

IMPACTS OF POLITICIZATION AND CONFLICT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RESOURCES: AN ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN IRAQ

by

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ABSTRACT

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Archeological resources have been used by political regimes to further their own interests since the discipline was established in the late 19th century. Regime-backed 20th century dictators in Iraq, Iran and Egypt understood that whoever controls a nation's archeological resources controls its memory and its people. However, power changes hands and archeological resources are not immune to the shifting of power, be it through external conflict such as an invasion or internal conflict such as a revolution. In situations where the ruling party is overthrown and a power vacuum forms, destructive activities such as looting and land development increase and it is often a struggle to get the new governments to recognize archeological resources as having value. This thesis explores how archeological resources were affected when power changed hands in Iraq under the Ba'athist regime led by Saddam Hussein and after his removal. The focus will be on how different political, societal, and academic forces interacted with archaeological resources in Iraq after the 2003 invasion and the rise of ISIS/ISIL. Identifying the patterns and preconditions that characterize such transitions can help to mitigate negative impacts under similar circumstances elsewhere in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Archaeological resources have been used by political regimes to further their own interests across time and space for many decades ever since the discipline was established as a profession in the late 19th century. Regime-backed 20th century dictators like Iraq's President Saddam Hussein (1937-2006), Iran's Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989), and Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak (1928-2020) understood that whoever controls a nation's archaeological resources controls the nation's memory. By controlling collective memory, a regime can assert control over its people. Archaeological resources can be used to validate a regime's control over physical space as well, as has been demonstrated in many different contexts (Arnold 2006; Sommer 2017; Feige 2008; Gänger 2009; Trigger 1984; Meskell 2020). Educating a population about its archaeological past can help solidify the legitimacy of a political entity. This is well-illustrated by the examples of Iraq (De Cesari 2015), Iran (Abdi 2001), China (Friedman 1994) and Egypt (Silberman 1989). However, power changes hands and archaeological resources are not immune to the shifting of power, be it through external conflict such as an invasion or internal conflict such as a revolution. While destruction of sites by military action is an obvious source of threat, as when overly zealous soldiers fire weapons into or bomb cultural sites intentionally (Arnold 2014), archaeological resources are also impacted by changing political agendas. For example, textbooks printed after the Iranian revolution all but omitted references to pre-Islamic history due to the political motives of the revolutionary government, rejecting the deposed government's affinity for pre-Islamic archaeology. In addition, the Department of Archaeology was closed in 1979 and didn't resume activities fully until 1990 (Abdi 2001). In situations where the ruling party is overthrown and a power vacuum forms, destructive activities such as looting and land development are expanded (Parcak 2015;

Ikram 2013; Kane 2015). For example, during China's sociopolitical movement known as the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the education system created a narrative of the rise of Chinese civilization that ignored the multicultural and ethnically diverse nature of ancient China (Friedman 1994). This led to a misrepresented history designed to legitimize the policies of the contemporary ruling parties. After power changes hands it is often a struggle to get the new governments to recognize archaeological resources as having value (Kane 2015).

This thesis seeks to examine how archaeological resources are affected when power changes hands by examining the politicization of archaeological resources by the Ba'athist regime under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, and how these resources were affected by regime changes in Iraq. The focus will be on how the nation's archaeological resources were affected, including the impact on the region's people, a direct result of the role archaeological resources play in identity creation. How different political, societal, and academic forces interacted with archaeological resources in Iraq after the 2003 invasion and how they were affected by the rise of ISIS/ISIL will also be investigated. Identifying the patterns and preconditions that characterize such transitions can help to mitigate negative impacts under similar circumstances elsewhere in the future. A brief history of Iraq and archaeological investigations in the region will be discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will examine how political entities impacted archaeological resources in Iraq and how those resources were coopted by these entities. Chapter 4 will examine how Iraq's people interacted with archaeological resources through the lens the nation's political regime afforded them, and how, after that regime collapsed, these resources were viewed differently. Chapter 5 will discuss what can be done in the future to minimize damage to archaeological resources during the destabilization of political

regimes and how these resources are a valuable tool for intelligence gathering as well as gaining the trust of local populations.

Iraq Case Study

Iraq demonstrates how archaeological resources and their interpretation can be impacted by a political regime before, during, and after military invasion (Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1 Map of Iraq (http://ian.macky.net/pat/map/iq/iq_blu.gif).

