible databases. We need to establish it using an open protocol that can be interpreted and used by other people.

We've shared information for years – we've done casts of objects here since the 1860s. We treat our casts as museum objects: they're valuable and one of the most visited parts of the museum. They're a tool to inspire artists, designers and architects. They're the best option for those who can't actually visit the country of the original object's origin, though they'll never be a real replacement.

We've always recorded cultural heritage in the best way we could.

Austen Henry Layard, when he discovered Nimrud, drew it with pencil, pen and ink. If the best technology we have now is a 3D scanner, why wouldn't we use that? Though just because we have a copy doesn't mean we don't need to worry about the original.

A former Director of a Berlin Museum said many years ago, 'I would rather have one fragment of a real vase than a copy of the entire thing'. I don't think copies will ever replace that need for the authentic, but I do think they are a way of introducing a much larger section of society to the wonders of the world.

# Cultural Property Protection and the Blue Shield



## PETER STONE

UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection & Peace at Newcastle University; Chair of the UK National Committee of the Blue Shield; Interim Secretary of the Blue Shield

In 2003 when the USA and UK led the Coalition that invaded Iraq, neither had ratified the 1954 Hague Convention or either of its Protocols. The Convention is the primary piece of international humanitarian law regarding the protection of cultural property during conflict, and it is astonishing to think that two of the world's major military powers had failed to share the international community's understanding of the importance of cultural property to community and national resilience and stability.

At the beginning of February 2003, I was approached by the UK's Ministry of Defence to identify archaeological heritage that should not be damaged if at all possible during what was expected to be a hard-fought conflict lasting months. This approach was far too late: most military units were already deployed in countries surrounding Iraq and all had their orders and responsibilities. These did not include the protection of cultural property. US forces, and those of most other Coalition partners, were in a similar position.

The failure to identify Cultural Property Protection (CPP) as a military responsibility was surprising given its importance during the Second World War, and the perceived success of the Allies' Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives unit (MFAA). During the War the protection of cultural property was seen as part of the responsibility of the combatants – something the Allies, and some elements of Axis forces, took seriously.

Fully supported by the Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower, the MFAA was a team of cultural heritage experts fully integrated into the Allied forces who made enormous and successful efforts to protect cultural property in all theatres of the war.

Despite their work there was massive damage to cultural property during the War, and the 1954 Hague Convention was a direct response. Unfortunately, despite the Convention, little was done post-1945 to continue the work of the MFAA conscript-soldiers (although elements of their work were retained with US Civil Affairs units), and by the time of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the

invasion of Iraq in 2003, few military forces retained anything other than a superficial expertise or commitment to CPP, as demonstrated depressingly by the debacle in Iraq.

The 1954 Convention identifies a Blue Shield as its emblem, to be used to identify property protected under its measures. The 1999 2nd Protocol to the Convention established a 12-member Intergovernmental Committee to oversee its implementation, and identified the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) as an advisory body to the intergovernmental committee.

The ICBS had been created in 1996, in anticipation of the 2nd Protocol, by the four major international non-governmental heritage organisations: the International Council of Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

Since 1999 a number of national committees of the Blue Shield have been created, with varying degrees of activity and success. In order to attempt to support these national committees, the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS) was established in 2006 with limited, time-restricted funding from the Municipality of The Hague. The ICBS and ANCBS amalgamated in 2016 to become simply 'The Blue Shield'.

Putting energy and resources into Cultural Property Protection during conflict has been questioned, with the argument that it diverts attention and resources from the protection of civilians and can even – so some have argued with respect to the 2003 invasion of Iraq – lend academic legitimacy to an illegal conflict.

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*The line between protecting people and protecting their cultural property and heritage is so fine as to be almost invisible.*

No-one in the Blue Shield would argue against the primary importance of protecting human life. However, I would suggest that the line between protecting people and protecting their cultural property and heritage is so fine as to be almost invisible.

Just as a person without a memory becomes a dysfunctional individual requiring the support of others, so a community or society without a memory can become dysfunctional – needing external help to support it. This is, of course, not to suggest that all memory is positive – far from it – but just as an individual needs to come to terms with parts of their past they would perhaps prefer to forget, so too must communities and

societies learn to deal with the totality and complexity of their past.

The Blue Shield organises its work, within the overarching framework provided by UNESCO, under five general headings: policy development; coordination; proactive protection; training; emergency response; and long term support.

Our policy development work tries to unpick and promote our understanding of how best to protect cultural property during conflict and following environmental disaster. We identify the four occasions when the cultural heritage community needs to work with the military and emergency services.

