

Ex Novo Journal of Archaeology

Volume 2, December 2017

Editorial Panel

Editors in Chief

Direttore editoriale

Maja Gori – Ruhr University of Bochum (maja.gori@ruhr-uni-bochum.de)

Direttore responsabile

Paolo Fallai – Corriere della Sera

Editors

Alessandro Pintucci – Sapienza University of Rome (alessandro.pintucci@gmail.com)

Martina Revello Lami – Leiden University (m.revello.lami@arch.leidenuniv.nl)

Advisory Board

Kenneth Aitchison (University of York), Marcello Barbanera (Sapienza University of Rome), Rita Borioni (CDA Rai), Peter Campbell (University of Southampton), Filippo Carlá Uhink (University of Heidelberg), Jasper Chalcraft – University of Sussex; Rachele Dubbini (University of Ferrara), Gabriele Gattiglia (University of Pisa), Patrizia Gioia (Sapienza University of Rome), Alfredo González-Ruibal (Institute of Heritage Sciences (Incipit) of the Spanish National Research Council), Alessandro Guidi (University of Rome 3), Enrico Giannichedda (ISCUM – Ethnographic and Archaeological Museum of Masone), Matthew Harpster (University of Birmingham), Valerie Higgins (The American University of Rome), Richard Hodges (The American University of Rome), Francesco Iacono (University of Cambridge), Eduard Krekovič (Comenius University in Bratislava), Heleen van Londen (University of Amsterdam), Arkadiusz Marciniak (Adam Mickiewicz University), Davide Nadali (Sapienza University of Rome), Silvia Pallecchi (DAFIST University of Genoa), Dimitris Plantzos (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens), James Symonds (University of Amsterdam).

Subscriptions

The journal is published once a year. For all subscription-based enquiries please contact: info@archaeopress.com

Instructions to authors

Authors who consider submitting an article to the journal are requested to contact the editor in chief M. Gori before sending in manuscripts. They can download a copy of the Editorial Style Guidelines to which they must conform as closely as possible. All manuscripts will be reviewed by external referees before acceptance. Manuscripts may be submitted to: submission@archaeologiaexnovo.org

Cover Image

Metropolis (ink, watercolors), courtesy of Daniel Egneus ©Daniel Egneus (2011)

ISSN 2531-8810

ISBN 978-1-78491-763-0

© 2016 ASSOCIAZIONE EX NOVO

Published by ASSOCIAZIONE EX NOVO in association with ARCHAEOPRESS

www.archaeologiaexnovo.org

www.archaeopress.com

Ex Novo Journal of Archaeology

Volume 2, December 2017

CONTENTS

Maja GORI, Alessandro PINTUCCI & Martina REVELLO LAMI <i>Editorial: Who Owns the Past? Archaeological Heritage between Idealisation and Destruction</i>	1
Caroline A. SANDES <i>Remembering Beirut: lessons for archaeology and (post-)conflict urban redevelopment in Aleppo</i>	5
Nour A. MUNAWAR <i>Reconstructing Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones: Should Palmyra be Rebuilt?</i>	33
Augusto PALOMBINI <i>The rights of reproducing Cultural Heritage in the digital Era. An Italian Perspective</i>	49
Emily R. HANSCAM <i>Frontiers of Romania: Nationalism and the Ideological Space of the Roman Limes</i>	63
Ivan MARINOV & Nicolas ZORZIN <i>Thracology and Nationalism in Bulgaria – Deconstructing Contemporaneous Historical and Archaeological Representations</i>	85
Reviews	
<i>Museo Federico II Stupor Mundi. Palazzo Ghislieri, Piazza Federico II, 3, 60035 Jesi (AN)</i> Reviewed by Rachele DUBBINI.....	113
<i>UNESCO Experts' Meeting on the Safeguarding of Syria's heritage. Berlin, 2-4 June 2016</i> Reviewed by Nour A. MUNAWAR.....	123

Who Owns the Past? Archaeological Heritage between Idealisation and Destruction

Maja Gori, Alessandro Pintucci, Martina Revello Lami

Ex Novo Journal of Archaeology

On the 23rd of August 2015 Daesh blew up the 2,000-year-old Baal-Shamin temple in the world-famous Greco-Roman site of Palmyra. This event triggered a profound emotional reaction in society at large, and the ruins soon became an iconic symbol of world heritage in danger. The appalling images of the ruins of Baal Shamin reinforced the perception, especially among western observers, that protecting cultural and natural heritage is yet another duty in the fight against terrorism. A similar international outcry occurred in 2001, when the Buddhas of Bamiyan fell to Taliban dynamite in Afghanistan, and when Iraqi museums and sites were ransacked and looted providing two of the most recent and vivid examples of destroyed heritage in the so-called War on Terror which was launched by the U.S. government after 9/11. Following the destruction at Baal-Shamin, UNESCO declared that the deliberate destruction of Syria's cultural heritage was a war crime, and put into motion several projects and actions aimed at preserving endangered Syrian archaeological heritage. At the same time, alongside income gained from the sale of drug and weapons, the trafficking of antiquities from Syria and Iraq worldwide provided a major source of revenue for Daesh¹.