Iraq's Baathist party under Saddam Hussein emphasized the region's archaeology to legitimize itself as a government for all Iraqis, although human rights abuses were pervasive. Even though Iraq has more than 6000 years of archaeological heritage, the party chose to emphasize Mesopotamian civilization over other historical periods. This may have been because Iraq's former colonizers placed so much emphasis on it in their research, including early archaeologists such as Layard (1854), Rich (1818), and Koldewey (1914), which established a cultural precedent within Iraq to gravitate toward this temporal and cultural context. This is the

exact opposite of what happened in Iran during the same period, when the emphasis was placed on Islamic archaeology and non-western influenced topics (Abdi 2001). During the reign of Saddam Hussein, the archaeology of Iraq was fused to his nationalist view of a powerful Iraq loosely modeled on ancient Babylon (De Cesari 2015). Although many different groups have inhabited the region, the Babylonian civilization is by far the most famous, and due to its prestige, the archaeological evidence from this cultural context was ripe for political manipulation. The Baathist government funded numerous excavations and restorations of various ziggurats and sites identified as Babylonian, or within the Babylonian sphere of influence. Because of governmental protections and education on the value of archaeological resources there was virtually no looting of archaeological sites in Iraq prior to the fall of Saddam Hussein and the Baathist party (Gibson 2003). After the government became completely destabilized and Saddam went into hiding, archaeological sites in Iraq lost their protection by the Iraqi military from looting and collecting (Gibson 2003). Iraqi archaeology has gone through many phases since the 2003 invasion and is currently still in a state of flux (Figure 1.2). Archaeological resources in Iraq have been impacted by large scale looting, political corruption, and lack of institutional protection (Poole 2008; Bogdanos 2005; Adams 2001). The Baghdad Museum lost over 15,000 artifacts to looting (Bogdanos 2005); the identity of these looters is still murkily veiled by the fog of war and was not limited to the Baghdad Museum. This represents a change from the limited looting of pre-invasion Iraq and illustrates the shift in how archaeological resources were valued by the population until survival in times of unrest began to overrule personal beliefs or principles. Some sites escaped looting only to become neglected and have fallen into disrepair, as reflected in a joint Iraqi-British survey conducted in 2008 (Curtis et al. 2008). This suggests that certain regions or sites have been better managed, that locals have

found ways to sustainably profit from the sites, or that the populations that interact with these sites are not interested in looting from them. Iraq offers insights into how archaeological resources are affected by an extended period of armed conflict in a nation with a formerly strong dictatorship.

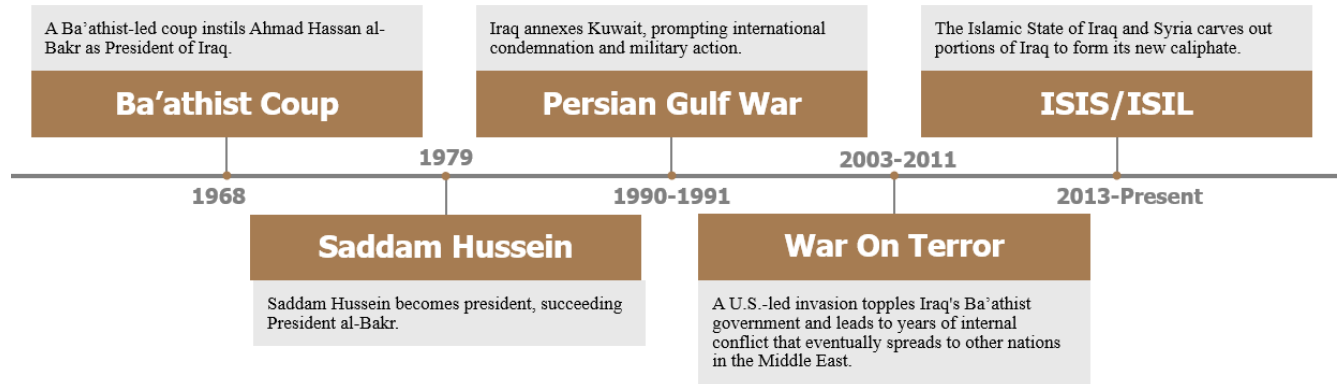


Figure 1.2. Timeline of Iraqi political and military events since 1968.

Literature Review

History of Iraq and Political Regimes

Understanding the different phases of Iraqi history is crucial for anyone trying to study the region. Although there are many periods in Iraqi history that could be studied, this thesis focuses on those that were most relevant to the state under Saddam Hussein. Studies of the archaeological investigations conducted in Iraq during the late 19th century (Kramer 1963; Lloyd 1980; Pedde 2015) provide a general background on the type of archaeological excavations conducted in the region and the types of artifacts found at sites deemed of special cultural value. When examining these excavations, it is also important to understand the impact of the decipherment of cuneiform on the salience of archaeological resources for purposes of nation-

building (Sayce 2019; Cathcart 2011). Cuneiform's decipherment influenced some aspects of Iraqi art and culture under the Ba'athist regime in the 20th century in significant ways. Important figures in Iraqi archaeology such as Gertrude Bell (Wallach 1996), Hormuzd Rassam (Reade 1993) and Leonard Woolley (Winstone 1990) contributed to understanding how powers outside Iraq influenced the nation. Along with the biographies of the individuals who contributed to early Iraqi archaeology it is important to consider the history of the colonial Middle East, the creation of the nation-state that is Iraq today (Fisk 2005; Meskell 2020; Lieshout 2016) and how this has impacted the peoples of Iraq (Hourani 1991; Tripp 2007; Vinogradov 1972). Because a great deal of this thesis focuses on the ways that Saddam Hussein interacted with and coopted archaeological resources, his personal and professional history are important for understanding how the past shaped the ways Iraq and its people have interacted with its archaeological record (Bengio 1998; Coughlin 2005; Niblock 1982). Primary sources such as the program for the 1989 International Babylon Festival (Iraq's Ministry of Culture 1989) and contemporary news bulletins from Saudi Aramco (Tracy 1989) also help reveal the people's connection with the archaeological past in Iraq.