These are *long term* (where everyone in uniform needs basic training to introduce them to the military's legal responsibilities regarding cultural property protection and how, in extremis, protecting cultural property in conflict might save their life); *immediate pre-deployment* (when there is a need to understand the type of cultural property in country X, and the level and sophistication of local cultural property protection organisations); *during conflict* (when decisions need to be taken quickly about military operations that may impact on cultural property); and *post conflict/disaster* during the so-called 'stabilisation' phase (when those in uniform are frequently the only people to have access to resources and expertise to protect cultural property).

Reading about this in the British Army Review led Lieutenant Colonel Tim Purbrick to set up the Army's Cultural Property Protection Working Group in 2014 (see his essay in this volume).

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*We are frequently told that cultural property destruction during conflict is 'collateral damage' and, as there is nothing that can be done about it, we should stop worrying.*

We are frequently told that cultural property destruction during conflict is 'collateral damage' and, as there is nothing that can be done about it, we should stop worrying. We reject this negative, blanket approach and have instead identified seven separate risks to cultural property during conflict (lack of planning; spoils of war; military lack of awareness; looting; collateral

damage; enforced neglect; and specific targeting).

Our argument is simple: if we address each of the seven risks in a structured way with relevant partners we can reduce the overall threat to cultural property during conflict and following environmental disaster.

This breaking-down of the problem flows from a simple lesson that took some time to learn. There is little point asking the military or anyone involved in a conflict to protect cultural property because it is important academically. That site A or archive B is incredibly important for human history cuts little ice with a military commander tasked with operations in the area, until their legal responsibilities to protect cultural property are made clear, and when they can be made to understand that protecting the site or archive might have a positive impact on their operation.

We have had to learn to view CPP through military, not cultural heritage, eyes. As one example, while there is a generic legal responsibility on the part of the military to protect cultural property, no-one suggests that all cultural property can be saved during conflict. However, while a decision not to protect a library or archive from looting may initially seem like an understandable and good use of scarce military assets, if the looted material is sold to provide funding for the opposition to continue the conflict, it may seem less sensible, and its protection move up the military priority list.

Our second area of activity is 'coordination' and in particular the coordination of our nearly 30 national committees. As the Blue Shield has no funding, it has never been able to establish a staffed central office or, until now, a specifically Blue Shield 'approach' or set of agreed activities. The policy development set out above is helping to formulate the context within which all Blue Shield national committees will work – and through which they will be supported as and when a central office can be established.

Such coordination should unlock the full potential of hundreds of willing, specialised volunteers. At the same time, we need to coordinate with other related bodies – for example UNESCO, and our four founding organisations – so as not to overlap with their existing activities. We also need to coordinate with military organisations: for example the NATO-affiliated Civilian/Military Centre of Excellence in the Netherlands that we worked with to produce their publication 'Cultural Property Protection Makes Sense'\*.

Since the civil war in the former Yugoslavia the cultural heritage community has been reacting to crises and conflicts. One of Blue Shield's aspirations is to move the emphasis from 'reactive' to 'proactive' protection. This means helping heritage organisations, in particular those in countries where the threat of armed conflict is high, to ensure that they are as prepared as they can be for the worst.

Are all library and archive catalogues digitised and up-to-date? Have archives and rare books been scanned? Do those responsible for

\*Available to download for free at <http://www.cimic-coe.org/products/conceptual-design/downloads/ccoe-publications/>.

heritage assets even know where all important libraries and archives are located? Have all museum objects been photographed to the highest standards and collections catalogued? Do libraries, archives, and museums have disaster and evacuation plans? Who has the responsibility and authority to order such plans to be implemented? Are there detailed, digitised inventories of historic buildings and archaeological sites? And so on.

The answer to most of these and similar questions, in perhaps most countries in the world, will be 'No'. The main reason is lack of resources – both financial and specialised staff. Yet such information would be of enormous value for most heritage organisations in peacetime as well as in conflict. If we are to avoid the disasters of recent conflicts we need to find these resources as quickly as possible.

Training courses for staff of heritage organisations are available in many parts of the world, and excellent specialist courses, such as ICCROM's 'First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis' and 'Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage', are available.

While all of them could probably benefit from additional funding, there is no value in the Blue Shield establishing similar courses. Where there is a significant gap in provision is in training for the military and other uniformed organisations, relating to their responsibilities regarding cultural property protection during armed conflict and following natural disaster.

The Blue Shield has carried out basic courses for a number of military organisations, and recently worked with UNESCO to develop some generic training materials. We are currently working with a number of armed forces to integrate these materials into their existing training, and to develop new, specialised courses.

The Blue Shield has carried out a number of emergency missions to countries (Egypt, Libya, and Mali) where conflict has just finished or where it continues. Such missions are by their very nature dangerous, but they are essential if important information is to be collected for future use.