The dichotomy that is inherent in antiquities – which are either perceived of as the embodiment of freedom, democracy and other values that western society considers too often its own domain, or as a very profitable commodity to be traded illegally– calls for a more accurate reflection upon the notion of cultural appropriation and ownership of the past and its material remains, as well as on the role that globalised scientific archaeology plays in this process.

Certainly, discussions on ownership of the past, its traces and their connection to different identities do not apply only to Syria and Iraq. Among the most well-known cases of controversial heritage, one related to the Palestine-Israeli conflict holds a particular position.² A few months ago, in July 2017, Israel rejected once again the presence of Palestine at the UNESCO council, stating that this was an outrage in terms of its ownership of the Holy Land. To be sure, membership of UNESCO certainly implied that Palestine had been internationally acknowledged as a state in its own right. Most recently Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital has generated on the one hand Palestinian and Arab outrage, and on the other concern

¹ S. Heißner, P.R. Neumann, J. Holland-McCowan & R. Basra, Caliphate in Decline: An Estimate of Islamic State's Financial Fortunes, Report 17/02/2017. <http://icsr.info/2017/02/icsrey-report-caliphate-decline-estimate-islamic-states-financial-fortunes/> accessed 13 December 2017

² M. Gori, The Stones of Contention: The Role of Archaeological Heritage in Israeli–Palestinian Conflict. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 9 (1) 2013: 213-229.

among Washington's western allies. As a result, UN Security Council felt compelled to vote in favour of a resolution calling for Donald Trump to rescind his declaration.

Tensions concerning heritage ownerships and its symbolic value manifest in several different forms. Following the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, heritage places that materialised conflicting ethnic identities during the conflict, such as the Mostar Bridge or the Sarajevo Gazi-Husrev-beg Library, were transformed into reconciliation symbols. This change occurred mainly as bottom-down process and in the overwhelming majority of cases did not succeed in replacing the significance as ethnic markers that these heritage places acquired during wartime.

In October 2017, the Hindu Government of Uttar Pradesh in India decided to remove the Taj Mahal from the official leaflets for tourists, as the world-famous monument had been built by a Muslim emperor during the seventeenth century. This decision reflected the pivotal role played by heritage in the long-standing tensions between Hindu and Muslims that dramatically characterize India's recent history.



Figure 1. The arch of Palmyra's Temple of Baal-Shamin reconstructed by the Digital Archaeology Department at the University of Oxford (London, May 2016, iStock Getty Images ID532270230).

The Colosseum is another iconic heritage site that can be best understood as an archaeological feature used to stimulate collective and individual memory, as well as to promote multi-layered historical associations. In September 2017, the Muslim community of Rome organized a public prayer to be held in the centre of the city, with the intent of raising their voice against the terrorist attacks in Barcelona. Significantly, the area chosen by the Muslim community for the public gathering was located next to the Colosseum, as a way to manifest materially their sense of belonging to the Italian State and their affinity to the political and social values of western countries. The public

prayer, however, never took place. Due to security issues officially raised by Italian police authorities, the ban seemed to be rather an unofficial response to the right-wing parties' strong criticism of the event. In their eyes, Muslims gathering around the Colosseum represented an unacceptable appropriation of Italian symbols and the Italian identity held by that community.

In the light of these events, when applied to the past the word ownership takes on multiple shapes and meanings. Is it thus possible to draw a line between different owners, be they private or public, of cultural heritage? What about the property that is seen today in the myriad of images at our disposal which depict sites and monuments? The spread of 3D and other digital technologies has greatly contributed to making monuments more accessible and democratize heritage. Potentially, everybody can now reproduce cultural objects, own a copy and exploit it for different purposes. In this sense, the photo portraying Palmyra's Arch of Triumph crafted using cutting-edge 3D printing and carving techniques – here on display outside the National Gallery of London (Fig. 1) - brings us back to where we started. Who owns the past and its replicas?

The present issue of Ex Novo contains five papers that explore the various ways in which the past is currently being appropriated, remembered, recovered, (re)created, and used. Caroline Sandes and Nour Munawar discuss the Syrian conflict and issues of reconstruction, adopting two very different points of view. Emily Hanscam, Ivan Marinov and Nicolas Zorzin address processes of creation and appropriation of past narratives in identity construction along the eastern border of the European Union, in Bulgaria and Romania. Augusto Palombini tackles the difficult connection between authenticity and the (re)production of cultural heritage, and the implications that this raises for archaeological research and museum studies. The appropriation of the past in identity building processes is also addressed by Rachele Dubbini in her review of the Museo Federico II in Jesi. Lastly, the political value of heritage is assessed by Munawar in his review of the UNESCO Experts Meeting held in Berlin in 2016.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to the authors who contributed to this issue, the colleagues who reviewed the papers and our advisory board. We are grateful to James Symonds for his support and for the proofreading. Special thanks go to Daniel Egneus, who kindly shared his art with us. As cover image for the second number, we chose his evocative Metropolis that lines up a collection of western heritage icons and allows us to continue the tradition - inaugurated with the first issue - of hosting the work of contemporary artists on our journal.