



Republic of Iraq
Ministry of Culture
State Board of Antiquities & Heritage
World Heritage Department

The High Commission for Managing World Heritage Sites in Iraq

The systematic destruction of iconic components of Iraq’s rich and diverse heritage that we have been witnessing over the past months is intolerable and it must stop immediately”,

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova

Hatra-Ashur- Samarra
State of Conservation Report
2016

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General Background

Heritage of Nations is foundation of their cultural identity, and address of cultural individuality esteem in its history and its presence , so possibly we can see first the enemy to destroy them as it did in Iraq , Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia ,and the cultural heritage of nations has always been a source of inspiration and vital source of contemporary creativity draws their artists , intellectuals , poets and , philosophers to the new creations take its location in the map of cultural heritage, and themselves become heritage connects past and present of the nation and strengthens its presence in the global cultural scene. And the cultural heritage don't be as a monuments and antiquities , but also everything that introduces by the nation of an intangible expression, folklore, songs ,tales , music and traditional knowledge handed down to the nation through generations and centuries, and those multiple and varied architectural monuments , clothing, documents, reflect the spirit and pulse of her life and culture.

Heritage of Iraq according to several sociological and anthropological studies, which agree on the fact that an identity ,socially has based on the principle of symmetry and harmony as we accustomed to in Iraqi society, it carries connotations of diversity, complementarities and differences, but without clashes it became a catalyst for creativity, identity also affecting in the cultural heritage as a condition and the climate; and support of creativity, and sense of self and belonging, but a sincere expression of the self in in its peak. Thereby becoming as an objective and way. It's based on instinctive feelings of belonging and be with special culture within her original features , which form a collective identity, identity based on cultural heritage and joint race and then, it helps to discover the structural context to the community until it turns into a harmonious whole on awareness level.

World Heritage Sites in Iraq .

Iraq is one of the first regional states signed the World Heritage Convention in 1974 and received the honor of inscription of five sites on the world heritage list ,Hatra, Ashur, Samarra ,Erbil citadel , and southern marshes of Iraq, and still saved a long list of tentative list sites for more than a decade and a half have ratified by World Heritage Committee.

In Iraq, World Heritage Sites (WHS) experience a number of tribulations arising from protection and management and land use issues; this situation is not much different from almost all developing countries. Besides common issues like inadequate management and lack of policy formulation, some areas possess specific problems of their own nature. In general, for effective management of these areas, it is necessary to deal with various issues on priority basis such as lack of management plans, lack of coordination between area management institutions and concerning parties, deficiency of funding, limited foreign investment, insufficient social awareness and unsatisfactory promotion and advertisement for the concept of world heritage is no longer mentioned and the historical sites in

Iraq , not seen a great work of preservation can be relied upon to remove our sites from the world heritage list of danger , such as Ashur that still for more than a decade on the list of danger and archaeological city of Samarra , had completed the first decade on the list of danger .

We will review briefly the three World Heritage sites;

Hatra

Historical site, Hatra is of great importance not only for Iraq but for the whole world of the early historical sites of Iraq have been inscribed on the world heritage list(1985) the city has been a concern of the State party since the middle

of last century, much of the work carried out in the field of excavations and conservation since the fifties of the last century and had been preceded by

German scientist , Walter Andrea who was the director of the excavations in the city of Ashur and those projects have increased after the inscription the site on the World Heritage list.

Instability in Iraq after 2003 and the absence of planning in the city has affected negatively on the completion of infrastructure of world heritage sites in the city.

But the worst that's happened to the city, its occupation by the terrorist forces of Islamic State (ISIS) in mid-2014 and exaggerated in bulldozing the city and destroying a lot antiquities and we couldn't identify to what happened in

the city only through videotapes broadcasted by those terrorist gangs as a sickening images are infuriated the international community ,and reports indicated that the site has become as a store for saving military material and training center to terrorist groups.

Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova Said ("*Destruction of Hatra marks a turning point in the cultural cleansing underway in Iraq*")

In this situation the site had been inscribed on the list of danger during the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn/Germany, 2015.

Draft Decision: 40 COM 7A.11

The World Heritage Committee took the following decision after a occupation the site by Islamic state troops;

1-,Having examined document. WHC/16/40.COM/7A

2-Recalling Decision 39 COM 7B.51, adopted at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015),

3-Encourages the State Party to pursue its effort to ensure the protection of the property, despite the impossibility to access it.

4-Expresses its great concern about the absence of information on the state of conservation of the property and requests the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of the evolution of the situation on the ground.

5-Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2017, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017.