For example, photographs taken by a Blue Shield team at Ras Almageb in Libya in 2011 were instrumental in NATO setting up its internal review 'Cultural Property Protection in the Operations Planning Process' that recommended in 2012 that NATO develop its own CPP policy. We need to do much more regarding the deployment of such missions, and be clearer in their aims and objectives.

We need to acknowledge that the need for cultural property protection is not going to disappear – and that the heritage community must not lose its crucial relationship with the military, as happened following the Second World War.

Such long term support includes the development of policy, and support for national committees and training mentioned above; but also, for example, the development and maintenance of a useful website; the hosting of regular General Assemblies; academic, professional, and less specialised publications; and a constant programme of raising awareness within the general public of the importance of cultural property and its protection during armed conflict and following environmental disaster. Training the media in the importance of cultural property is also of paramount importance.

The UK national committee works within the above developing international framework. We have had recent successes in the current Government's sudden inclusion of the Cultural Property (Armed Conflict) Bill included as part of the 2016 Queen's Speech. We worked with Peers, MPs, Ministers, and the Civil Service to support the Bill at all stages of its progress through Parliament; the Bill gained Royal Assent on 23 February 2017.

We are working closely with the UK Joint Service Cultural Property Protection Working Group and are cautiously optimistic that in the near future the UK will be able to include in any military deployment a specialist CPP capability. We have built on the generic training materials developed in conjunction with UNESCO, and in February 2017 piloted a three-day course with the Army's Defence Cultural Specialist Unit.

We have also been invited to the USA to discuss modifying our materials to the requirements of the US Air Force, and have been asked to discuss training courses with the militaries of a number of other countries. The key to success with military training is to be able to adapt a set of core messages, as identified in the above policy development, to various military situations and requirements. If we can manage this we will be welcomed; if we fail to adapt to the needs of the military end-user, we will be ignored.

There was great anticipation within the CPP community when the Government announced its £30 million Cultural Protection Fund (CPF) in 2015.

Many of us were disappointed, however, when it became clear that the CPF was not to be used in a strategic CPP sense that would address the range of urgent issues discussed above, and leave a positive, permanent legacy internationally\*.

The decision that the CPF should be used instead to 'help to create sustainable opportunities for economic and social development through building capacity to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage

\*The Cultural Protection Fund is part of Official Development Assistance funding, which determines the way awards can be made – Editor.

affected by conflict overseas' essentially addresses the symptoms but not the cause of the problem.

This fundamental issue was exacerbated by the decision to mirror the CPF on the tried and tested Heritage Lottery Fund's application process. The result is that many of the activities funded by the CPF, no doubt excellent in their own right, are stand-alone projects unlikely to lead to any collective legacy, and with limited relevance to Cultural Property Protection.

However, it is to be welcomed that a Cultural Protection Advisory Group is to be set up to 'provide advice and bring fresh insights to the management of the Fund; to influence the development of the Fund, its decisions and strategic direction'. I hope that this Group will help to focus the Fund more closely in the area where it is most needed: the protection of cultural property during armed conflict.

The Fund aside, the strides taken and achievements made since the 2003 invasion of Iraq with respect to CPP have been dramatic and overwhelmingly positive.

Assuming the Blue Shield continues to consolidate its role and activities as described above, and that the UK Government makes good its commitments under the 1954 Hague Convention (in particular the creation of a new CPP capability within the UK's Joint Services), we have a very sound basis on which to build a really coordinated, strategic, and long-term environment for the better protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. We are a long way from where we were in 2003.

Red Lists and Red Lines:  
The Role of Museums in  
Protecting Heritage in Danger



# FRANCE DESMARAIS

## Director of Programmes and Partnerships, International Council of Museums

Since 2011, following the outbreak of violent conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East, cultural heritage in a number of countries in the region is in danger of disappearing because of intense looting and destruction.

The countries where heritage is now at greatest risk were once home to a number of ancient cultures and kingdoms, including prehistoric tribes, Islamic societies, European crusaders, Persian merchants, and the Abbasid and Ottoman empires.

A record of these past cultures has survived to the present day, in tangible and intangible forms. Yet we now seem incapable of halting the destruction of this priceless historical, scientific and cultural evidence of our shared past. If we want to prevent the disappearance of certain sites and objects representing our common heritage, we must act immediately.

But what to do, and how to do it?

That is the challenge facing the world museum community. Since the Second World War, other than through the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols, the international heritage community had spent little time preparing to protect heritage in conflict and occupation. Peaceful days had – by and large – become the new normal.

In the past five years, that 'new normal' has received a jolt. Sites and objects have been extensively destroyed and looted. Satellite imagery shows the scale of the damage: archaeological sites riddled with pits dug with shovels or machinery. Syria and Iraq as we know them – as cultural entities – are threatened with disappearance. This is partly due to the fact that there is an ever-expanding international market for rare cultural artefacts.