Politicization of Archaeology and Links to Nationalism

A great deal has been written about the politicization of archaeology and how nationalist elements have interacted with and coopted archaeological resources (Trigger 1984; Sommer 2017; Kohl and Fawcett 1995). Trigger and Sommer both provide a general overview of this subject, but to really understand the politicization of archaeology one must look at case studies such as how the Third Reich coopted archaeological and anthropological research in Germany (Arnold 2006, 2014), how resources can be used to shore up nationalist entities (Gänger 2009), and how resources can be used to forge false narratives (Friedman 1994). Much has been written

about the Nazi cooption of archaeology and how archaeology was treated in the Cultural Revolution in China to a lesser extent, but much less has been written on how archaeology was politicized in the Middle East, specifically in countries that were considered hostile to Western powers during the Cold War. Archaeological resources under these regimes have had to weather various shifts of power, as illustrated by the situation in Iran (Abdi 2001), governmental cooption and repression in Israel and Egypt (Feige 2015; Parcak 2015) and Iraq itself (Silberman 1989; De Cesari 2015). This collective body of work is crucial to an examination of the events that transpired between the rise of the Ba'athist party in Iraq and the rise of the Islamic state with its destabilizing effect on the Middle East as a whole.

Destabilization of Iraq and Damage to Iraq's Archaeological Resources

The topic of destabilization of regimes and the damage done to archaeological resources in the resulting chaotic conditions is interesting to study due to the eclectic nature of the resources available. Journals and academic studies have highlighted the topic of damage and looting (Lawler 2008; Adams 2001; Bogdanos 2005; Gibson 2003; Kopanias et al. 2015; Kane 2015; Ikram 2013), the use of military forces to protect sites (Deblauwe 2004), and a massive study conducted by the British Ministry of Defense in 2008 that focused on the damages done by both military forces and looters in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion (Curtis et al. 2008). However, a substantial amount of the information on the topic comes from media outlets and was produced for public consumption (Jackson 2007; Rathje 2001; Borger 2004; Glancey 2004; Poole 2008). This public format has also led to a number of publications on side topics dealing with the personality cult of Saddam Hussein (Cremonesi 2003; Stansfield and Anderson 2004). Post-Iraq War publications, especially those after the rise of ISIS/ISIL, focus on international terror (Arab 2019; Laessing 2017) and looting (Brodie 2011). It is interesting that non-

archaeology focused sources such as the journal of *Intelligence and National Security* (Piffner 2010), architectural journals (Kulić 2015), and international affairs studies (Miller 2020) also have highlighted this topic. Official training resources created by the US government (CENTCOM 2006), propaganda created by ISIS/ISIL and even photo sharing social media (Amin 2019) have contributed to the body of knowledge on this topic as well.

Anecdotal Information as Supporting Evidence

This thesis also makes use of anecdotal information provided by individuals who lived during Saddam Hussein's reign, grew up during the 2003 Invasion, fled Iraq after the rise of ISIS/ISIL, and saw firsthand the inner workings of the illicit antiquities market in Iraq. Many of these individuals cannot be named due to the potential of repercussions befalling them for speaking out on this subject. Along with social pressure brought to bear on Iraqi citizens to not speak of the Saddam Hussein regime, there is also cultural pressure, and in some cases institutional pressure, preventing these individuals from ever publishing or presenting this information in a formal setting. I have worked with many of these individuals for years and consider these voices to be equally valuable as those who publish on the topic in academic journals. Anecdotal information provided by these individuals over the years was compared to the published evidence highlighted in the literature review and information gathered from all sources was treated with extreme care to preserve anonymity.

Research Questions

The guiding research questions of this thesis were as follows: "How has Iraq, a nation that has historically promoted archaeology as a national resource, handled archaeological sites and artifacts in the aftermath of military conflict and civil unrest that destabilized the national regime? Do the interactions between governments and communities with archaeological

resources under their care illustrated by this case study provide a way to predict or develop strategies to deal with such events under particular conditions?”

Considerations:

1. How were/are archaeological resources treated by successive governments in Iraq? Were they seen as valuable resources, burdens, or ignored?
2. What relationship do these resources have to the nation’s cultural identity and tourism industry?
3. How were/are archaeological remains treated by private citizens pre- and post- regime change? Were/are they respected and protected, looted, or used as an economic draw or resource to be exploited?
4. Based on this case study, what conclusions can we draw from contemporary conflicts to develop a toolkit/protocol for dealing with and protecting archaeological resources in future conflicts?