6-Decides to retain *Hatra* (Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Hatra within World Heritage

1-	State Party	Iraq, Governorate of Ninawa
2-	Name of the World Heritage Property	Hatra
3-	Geographical coordinates to the nearest second	N35 35 17.016 E 42 43 5.988
4-	Date of Inscription on the World Heritage List in danger	1985, and in 2015 inscribed on the world heritage list in danger
5-	Organization responsible for the Preparation of the report	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage /World Heritage Commission of Iraq
6-	Date of the report	15/1/2017
7-	Criteria	(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)

Source ,World Heritage Centre (Access Date 15/1/2017)

Ashur

Ashur is from the major historical sites ,the Assyria capital currently known (*Qal'at Sherqat*) , ancient religious capital of Assyria, located on the West Bank of the Tigris River in Mosul province, northern Iraq. The first scientific excavations began in the city by the German expedition (1903 – 1913) led by Walter Andre.

The first concerns of the Iraqi state board of antiquities and heritage (SBAH) with the site since 1950s, and a lot of work done in the field of excavation and conservation.

The significant role of the site emerged in the inscription on the world heritage list in danger in 2003 , where there are many international demands for protection and management ,but unfortunately don't implemented due to the fragile security situation in Iraq, until occupied by the terrorist forces of Islamic state (ISIS)) where they began bulldozing the site and destroy its antiquities.

So our connection stopped with site until fully liberated in the middle of the December 2016, by Iraqi forces and state board of antiquities and heritage (SBAH) began with fast , first estimate of damage and therefore that the State party is seriously concern now to start a quick campaign of preservation with the help of the international community to do immediate intervention on the site to stop a lot of site components to fall , especially Tabira Gate , after two years of occupation of the site by terrorist forces of the Islamic State. (ISIS

We hope that security situation will be stabilized within months and we hope to begin a big campaign of work in the site and to put central assessment of damage report and to deal with the matter on the base of proprieties ,particularly the site on the list of danger since 2003, and the efforts must be concentrated to remove the site from the list of danger,

but before begin any work on the site we request world heritage committee to send team of experts to do damage assessment to be a guideline for next work in the site .

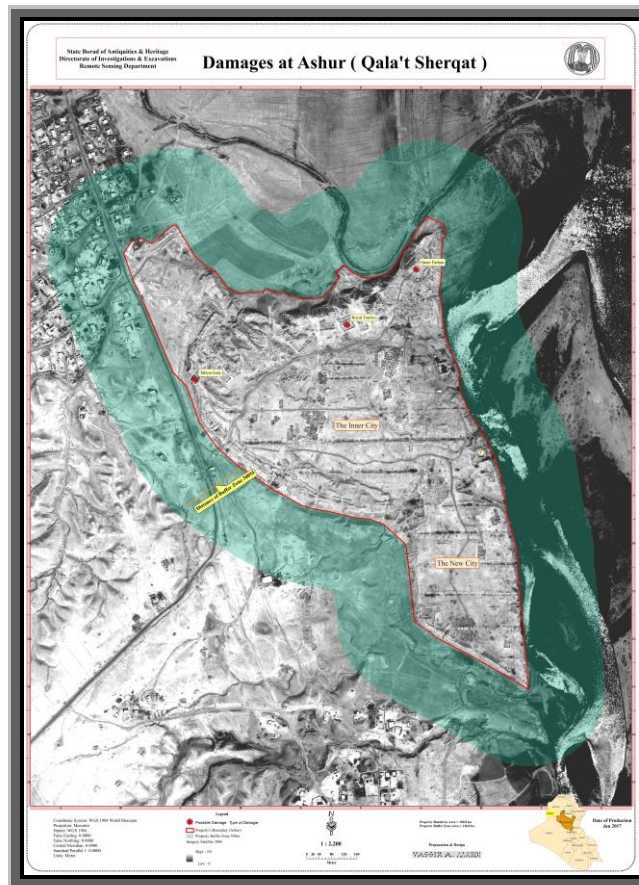


Fig.1 An affected areas in Ashur (Source, World Heritage Department, Baghdad)2017

Due to the improved situation on the site so our department began a preliminary campaign of work such cleaning the site and recognizing the most affected areas of the site, and preparing for emergency work where some parts nearly fall and need a preventive way of quick preservation.