Objects from sites in Syria and Iraq are highly coveted on the international art and antiquities market – and that makes them vulnerable to theft, looting and illicit trafficking.

The need to act to counter such criminality is clear. But more importantly the destruction of ancient sites and the vanishing of cultural

objects deprives us of our knowledge and understanding of those places, and their immeasurable contributions to the history of humanity.

The scientific, historical and cultural losses are considerable, though it is hard to reach accurate conclusions about the scale of the damage. How can we document or evaluate what has been lost when so many of the archaeological sites had never been surveyed?

Each site, or artefact destroyed means that – put simply – part of the future has vanished with the past.

Regions that are outside state control are also unable to protect their cultural heritage, resulting in thousands of uncontrolled excavations, with pits dug by looters intent on finding objects to feed a lucrative antiquities market.

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*Cultural objects – those other unwilling refugees – are also crossing borders in their thousands.*

When the humanitarian situation worsens, so does the situation for cultural heritage. Cultural objects – those other unwilling refugees – are also crossing borders in their thousands.

Beyond their value as testaments to an era or civilisation, ancient cultural objects have become a sound investment: a good financial bet in a region undergoing violent economic fluctuations.

Periods of conflict and political and economic instability provide circumstances favourable for illegal excavations and the trafficking of cultural objects.

Museums can fight this by (among other things) raising awareness of the need to preserve the vital bond between ancient artefacts and their place of origin. Cut off from its own past, an object's ability to inform and illuminate human history is hugely diminished.

The fight against illicit trafficking in cultural objects calls for: the strengthening of legal instruments; the use of practical tools allowing for the spread of information; awareness-raising for the public; and the prevention of illegal exports.

In the case of Syria and Iraq, in an exceptional event at the international level, a binding resolution by the United Nations Security Council and a European import ban were added to the existing legal framework.

These regulations are bolstered by the Red Lists of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a practical tool enabling police forces worldwide to identify, intercept, seize and potentially return looted objects.

ICOM, created in 1946 alongside UNESCO as the worldwide non-governmental organisation of museums and museum professionals, is committed to promoting and protecting natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. With more than 36,000 members in 138 countries, ICOM is active in numerous fields relating to museums and cultural heritage.

The Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk were designed by ICOM to highlight the categories of objects that are subject to smuggling and illegal trade and that are often found on the illicit market, in spite of being protected by national and international legislation. They therefore contribute to the protection of cultural heritage in the countries concerned.

To support the efforts of our colleagues in the field and of law enforcement in transit or destination countries, Emergency Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk have been published for Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Mali. A Red List for Yemen will soon follow.

Used by customs authorities around the globe, Red Lists can lead to the return of hundreds of objects to their countries of origin. In the UK, a particularly successful operation enabled the return to Kabul of over 1,500 archaeological objects, thanks to a close cooperation between the British Museum, national police and Customs, who used the ICOM Red List for Afghanistan.

Recognising the right of access to, and study and enjoyment of, cultural heritage as a human right; developing strategies and preventive measures for safeguarding cultural property; countering illicit trafficking and increasing cooperation at the international level – all of these are high-priority activities for museums around the globe.

ICOM, with the support of its members and through its Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC), has the capacity to rapidly mobilise experts around the world to monitor, assess and salvage cultural heritage in danger when needs exceed national capacities in an emergency situation.

As an example, the safeguarding of cultural heritage in liberated areas of Iraq is the current focus of efforts by ICOM-DRMC. In the context of the

battle for Mosul, in partnership with the Smithsonian Institute, and with the support of the Louvre, the Pergamon, and the Metropolitan Museum, ICOM is preparing salvaging efforts on the ground at the Mosul Museum, the second largest museum in the country.

Syria and Iraq – its ancient cities, celebrated archaeological sites and places of worship, some of which are part of the famous ‘cradle of civilisation’ – have paid a heavy price for war. Ancient sites have greatly suffered, and the cultural landscape is devastated, to the point that some fear that hardly anything will remain when peace returns.

And yet in the midst of this destruction there are glimmers of hope. Operations for safeguarding and protection are being carried out in the field, not without difficulty. We have yet to see the full extent of the damage, but initial evaluations lead us to believe that, despite the intensive looting, all is not lost for some of these sites.

In any case it is inconceivable that the international community should cease its efforts while there are still women and men (the few remaining heritage professionals still left on Syrian soil, for instance) who are risking their lives to protect world heritage.

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*We have a duty to support their audacious resistance. It is a question of the future of our shared history: the conflict rocking Syria is incurring losses beyond borders and across time.*

Day in and day out efforts are undertaken by our colleagues, with the support of the international museum community, to secure threatened sites. Among those who have courageously stayed, for example in Palmyra, some have paid the highest price.