Methodology and Variables

The research questions were addressed by means of a qualitative synthetic analysis of the political systems, archaeological resources and shifting attitudes toward the material remains of the past represented by the case study. This research was conducted at the intersection of history, archaeology, and political science and a qualitative analysis is best suited to a synthetic approach such as the one applied here. Qualitative data were gathered through analysis of published peer reviewed material, maps, satellite and other visual images, as well as anecdotal information gleaned by the researcher in the course of his interactions with individuals on the ground through

military service and volunteer activities between 2013 and 2019. The project's guiding questions provided a lens through which to interpret the published material. The data were tested against the project's research questions to investigate how archaeological resources were and are treated in the region included in the analysis.

Anecdotal Information and Identification of Informants

This thesis makes use of anecdotal information gleaned from casual conversations conducted prior to the research conducted for this project. The information presented in this thesis is derived from personal experience. Individuals involved in these conversations were labeled as CI (Confidential Informants). As no formal interviews were conducted, an IRB was not necessary. No informants associated with the US Military or in Iraq are identified by name, including current and former US military and current or former Iraqi citizens. All other identifying information was changed as well to protect their privacy as well as prevent any harm from befalling them as a result of their contact with the researcher. Academic and news sources in the public domain were used to corroborate the anecdotal information provided by informants. The academic treatment of this topic was filtered through the researcher's personal experiences working with Iraqi civilians and the US military.

Variables Evaluated:

1) The attitudes of Iraqi citizens toward archaeology and archaeological resources. This was measured by analyzing how individuals describe their personal relationships with archaeology, and how this relationship changed over the course of the shifts of power experienced over several decades, including how sites are being used by the local population.

2) The national government's attitudes toward archaeological resources and the study of archaeology. This was measured by looking at how the different political factions have interacted with archaeology and how these interactions changed or stayed the same before, during, and after the transition of power. How these governments interacted and continue to interact with professional archaeologists, both foreign and domestic, and academia more generally also contribute to this discussion.

Data Sources

1) Newspaper reports on archaeological discoveries (frequency and changes over time) in the national press (mainly online).

2) Anecdotal evidence from local informants gathered on the ground from 2013 to 2016.

3) Secondary sources that provide data on changes in looting frequency and intensity using proxies like aerial photographs of sites and changes in the number of artifacts from the countries included in the case studies appearing in western and Asian auction catalogs.

4) Secondary sources that provide data on the growth and development of terror groups in the region and how this compares with both the destruction of archaeological resources and the illegal artifact trade.

Limitations

The main limitation of this investigation was the availability of published source material. On the military side, some of the most useful sources are still classified and there is limited access to human subjects. Availability of information is especially problematic in Iraq,

which is still an active warzone in which information can be scattered or is simply not available to the public. There is a smaller sample of academic work to review. This is a relatively new topic, so few scholars have addressed how contemporary conflicts are actively influencing archaeology in the region. Finding individuals willing or able to share their opinions and experiences in these regions is also limited due to geography and the fact that speaking about these issues could target some individuals and potentially lead to personal harm. I have established friendships with a large number of Iraqi refugees and civilians via my previous work with the Iraqi American Reconciliation Project, the Minnesota Literacy Council, and my military service, and was able to access some of the relevant information through these sources. Another limitation when working with human subjects is the possibility for these subjects to alter the narrative when being interviewed (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). In spite of these limitations, it was possible to gather enough data from primary and secondary sources to produce an effective analysis of the uses and abuses of archaeological data for gain, both economic and political, in these regions.

Significance of Study

Archaeological research focuses on the past by definition, so it has a tendency to lean toward quantitative, data driven analysis. While quantitative research is incredibly valuable, it often overlooks how the past influences the present. This study uses a synthetic qualitative approach to help us understand the intersection between people and archaeology. By presenting archaeological resources as actively stimulating action by participants in the present, we can illustrate how archaeological resources interact with and influence political power networks at the local and national level alike.

Implications for Future Research

The approach developed here could be applied to post WWII conflicts in South East Asia as well as Latin America and the Caribbean, where archaeological resources have also been affected by various Cold War upheavals. The general significance of this thesis lies in its ability to illuminate how manipulation of the past in the present is an obvious and recurrent concern in contemporary societies. This study will contribute to an ongoing effort to expose and reveal just how pernicious this symbiotic relationship can be.

Chapter 2: Brief Historical Outlines of the Case Study Regions

Brief Modern History of Iraq

Iraq is a western Asian country, bordered to the north by Turkey, to the east by Iran, to the south by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and to the west by Jordan and Syria (Figure 1.1). Iraq has a limited amount of coastline on the northern Persian Gulf connected to the Mesopotamian Alluvial Plain. Two major rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, run south through the center of Iraq and into the Shatt al-Arab near the Persian Gulf. These two rivers provide Iraq with substantial amounts of fertile land in the south. The Zagros Mountains run along the eastern border of the country with Iran, while the western portion of the country is part of the eastern Syrian Desert (Figure 2.2). Iraq's central location on the Asian continent and its geography have made it a cultural melting pot for millennia.