Ashur within World Heritage

1-	State Party	Iraq Governorate of Salah ad Din
2-	Name of the World Heritage Property	Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)
3-	Geographical coordinates to the nearest second	N35 27 32.004 E43 15 34.992
4-	Date of Inscription on the World Heritage List /in danger	2003
5-	Organization responsible for the preparation of the report	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage/World Heritage Commission of Iraq
6-	Date of the report	15/1/2017
8-	Criteria	(iii)(iv)

Source; World Heritage Centre, Access Date 15/12/2016

Draft Decision: 40 COM 7A.10

The World Heritage Committee,

1-Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7A,

2-Recalling Decision **39 COM 7A.25**, adopted at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015),

3-Encourages the State Party to pursue its efforts to ensure the protection of the property, despite the impossibility to access it;

4-Expresses its great concern about the absence of information on the state of conservation of the property and requests_the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of the evolution of the situation on the ground;

5-Also requests_the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2017, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017;

6-Decides to retain Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) (Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The current situation of the site

After completely falling the site by terrorism, the forces of Islamic state (ISIS) and the difficulty of communicating so Iraqi World Heritage Commission has to follow up the affair with the international organizations that uses the principle of analyzing satellite images such as Blue Shield organization and the Institute for training and research, United Nations and their published reports ,

The military campaign by Iraqi forces began in 2016 fall to liberate Nineveh province from Islamic state terrorist forces as site of Ashur completely liberated and a first fast assessment of damage for site prepared by officials working in the site .



Fig.2 Tabira Gate, seriously affected(Source, World Heritage Department, Baghdad)2017

The most affected city monuments is Tabira Gate where it looked that the forces of the Islamic State was on the site , so Allied planes or Iraqi planes raided on the site where the damage occurred as shown in figure (2)

Other affected parts in the site the Royal Cemetery where some parts collapsed caused by rain water and the metal cover on the cemetery affected too.

Protective metal cover has been done four years ago intended to maintain the Royal Cemetery of weather factors but in the presence of (ISIS) became danger on the site where the rain came and swept away in the middle of the graveyard and therefore had extensive damage on the site in addition to that glass panels that cover the cemetery affected by the air raids.

And with all these and in spite of the fragile security situation in the newly liberated areas, the state board of antiquities and heritage (SBAH) had sent some teams to the provinces of Anbar, Salah Uddin and Nineveh to assess the damage and begin preventive preservation to stop factors of collapse.



Fig. 3 Royal Cemetery of Ashur, after two year of occupation by Islamic State Troop.

(Source, World Heritage Department, Baghdad)2017

Archaeological City of Samarra

The old capital city of Samarra of the Abbasids during (836 – 892) stands as a witness to the greatness of the Abbasid Caliphate, which influenced over large areas of the civilized world and their territories stretched from Tunisia to Central Asia to pose the greatest Islamic Empire at that time.

The only Islamic capital which has maintained its original architecture and arts, such as mosaics and inscriptions. the urban scheme of Samarra arrived to us with its original copy well preserved ,we cannot find this case in any of the large ancient cities, Samarra was abandoned early, so the city don't subject to demolition or rebuilding and change the plans as it happened in other cities .

Samarra was built to replace Baghdad as the capital of the Abbasids. As Baghdad's monuments and landmarks have been lost and devastated throughout the ages, Samarra is the only material witness to the greatness of the Abbasid Caliphate at the height of her greatness and prosperity.

The ancient city of Samarra, includes two of the largest mosques in the Muslim World (Great Mosque known as its Minaret (Malwiyya) and Abu Dlaf mosque and the biggest palaces in the Muslim World (such as the Palace of the Caliph and Al Mashooq Palace etc.). Samarra saw developing the own artistic styles like sculptured plaster known as style or model of Samarra, which spread to the other parts of the Muslim world in that time .

State board of antiquities and heritage (SBAH) has paid her full concern toward the city since the 1930s and reached the peak of interest through the archaeological revitalization project of Samarra and Al Mutawakilyya of 1980s last century and for outstanding universal value the site inscribed on the world heritage list in danger on 2007 and remained in this case till now ,the city seriously affected by many events such as the 2003 war , and the great mosque minaret shelled , and bulldozing some sites such as Sur Ishnas caused by intense military presence of coalition forces.

By 2014 with the emergence of the Islamic State terrorist forces (ISIS) and occupied many parts of Iraq and Syria , Samarra seriously affected by the military actions and the most affected sites the Great Mosque , Sur Ishnas ,and Qubbat Alsalybyya.

After the security situation stabilized in the city, international commitments increased to preserve the city's monuments by UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee .

Samarra Archaeological City within World Heritage

1-	State Party	Iraq -Governorate of Salah ad Din
2-	Name of the World Heritage Property	Samarra Archaeological City
3-	Geographical coordinates to the nearest second	N 34 20 27 .562 E 43 49 24.75
4-	Date of Inscription on the World Heritage List /in danger	2007
5-	Organization responsible for the preparation of the report	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage/World Heritage Commission of Iraq
6-	Date of the report	15/1/2017
8-	Criteria	(ii)(iii)(iv)

Source; World Heritage Centre, Access Date 15/12/2016

Draft Decision: 40 COM

7A.12

The World Heritage Committee,

1-Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7A,

2-Recalling Decision **39 COM 7A.26**, adopted at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015),

3-Encourages the State Party to pursue its efforts to ensure the protection of the property, despite the impossibility to access it;

4-Expresses its great concern about the absence of information on the state of conservation of the property and requests the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of the evolution of the situation on the ground;

5-Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2017**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage

Committee at its 41st session in 2017;

6-Decides to retain Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Preliminary assessment of the damage

Due to the large space of the site and the difficulty of doing a central assessment however ,department of antiquities of Samarra ,documented the affected monuments as Samarra, became the first line of defense to Iraqi forces confronted the terrorist forces of the Islamic State (ISIS) when occupied Salahuddin province , however the damages diagnosed as follow;



Fig. 4 Sur Ishnas , fortification on it.

Source(Dept. of Antiquities of Samarra,2016)

- **The fortifications erected by the Iraqi army** to repel the enemy using some high places as it happened on the surface of Sur Ishnas where it was erected barricades and digging a lot of trenches on top of the fence and has been influenced very much by military actions.

Sur Ishnas is one of the landmarks of archaeological city of Samarra due to its height of the area it has become as a target of the warring parties where it

bombed by artillery, some images published by terrorist forces of the Islamic State (ISIS) show military operations from the top of the Sur.

- **Damage happened on the site by exchanging fire** with the enemy as it happened at Qubbat al Salybyya ,as warring parties occupied this significant monument in the city ,see figure (5)



Fig.5 An affected area of Qubbat al Salybyya

Source(Dept. of Antiquities of Samarra,2016)

- The damage done to the Great Mosque

The great mosque is of outstanding historical monuments in the city , located on the street known Street (Alsrijah) established by the Caliph al-Mu'tasim, and renewed by Caliph al-Mutawakkil and work began on building a mosque in 234 HJ which continued for three years.

Due to its central location of the archaeological city of Samarra so attracted the interest of the state board of antiquities and heritage(SBAH), since the 1930s, they did a lot of excavation and conservation work on the site and on inscription the site on the World Heritage list, the world heritage

committee has recommended the establishment of the infrastructure for archaeological city of Samarra and some corrective procedures in the field of protection and management , so the choice and start working in the great mosque in 2013 but the military operations and clashes with terrorist forces of Islamic state (ISIS) have removed everything that has been done on site.



Fig.6 Great Mosque ,side of green areas ,completely removed.

Source(Dept. of Antiquities of Samarra,2016)

World Heritage Sites – Tentative List

As mentioned in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (paragraphs, 62,64), is that States parties must recognize of its significant historical sites in their territories , and preparing a tentative list and send it to the world heritage committee in order to look for possibility of inscribing on the world heritage list ,so Iraq has prepared a list with the historical sites to be inscribed on the world heritage list for historic sites of universal value such as a city of Nimrod ,Nineveh, Ukaydir

fortress, the city of Babylon, Wadi Assalm cemetery, Amedy city and historical center of Baghdad ,from the sites of this category seriously affected by the military operations ,Nimrod and Nineveh ,as shown below.

s/n	Name of the site	Criteria	Date of preparing the list	Current situation
1-	Nimrod (cultural)	(i)(ii)(iii)	7/7/2000	After two years of occupation by terrorist forces of Islamic state, the site liberated by Iraqi forces, and assessment mission has been sent to the site, in the mid of Dec. 2016
2-	The Ancient City of Nineveh (cultural)	(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)	7/7/2000	After two years of occupation by terrorist forces of Islamic state, the site fully liberated by Iraqi forces.

Source ,World Heritage Department(SBAH) 20017

And in terms of the world heritage sites, the tentative list sites have acquired special significance after the control of terrorist forces of the Islamic State(ISIS) on two of them as follow:

City of Nimrod

Nimrod city is known with other names such as Kalih and Kalihu is an Assyrian city, its remaining ruins located 30 kilometers south of Mosul, a city founded in the 13th century BC. In the 9th BC century became the capital of the Assyrian Empire in the time of king Ashurnasirpal II, and destroyed in the year 612 BC by the Chaldeans and Medes. And due to its outstanding universal value ,the state board of antiquities and heritage (SBAH) prepared a tentative list for the site since 2000 for inclusion on the World Heritage list. The largest event of the site ,occupying it by terrorist forces of Islamic State (ISIS) mid-2014.