We have a duty to support their audacious resistance. It is a question of the future of

our shared history: the conflict rocking Syria is incurring losses beyond borders and across time.

It is not necessary to have seen those countries with your own eyes to grasp the scope of what has been lost since the outbreak of the violence ravaging the MENA region. It is not necessary to have held those objects in your hands, and to have walked among those archaeological sites, to imagine the irreplaceable loss, through looting,

of science, culture and history. It is easy to see that these losses are our own.

It is impossible to remain untouched by the destruction of vast swathes of humanity's history, and it is tempting to shut our eyes to the brutality of a conflict – but more important to open our mouths, to condemn it.

# The Return of the Monuments Men (and Women)

## TIM PURBRICK

### Lieutenant Colonel, Royal Lancers; SO1 Cultural Property Protection, Army HQ

During the Second World War the Allies separately and then collectively developed a military capability which came to be known as the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) sections.

For the British fighting across North Africa the impetus was the protection of archaeology. For the Americans and British in London, with a firm eye on the liberation of Europe, the spur was protection of museums, libraries and architecture.

The sections were attached to headquarters to advise commanders and senior staff. They also deployed to the frontline to ensure, in northern Europe, that General Eisenhower's diktat – that the Allies should spare cultural objects unless military necessity forced another outcome – was carried out. Where damage was encountered, repairs were to be organized. Later, as the shocking scale of the looting across Europe became clear, the MFAA gained an additional role of tracking down and securing Europe's stolen treasures.

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*There is a responsibility on the Armed Forces of each ratifying nation to educate and train their personnel to respect cultural property.*

Not surprisingly, the drafters of the Hague Convention (1954) enshrined in law many of the best practices for the protection of cultural property that had been learned during the Second World War. For the Armed Forces the tasks are specified in Article 7. There is a responsibility on the Armed Forces of each ratifying nation

to educate and train their personnel to respect cultural property; and a requirement that they establish a unit of military Cultural Property Protection (CPP) specialists.

While the United Kingdom signed the Convention in 1954 it did not ratify – pass into law – the Convention or its two Protocols.

I am an Army Reservist and until recently worked in the Concepts Branch of Army HQ, the strategic foresight unit of the Chief of the General Staff (the head of the British Army). The job of Concepts Branch is to look ahead 20 years, work out what the future environment might

be like, and then ask how we can get the Army of today into a shape to meet the challenges of tomorrow – by working with military scientists, academia, think tanks and allies.

Reading the latest copy of British Army Review one day in December 2013, I came across an article about the actions the military should take for the protection of cultural property during conflict, written by Professor Peter Stone.

I used to work for the Art Loss Register, tracking down stolen art and antiques, so I have had a longstanding interest in the work of the MFAA and the issue of stolen art in the Second World War. In addition, our family business – my current employers – are private art dealers in St James's in London.

When I'd finished reading the article, I rang Professor Stone, and that conversation led to my drafting an analytical concept paper titled 'Delivering a Military Cultural Property Protection Capability'. In parallel, six of us met at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham to form the Military Cultural Property Protection Working Group.

A year and a half later, after the Army HQ paper had been all the way up to 3-Star Generals and there had been many more meetings of the Military CPP Working Group, John Whittingdale MP (then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) announced that the Bill to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols would be put before Parliament in the near future.

There was some scepticism among those who had been lobbying for the ratification of the Convention for many years. Since 2004 successive Governments had announced that they would ratify the Convention, but none had found the Parliamentary time to do so. However, those of us inside the Government 'wire' knew that this time, barring unforeseen circumstances, the Bill would be announced in the next Queen's Speech.

This meant that the aspirational nature of the work completed to that date on military CPP could, perhaps, anticipate positive actions taking place. The Queen announced the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill in May 2016. Sir Michael Fallon MP, the Secretary of State for Defence, announced that the Armed Forces would form a unit of military CPP specialists.

Ministers went on to announce that such a unit would be comprised of 10–20 Specialist Reserve Officers serving under a Lieutenant Colonel. The Ministry of Defence gave the Army the job of delivering the military CPP capability. Army HQ is currently putting in place the processes to ensure that capability is put in place.

There are three essential elements to Defence obligations under the Hague Convention. Two are specified in the Convention: education



and training, and the formation of the military CPP unit. The third, and most fundamental element, is the acquisition and then dissemination of cultural property geo-spatial data – the where and what of monuments and other cultural assets – to military staff, enabling them to ensure that cultural property is properly protected during conflict.

It's easy to write these words, a very significant challenge to deliver against them – but one that is now in the capable hands of the Defence Geographic Centre, the Ministry of Defence's geo-spatial intelligence agency.