Iraq is and historically has been home to diverse ethnic groups including Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Turkmen, Shabakis, Yazidis, Armenians, Mandaeans, Circassians, Sabians and Kawliya (CIA 2020). Today, around 99% of the country's 38 million citizens are Muslims, with small minority populations of Christians, Yarsans, Yezidis and Mandeans also present (CIA 2020). The official languages of Iraq are Arabic and Kurdish.

The region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which is historically known as Mesopotamia, is often referred to as the Cradle of Civilization (Figure 2.1). This region is one of the locations where modern humans first began to domesticate plants and animals, develop writing, create laws and live in cities under an organized government—notably the city-state of Uruk, from which, it has been speculated, the name "Iraq" is derived. The area has been home to



Figure 2.1. Map of Mesopotamia (<http://mrscelis6.weebly.com/mesopotamia.html>)

successive civilizations since the 6th millennium BC, making Iraq one of the most traversed and contested regions on the planet. Historically Iraq was the center of the Akkadian, Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. It was also at different times part of the Median, Achaemenid, Hellenistic, Parthian, Sassanid, Roman, Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid, Ayyubid, Seljuk, Mongol, Timurid, Safavid, Afsharid, and Ottoman Empires (Fagan and Scarre 2008; Hourani 1991) (Figure 2.1).

The Ottoman Empire controlled what is now Iraq until its partition on October 30, 1918 (Hourani 1991). Under the Ottomans, the country was divided into three provinces, called Vilâyets in the Ottoman Turkish language: Mosul Vilâyet, Baghdad Vilâyet, and Basra Vilâyet, which still correspond to the main modern population centers of Iraq today. During the First World War, the Ottoman Empire sided with Germany and the Central Powers. During the

Mesopotamian campaign against the Central Powers, British expeditionary forces invaded Iraq and suffered a major defeat by the Turkish army during the Siege of Kut. However, subsequent to this the British began to gain the upper hand and were substantially aided by the support of local Arabs and Assyrians during what would be known as the Arab Revolt. In 1916, the British and French co-authored a plan for the post-war division of western Asian countries under the Sykes-Picot Agreement (Hourani 1991). British forces captured Baghdad in 1917 and defeated the Ottoman garrison forces. An armistice was signed in 1918 (Hourani 1991)

After the Peace Treaty of Versailles in 1919 at the end of the First World War, the idea put forward by the League of Nations was to create mandates for the territories that had been occupied by the defeated Central Powers (Hourani 1991). The proposal was that the former Central Powers territories should eventually become independent, albeit under the strict control and supervision of one of the victorious *entente* countries (Lieshout 2016). People in the former Ottoman controlled provinces began to fear the mandate concept as it suggested European imperial rule by another name (Hourani 1991; Lieshout 2016). At the San Remo Conference in April 1920, Britain was given the mandate for Mesopotamia (Iraq) and the mandate for Palestine (Israel, Palestine, and Jordan). In Iraq, the British deposed most of the former Imperial Ottoman officials and created a new administration with mainly British officials. This resulted in favoritism toward British economic and academic interests in Iraq. Many Iraqis were concerned that Iraq would be incorporated into the British Empire, effectively trading one imperial ruler for another. One of the most eminent critics of British rule was the Shia *mujtahid* (Authority on Islamic law), Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi, who then issued a *fatwa* (religious ruling) declaring that service in the British administration was unlawful (Tripp 2007).

There was growing resentment among the Iraqi public regarding British policies such as land ownership laws that ignored traditional tribal territories and especially the new tax law that required people to pay for burial in the Wadi-us-Salaam Cemetery in Najaf, a sacred cemetery to the Shia, where Shia from across the Arab world came to be buried (Vinogradov 1972). The Shia *ulema* (Islamic scholars) met with tribal leaders and discussed strategies for peaceful demonstrations but they considered violent action as an appropriate strategy if demonstrations failed to get results. Between 1918 and 1919, three powerful anti-colonial secret societies had been formed in Iraq. The League of the Islamic Awakening (*al-Jam'iyya an-naḥda al-islāmiyya*) was established in Najaf. The Muslim National League (*al-Jam'iyya al-waṭaniyya al-islāmiyya*) was created with the intention of organizing and mobilizing the Iraqi peoples for major unarmed and armed resistance. Finally, the Guardians of Independence (*Harās al-istiqlāl*) was formed in Baghdad in February 1919, a group made up of a mixture of Shia merchants, Sunni teachers, various civil servants, Iraqi military officers, and both Sunni and Shia ulama (Ghareeb 2004). The last of these groups was the most representative of the ethnic and cultural diversity of Iraq, establishing cells in Karbala, Najaf, Kut, and Hillah, making it the most geographically influential group as well. The Guardians of Independence laid down the foundations of Iraqi nationalism that would shape the country over the next century. Under the auspices of the Guardians of Independence the Grand Mujtahid of Karbala, Imam Shirazi, and his son, Mirza Muhammad Riza, began to organize a counter-colonial insurgent effort (Ghareeb 2004).