Where these terrorist groups began series of destruction works at the site and then bombing it in dangerous precedent ,never seen in the history.

Through aerial photos analyzed by the United Nations Institute for training and research on 7/3/2015 showed that the most affected areas the Palace of Ashur Nasser II.



Fig. 7 An aerial image of Nimrod site observed damaged areas in red .

(Source: World Heritage Centre 2016)

In the fall of 2016 Iraqi forces began with air support from coalition forces and start liberating Ninawa province, where the city of Nimrod completely liberated , and UNESCO ordered to send a mission of damage assessment experts led by Iraq office of UNESCO in Amman and we await their report to assess the status of the site.

As relevant with the matter and many variables in the field and entire liberation of the site the World Heritage Department/in (SBAH) recognized the affected areas based on the preliminary surveying ,carried out by teams working there , through a map prepared for that purpose.



Fig. 8 Stone carvings destroyed in the city of Nimrod (Source: UNESCO 2017)

City of Nineveh

The city regarded the oldest and famous in the ancient Assyrian Empire, located on the East Bank of the Tigris opposite the city of Mousel . Since the ancient times the roads were coming from the hills of Kurdistan meet there.

The first who surveyed the city of Nineveh and drew its map , the archaeologist Claudius Rich in the 1820, the entire work was completed by Felix Jones and edited in 1854.

For the excavation was carried out by several people sporadically since then. In the period 1845 – 1851 Layard discovered the Palace of Sennacherib and took with him to England an unparalleled collection of stone carvings in addition to thousands of cuneiform tablets of the great library of Ashurbanipal.

Hormuzd Rassam completed this work in 1852. In the period 1929-1932 Campbell Thompson discovered Temple Nebo, and worked for the British Museum and discovered the location of the palace of Ashurnasirpal II.

In 1931 – 1932, and for the first time, Thompson digging together with Mallowan, the city is very wide of its remains ruins, the great Assyrian city wall.

The state board of antiquities and heritage (SBAH) preparing the tentative list for the site for inclusion on the World Heritage list since 2000.



Fig.9 The destruction of Nergal Gate,(Source; National Geographic,2016)

The terrorists forces of Islamic State (ISIS) fully occupied the site in mid-2014. And with the beginning the process of liberation of the city of Mosul the site had been liberated entirely.

Aerial photos and the initial surveys, which followed the process of liberating the site show that there is a lot of damage on the site due to the presence of the forces of the Islamic State (ISIS) for two years on site.

World Heritage Sites in Iraq ,Conclusion and Recommendations

The world heritage sites in Iraq as mentioned , it became an advanced lines of the conflict so that the warring parties unfortunately did not understand and realized the international conventions for the protection of cultural property in armed conflict as the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols.

The Iraqi heritage tragedy goes on and do not stop for this serious event (for best individual's possessions: his identity) after 2003, however we put some recommendations might remind the States Parties to the Convention that the endangered sites in Iraq are the property of humanity-due to the World Heritage Convention-and all parties must be as one line to safeguard it ,as follow :

1-The obligation of the warring parties in terms of international agreements for the protection of cultural property in times of armed conflict, particularly , many coalition troops and aircrafts are bombing Islamic State sites (ISIS) in these days and includes both aircraft of the United States , Canada , Australia , France, UAE, Jordan and other States that have signed those agreements and must be adhered to it.

2-The need for international action for immediate and rapid campaign of initial preservation for a lot of sites that have been liberated .

3-The necessity to send high level missions to assess the damage at world heritage sites by the World Heritage Committee as it sent an assessment mission to the city of Palmyra in April 2016.

4-The need to involve universities and scientific institutions to begin work of preservation in these such as Aga Khan organization , Global Heritage Fund and Getty Institute for conservation and others ,they have many projects around the

world and can take advantage of their experiences and major historical sites need big interventions of restoration to maintenance and preservation to reconstruction due to the damage happened in sites by terrorist forces by removing the site entirely as it happened in in Nimrod.

5-The need to initiate long term strategic planning in historic sites in the field of protection and management and if finance standing an obstacle , research and theoretical studies for future projects to upgrade those sites would be helpful to begin with implementing it after the crisis.

At the international level in developed countries, it looks that they except heritage issues of any financial constraints that effect on its survival and sustainability .