The return of the Monuments Men and Women to the order of battle of the UK's Armed Forces will mark a significant military commitment to the protection and preservation of cultural property during conflict.

Digital Recording in a  
Time of Iconoclasm, Tourism  
and Anti-Ageing

# ADAM LOWE

## Founder, Factum Foundation

At a time of increasing awareness of the dangers to cultural heritage, the ability to accurately record – and if necessary re-create – cultural artefacts has never been greater. The application of digital technology and 3D recording to the field of cultural protection offers huge opportunities.

Factum Foundation grew out of Factum Arte – a 21st Century workshop in Madrid that uses digital technologies and traditional skills to produce physical objects for artists and clients around the world. Factum Foundation exists to develop and promote digital technology for the recording, documentation and dissemination of cultural heritage.

Building bridges between the institutionalised professions traditionally tasked with protecting cultural heritage, and the development and application of new technologies, has allowed the foundation to develop an original approach to documentation and preservation based on practical experience in the workshop and in the field.

In an age that holds so many threats to our cultural heritage, 3D scanning and composite photography are changing the way cultural artefacts are recorded – but different scanning systems do different things. Some are mainly for screen-based visualisations, while others are for re-materialising objects in three dimensions. The techniques are still unfamiliar, and there is not enough agreement about how and when to apply the technology, the terminology used to discuss the work, or the usage of the resulting data. This essay gives a brief account of the new technologies, and suggests some of the political and philosophical questions raised in consequence.

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*It is now possible to record objects in colour and 3D and to re-materialise them in forms that are almost indistinguishable from the original.*

It is now possible to record objects in colour and 3D and to re-materialise them in forms that are almost indistinguishable from the original. But achieving this requires digital and physical artisans to work together, uniting technology and craft skills. The most dramatic technical developments with relevance to cultural heritage

are going on with software used in photogrammetry (the extraction of 3D information from 2D images), composite photography (blending data

from multiple images of the same object) and 3D output devices (both additive and subtractive technologies).

The 19th Century was a similar time of technological advance, in which photography, electro-forming and plaster-casting were changing attitudes to originality and museum collections.

2017 is the 150th anniversary of Henry Cole's 'Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of all Countries'. Evidence of the success of the Convention can still be seen in the Cast Courts at the Victoria and Albert Museum. To celebrate the anniversary the V&A, funded by the Peri Foundation, have launched ReACH (Reproduction of Art and Cultural Heritage), 'a year-long programme of events devoted to the drafting of a new convention regarding the role of museums in digital preservation and the dissemination of works of art and culture'.

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*The importance of cultural artefacts lies in the complex stories they communicate about people who lived in different places at different times, held different views, and often believed in different gods.*

We are again living in an age of copying, and there is a realisation that the importance of cultural artefacts lies in the complex stories they communicate about people who lived in different places at different times, held different views, and often believed in different gods. Museum objects are a means to access knowledge and understanding; they are not primarily things of commercial value.

In the Convention, Henry Cole optimistically claimed that copying does not harm the original. While this is true in the case of photography, casting and electroforming both require a mould. The production of a mould will damage original artefacts and is no longer allowed in most museums. When moulds were made of the Portico de la Gloria of Santiago de Compostela Cathedral, for example, the fragile polychrome surface was damaged. This is deeply regrettable and thankfully is no longer necessary (the re-materialised gothic masterpiece in London has inspired generations and is itself now the subject of a major restoration that will rejuvenate the Cast Courts).

Before cheap flights and mass tourism, it was easier to move copies of architectural sculptures to London than it was to move people to remote sites. Now the situation is reversed. Millions of people each year want to visit sites of cultural interest. Many of those sites, like the

tombs in the Valley of the Kings, were never intended to be visited – and cannot accommodate vast crowds without incurring significant damage. Tourism, which is vital for local economies, is now one of the main causes of the change and decay of our shared cultural heritage. It is increasingly difficult to balance the complex demands of protecting heritage sites while providing access to them.

Tourists are not the only threat to our cultural heritage. Other causes of damage and destruction include war, natural disasters, climate change, pollution, political apathy, vandalism, accidental damage, fire, iconoclastic attacks and theft. Cultural protection needs to address each of these destructive factors, as well as acknowledging the inevitable changes that occur to objects and buildings over time. Done properly, recording of cultural heritage can facilitate a deeper and more accurate understanding of the articulate artefacts left by previous generations.

Recently media attention has focused on iconoclastic acts of destruction, particularly those carried out by Daesh. While any attention is welcome, it is essential for public debate to be carried out in an informed way and within a considered and nuanced context.

The comments that attended the unveiling of a ‘copy’ of the central section of the Arch of Triumph from Palmyra in Trafalgar Square in 2016 were deliberately provocative, and had the effect of politicising the recording of cultural heritage. This is dangerous, because it puts both the technology and the people who operate it into a position of aggressive opposition to radicalised iconoclasts, making them a direct target.