Imam Shirazi issued a *fatwa* decreeing that it was against Islamic law for Muslims to submit to being ruled by non-Muslims, and he called for a *jihad* (struggle against the enemies of Islam) against the British. In July 1920, Mosul rebelled against British rule, and support for the insurrection moved south down the Euphrates River valley toward the Persian Gulf. The

insurrection was especially popular among southern tribes, who had lost their centuries old political autonomy to the British and needed little encouragement to join the fight. The movement however was not a unified or well-organized effort against the British and had only limited success. The country was in a state of rebellion and anarchy for three months until the British received military reinforcements from India and restored order. Although the revolution was put down it demonstrated that both Sunni and Shia, urban Iraqis and nomads, and the tribes in the southern river lands, could be brought together for a common cause. The Iraqi revolt against the British in 1920 ignited a fire in the general population that began the long process of creating a unified nation out of a highly diverse group of people. The revolt caused British officials to drastically reconsider their strategy in Iraq, costing the British government 40 million pounds, twice the amount of the annual budget allotted for Iraq (Glancey 2003). The Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, recognizing that a new administration was needed in Iraq and other British colonies in the Middle East, called for a major conference in Cairo in March 1921. The British decided at the conference to control Iraq through indirect means, by installing former Iraqi officials who were friendly to the British government. This would allow the British to retain their economic interests in the region, such as oil, and their academic interests in the region, which were primarily archaeological (Bell 1920). The British government decided to install Faisal ibn Husayn as a puppet King of Iraq. During the Arab Revolt, Faisal had partnered with the British military and led guerrilla operations in the region during the First World War, enjoying strong relations with certain important British officials. British officials also thought installing Faisal as king would prevent him from bringing his experience in guerrilla warfare to Syria, which would motivate anti-colonial movements there and damage British-French relations (Lieshout 2016).

Under Faisal and his British controlled government Iraq's social structure changed, with the newly emergent class of Sunni and Shia landowning tribal sheikhs competing with wealthy and prestigious urban-based Sunni families and Ottoman-trained army officers and bureaucrats for political power. Because Iraq's newly established political institutions were the creation of a foreign power, and because the concept of western democratic government had no precedent in Iraqi history, the politicians in Baghdad lacked legitimacy in the Iraqi people's eyes and never developed deeply rooted constituencies. Although Iraq had a constitution and an elected assembly, Iraqi politics was based on shifting alliances of important personalities and cliques rather than what would be considered a true democracy in the west. The absence of strong political institutions inhibited the early nationalist movement's ability to make deep inroads into Iraq's diverse social structure. This did however create an environment where counter-colonial ideas and revolutionary movements could take root.

On October 3, 1932 in accordance with an agreement signed by the United Kingdom in 1930, the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq was granted independence from the UK under the rule of King Faisal I (Vinogradov 1972). While this did end Iraq's state of being a puppet government, the British retained several military bases in the country, along with oil ventures and archaeological excavations. Even on the eve of independence, Iraq and the United Kingdom had a tense relationship, especially regarding control over the nation of Kuwait. Kuwait had loosely been under the authority of the Ottoman vilâyet of Basra for centuries until the British severed it from the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and on this basis the Iraqi government considered Kuwait to be a British imperialist invention.

Upon gaining independence in 1932, political tensions arose over the continued British presence in Iraq. Iraq's government was split between politicians who were considered pro-

British, such as Nuri as-Said, who did not oppose a continued British presence, and anti-British nationalist politicians, such as Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, who demanded that remaining British influence in the country be removed (Ghareeb 2004). Pressure from Arab nationalists in Iraq and abroad led Iraqi nationalists to demand that the British leave Iraq, but these efforts remained unsuccessful.

In the absence of a unifying government many ethnic and religious factions tried to gain political power out of self-preservation during the 1930s. This resulted in numerous violent revolts and brutal suppression by the Iraqi military led by Bakr Sidqi (Stansfield and Anderson 2004). In 1933, thousands of Assyrians were killed in the Simele massacre, in 1935–1936 a series of Shia uprisings were brutally suppressed in the Euphrates region of Iraq, and in parallel an anti-conscription Kurdish uprising in the north and a Yazidi revolt in Jabal Sinjar were crushed in 1935 (Stansfield and Anderson 2004). Although the Hashemite monarchy may have understood the extreme diversity of Iraq, they were compelled to try to rule the nation as a single homogenous group while still upholding British power in the region. This further fueled both pan-Arab unity and nationalist movements in Iraq and led to an exchange of numerous governments. Bakr Sidqi himself ascended to power in 1936, following a successful coup d'état.

The 1941 Iraqi coup d'état overthrew Nuri as-Said and installed Rashid Ali al-Gaylani as prime minister of a pro-Nazi government. Ali did not overthrow the monarchy, but appointed a more compliant Regent, emphasized Iraqi independence, and attempted to restrict the rights of the British under the 1930 treaty, including limiting British access to archaeological resources. Rashid understood that the British had to be removed to validate the Baghdad government as capable of leading Iraq and asked Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan for military assistance if they would leave Iraq alone after the British were defeated. In exchange the Axis

powers were permitted to use Iraqi bases as outposts for potential conflicts in Palestine, Iraq oil could be purchased, and Germany was specifically granted access to Iraq's archaeological treasures. This information comes from oral accounts obtained from now-deceased former Baathist officers. Documentary evidence on the Axis side of this part of the war is hard to come by probably because files were destroyed. Some clues remain, such as the *Führer Directive 30*, which defined military support for Iraq and instructed the German foreign office to work with the Golden Square Insurgents; Fritz Gobba was the German ambassador to Iraq at the time. There are also a few pictures of destroyed Luftwaffe aircraft (4. Staffel, II. Gruppe, KG 4) in Iraq, and there was definitely a military campaign conducted in Iraq. It would be worth finding someone with stronger German language skills willing to do a bit of digging into the archives in Germany, including those of the DAI (the German Archaeological Institute) for more detail about this interesting but poorly documented period of Iraqi archaeology. All of this maneuvering led to the Anglo-Iraq War, which lasted from May 2 to May 31, 1941. The British relied on expeditionary forces that understood how to play the different cultural factions of the nation against each other to eliminate the pro-Axis Iraqi government. Ultimately the British would reestablish themselves as an occupying force in Iraq.

After the Anglo-Iraqi War ended, Nuri as-Said was reestablished as Prime Minister and dominated the politics of Iraq until the overthrow of the monarchy and his assassination in 1958 (Tripp 2007). Nuri as-Said pursued a largely pro-Western governmental policy during this period with strong ties to the United Kingdom. On 14 July 1958, a group that identified as the Free Officers, a secret military group led by Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim, overthrew the Hashemite monarchy (Figure 2.2). This group was deeply indoctrinated by Pan-Arab teachings and nationalist sentiment (Hourani 1991). King Faisal II, Prince Abd al-Ilah, and Nuri al-Said were

all killed. However, resentment toward Qasim for not going far enough erupted among nationalist forces within the army and culminated in the 1959 Mosul Uprising. This attempted coup was launched with support from Ba’athist politicians in the United Arab Republic, which included Syria and Egypt. Ba’athism is a political ideology centered around the concept of national and cultural rebirth (Bengio 1998).

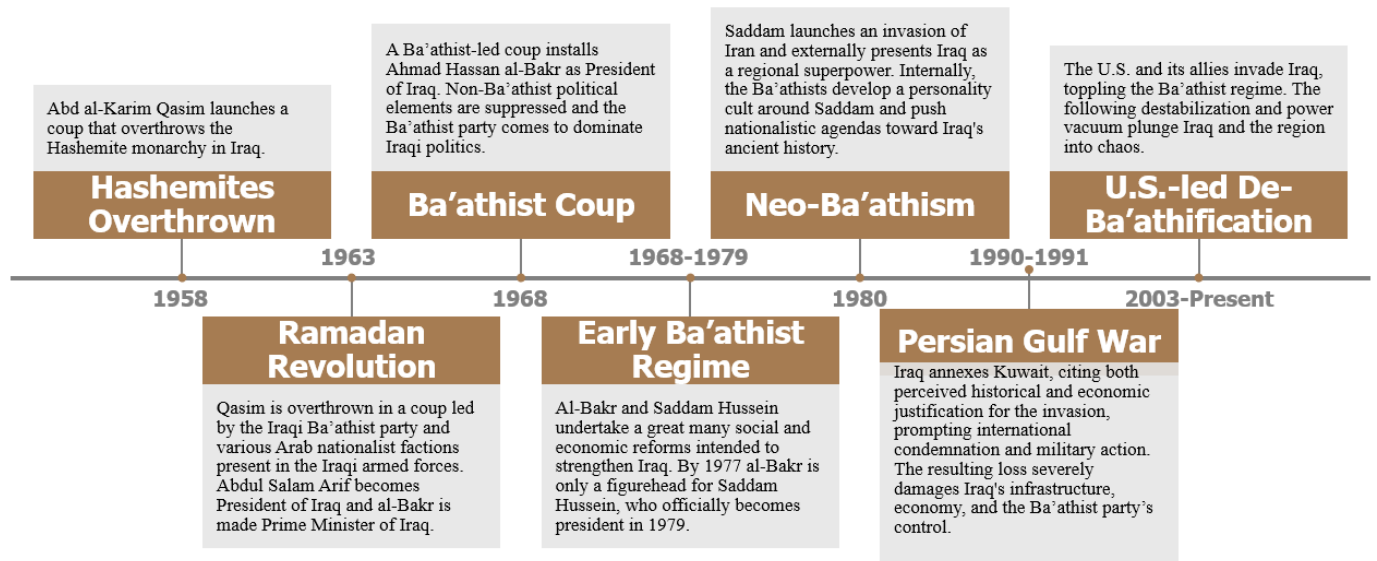


Figure 2.2. Timeline of Iraqi Political Events between 1958 and 2003.