There is also the very important question of quality. The ‘exact copy’ of the Arch of Triumph was inaccurate in terms of scale and material; and more importantly was incorrect in terms of the language of decoration and architectural ornament of the time in which it was made. The consequence was to turn the arch from a specific architectural monument into a generalized symbol that focused on defiance rather than communication.

By contrast, a French team from Iconem, and a Russian team that included experts in mine clearance, both working on the ground soon after Daesh was forced out of Palmyra in March 2016, used aerial photogrammetry to record the whole site at levels of accuracy of a few centimetres. This was invaluable work: when Daesh retook the site in December 2016, the Roman theatre, which had not been significantly damaged in their initial attacks, became the first target.

It hardly needs to be stated that recording should ideally be financed and carried out in times of peace. War zones are not conducive to subtle, detailed and often slow work. Accurate recording results in data that can be stored or used for repair and possible ‘rematerialisation’ of

the architectural forms. The whole question of anastylosis (authentic reconstruction) has re-emerged as a topic of importance. Do we re-erect and repair monuments using new and original material as was done in the past? Now we have the technology to create exact copies, what is the relationship between originality and authenticity, between the relic and the replica?

In this context the Cast Courts at the V&A are again a focus of attention and interest – both as practical means of preserving culture, and as a starting point for a philosophical exploration of creation and originality. Recording and understanding change is central to our view of an object, its history, where it has been and how it has been viewed. Comparing a 19th Century cast of one of the figures from the Parthenon frieze to its 'original' in the British Museum reveals that the surface is not the same. The mould contains forensic evidence of the 'original' eroded chisel marks that give access to a meaningful biography of the object. On the originals, these marks are overlaid with the toolmarks made by museum conservators in 1938.

All things change over time, yet the commonly held idea of an 'original object' is of something with fixed qualities that are integral to its being and character. While there is seldom an instant moment of creation, there are often periods of rapid change in its career. A series of actions and decisions, normally made by more than one person, are required to bring an object into being. This is then followed by decay, relocation, revaluation, conservation, preservation, imposition, addition, correction, alteration and 'improvement'. Originality is not a fixed state of being: it is a process in which many agents work together. In the digital age, diverse recording methods can accurately fix the object in a moment of time. The resulting archive acts as a record by which change can be measured.

So what is possible with the new technology?

Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative, by Factum Foundation and the University of Basel, has recorded the surface of some of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings that have since been re-materialised at a scale of 1:1. To the naked eye, from a normal viewing distance, they are indistinguishable from the originals. Not only are the surfaces of tombs recorded in colour and three dimensions with over 100 million ordered spatial points per square metre; key skills and technologies are simultaneously transferred to the local community.

As the project develops, the data generated will be stored locally and disseminated globally (the copyright remains with the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities). It will reveal change to the surface, paint loss and alterations caused by the impact of tourism and restoration attempts to halt the tomb's decay. Hopefully it will also lead to new discoveries about the tombs themselves.

The aim of all Factum Foundation projects is to produce freely available, interactive, multi-layered archives for paintings, sculptures and low relief objects – as a means of preservation of cultural heritage, and a source for scholarship and research. In 2016 the Foundation undertook a major research project in collaboration with the Museo del Prado, recording all of Goya's Black Paintings using a 3D surface scanner, composite photography, X-Ray, ultra violet photography and infrared spectroscopy, supplemented by photographs taken of the paintings in the 1870s.

The resulting documentation of the Black Paintings has been layered together so all the information can be seen at the same scale and aligned to facilitate direct comparison. The aim is to make them freely available on the museum website so they can be viewed on a normal computer, via the internet, without specialist software or advanced skills. These archives are an essential part of the preservation of any object, acting as 'digital passports' for works of art at a specific moment in time.

Recording cultural heritage requires operators who are sensitive to the vulnerable nature of the object. Imparting this idea of sensitivity is often more difficult than teaching technological skills. For this reason Factum Foundation always works with teams of people with different skills, knowledge and levels of experience.

The existence of 'big data' recorded with diverse technologies raises questions about storage, dissemination, and ownership of data. Who has access to the data, how it can be used, when it is freely available and when should it be commercialised; how it is used in restoration in the event of damage and to what extent it should be used to replicate damaged areas – these are all issues for top-level heritage managers. The question of when, where, and under what circumstances it should be re-materialised as a three-dimensional, physical object is emerging as a topic of great importance.

Long-term archiving is an important issue beyond the scope of this text, but it is essential that there are distributed servers capable of storing data in a secure format for many years, even in the absence of an electrical supply. Long term digital storage cannot be taken for granted.

There is an urgent need to establish guidelines for quality that cover the various types of digital recording. The common misunderstandings, based on a blind faith in technology and the myths of digital perfection, undermine the effective recording of cultural heritage. At the most fundamental level there needs to be a clear statement of intent: 'Digital recording should be carried out in a non-contact process using various technologies at a resolution sufficient to make an objectively accurate copy of the original object should the original be lost, damaged or destroyed'.

Guidelines are essential to give structure to the training initiatives that are at the core of Factum Foundation's work. The 3D Scanning, Archiving and Training Centre was opened by the director general of UNESCO, the Swiss ambassador and the Egyptian Minister of Antiquities in February 2017 as a central part of the Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative. Recording and training initiatives in collaboration with the Peri Foundation are ongoing in Russia. A centre for Digital Humanities is being planned with the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne and the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice. A centre for practical training in heritage recording is being developed with Columbia University and with Art Jameel in Dubai.

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The emphasis is on building bridges between different skills and professional disciplines; between the traditional arts that celebrate the transmission of knowledge through manual skill, and the digital arts that express a similar understanding through algorithms and electronic engineering. In Saudi Arabia the first practical workshop to record the buildings and decorative details of Al Balad, Jeddah has recently been completed in collaboration with Community Jameel and the House of Traditional Arts. Other initiatives are being planned. The scale of the task should not be underestimated.

The training of local operators is at the heart of these initiatives, merging political permission, technological understanding and academic discipline. Different types of recording take different amounts of time to master, and the cost of the equipment varies greatly. There needs to be collective agreement about what data is needed for each application. There is no excuse for wasting opportunities to carry out recording as well as possible, and future generations will judge us harshly if we do. The field is developing fast and requires operators who understand both technology and art. Fortunately this is not as rare as it was in the pre-computer age. The brief is simple: record at the highest resolution possible sensitively using systems that capture the colour, shape and surface of an object.



Basic training to record objects and buildings can be done in a relatively short time depending on the photographic skills of the operator, while training to use drones or training in data processing can take years of experience. The skill of the operator and their attention to detail during processing will ultimately affect the quality of the data. This requires powerful computers, and the work can be very time consuming. Processing the Sarcophagus of Seti I in Sir John Soane's Museum took a skilled operator, working with the software writers, several months. The resulting 3D model is made from five thousand 58-megabyte images, and consists of 13 billion polygons.

Other recording systems are more expensive and demand specialist software. These could be held in centralized pools and loaned (with trained operators) for specific purposes to ensure efficient and effective use. As technology is advancing so quickly, it is a mistake to put too much investment into hardware and software that is not intensively used.

This text should demonstrate that while the use of technology can be very expensive, it doesn't have to be. The secret lies in training and equipping local communities. This is a cost effective way to carry out recording and empower local people. Our work in Daghestan with the Peri Foundation has resulted in the training of two highly skilled operators, Shamil Gadzhidadaev and Gennady Viktorov who are now passing on their skills to others. The forthcoming work of the Peri Foundation to record Dionisy's frescos at Ferapontov Monastery in northern Russia will result in the training of more people.

Initiatives are also being developed in Cross River State in Nigeria, and the Ennedi Plateau in Chad, where we are working with the Trust for African Rock Art (TARA) to identify talented and highly motivated individuals who can be trained in photogrammetry. The people we have had the privilege to work with are as capable as (and often more ingenious and resourceful than) Oxford or Harvard graduates.

Digital and physical artisans are working alongside historians, scientists, restorers, museum directors, dealers, collectors, curators and others. Extraordinary things are possible when technical experts and cultural managers share the same goals and acknowledge each other's skills. Now is the time to focus part of the UK's Cultural Protection Fund on the documentation of sites and objects alongside (and in support of) the archaeologists and experts working on the ground.

This can be done through training, managing and equipping local photographers to undertake photogrammetry, creating a pool of equipment with operators that can be called upon, creating a chatroom and 'helpline' complete with remote access to the computers on the ground, and ensuring there is a network of servers that is capable of archiving the vast amount of data that will be generated. Once safely

stored, the time consuming task of processing can be done as and when required. There has never been a more dangerous time for cultural heritage – or a moment of greater opportunity offered by the available technologies.

Those of us with the resources, experience and techniques have a responsibility to find the most effective way to transfer them to others. We must give local communities an incentive to record and preserve their own cultural heritage.

Through this approach historical objects will reveal themselves as complex and meaningful subjects, and in this way we can preserve the evidence of the past for study and sharing by future generations – in the hope of better and more enlightened times ahead.

(An extended, fully-referenced version of this essay, with a detailed explanation of the technologies employed by Factum Foundation, can be found at [www.factumfoundation.org](http://www.factumfoundation.org))

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