In the Middle East Ba’athist movements have been characterized by a renaissance-like cultural and intellectual growth. Ba’athism is often used as a vanguard for stronger socialist movements to take root, blending socialist policies common in the Cold War, such as state control of resources, while still emphasizing private property ownership (Bengio 1998; Hourani 1991). Ba’athist movements sprang up across the Arab world during the 1940s and 1950s. Despite having strong support from local Arab tribes, the Mosul-centered leadership of the coup was defeated in a number of days by loyalist forces within the Iraqi Army who were supported by the Iraqi Communist Party and local Kurdish tribal militia. Following the failed coup, Mosul

was the scene of unprecedented violence as all political and ethnic groups engaged in score-settling, using the post-coup chaos as a cover, resulting in thousands of deaths.

This internal chaos was set against the backdrop of the Cold War and although Qasim was politically independent, his use of the Iraqi Communist Party to help put down the rebellion threatened anti-communist factions within the country. The communists' growing strength within Iraq convinced the Nationalist Iraqi Ba'ath Party that the only way to stop the spread of the communists was to overthrow Qasim.

On February 8, 1963, Qasim was overthrown by a coup led by a coalition of the Ba'ath Party and Arab Nationalist groups within the Iraqi Armed Forces (Citino 2017) (Figure 2.2). Qasim was unpopular in the Ba'ath Party and among Arab Nationalists, as he was seen as being too close to the Iraqi Communist Party, which both groups viewed with deep suspicion (Citino 2017). Qasim's critics were also concerned that although he rejected western influence in Iraq, he was quick to establish friendly relations with the USSR. This was seen as simply trading one meddling foreign power for another, generating sympathy for the Ba'athist coup.

After Qasim's overthrow and execution, members of the Ba'ath Party engaged in a hunt for communists and their allies (Figure 2.2). Approximately 5000 people were killed as part of this purge. The Ba'athists also shifted from a true Ba'athist movement to a Neo-Ba'athist movement. Neo-Ba'athism arose in both Iraq and Syria during the 1960s (Bengio 1998). It is distinct among Ba'athist movements as it relies on authoritarian government and strong military--government ties. Unity through military endeavors is a hallmark of Neo-Ba'athism, whereas true Ba'athism emphasizes civilian strength and unity (Bengio 1998).

The coup succeeded primarily due to the support of the military as the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party was not strong enough to take power alone. The Ba'ath Party made a deal with Abd ar-Razzaq an-Naif, the deputy head of military intelligence, and Ibrahim Daud, the head of the Republican Guard. Naif and Daud knew that Arif's and Tahir Yahya's government was weak, but they also knew that the Ba'athists needed strong military support for success. For his participation, Naif demanded to be given the post of Prime Minister after the coup. Daud was given the post of Minister of Defense. However, unbeknownst to Naif and Daud, al-Bakr had told the Ba'ath leadership in pre-coup secret meetings that the two would be liquidated either during or after the revolution (Coughlin 2005).

Saddam Hussein, then the vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, worked to establish the party's security and intelligence organization to combat its enemies, including tying up loose ends within the party (Figure 2.2 and 2.3). Naif was invited to lunch at the Presidential Palace with al-Bakr on July 30th 1968, during which Saddam burst into the room and threatened Naif with death. Saddam ordered Naif to leave Iraq immediately if he chose life (Coughlin 2005). Naif was exiled to Morocco. An assassination attempt in 1973 was unsuccessful, but he was assassinated in London on the orders of Saddam in 1978. Daud was exiled to Saudi Arabia shortly after Naif (Coughlin 2005). Al-Bakr strengthened his position in the party with the help of Saddam's party security apparatus and the intelligence services. Most of 1968 was used to repress non-Ba'athist thought and groups; for instance, a campaign against Nasserists and communists was initiated by Saddam's command (Tripp 2007) (Figure 2.2). Several spy plots were created by the party; spies who were "caught" were accused of being a part of a Zionist plot against the state (Tripp 2007).



Figure 2.3. Saddam Hussein (left) and President al-Bakr (right) in 1978.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ethiosudanese/4149880302/>

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) was highly skeptical of the legitimacy of the Ba'athist government, as many of its members remembered the anti-Communist campaign launched against them in 1963. Al-Bakr offered the ICP cabinet positions in the government; the ICP rejected this offer. Al-Bakr responded by initiating a systematic campaign against the ICP and Communist sympathizers. The Ba'ath Party believed that the ICP was a threat to the neo-Ba'athist agenda (Tripp 2007).

By the mid-1970s, Saddam's power within the Ba'ath Party and the government had grown; he was de facto leader of Iraq, although al-Bakr was officially president, Ba'ath Party leader and Revolutionary Command Council chairman (Figure 2.2). In 1977, after protests by Shia Muslims against the Sunni dominated government, al-Bakr relinquished his control over the Ministry of Defense; Adnan Khairallah Tulfah, Saddam's brother-in-law, became Defense

Minister. This appointment emphasized the clan-like character of the Ba'ath Party. At the end of 1977, al-Bakr had virtually no control over Iraq as president. Saddam initiated a brutal anti-Communist campaign even though the ICP had no real power, as its leading officials had left the country or already been imprisoned or executed by the Ba'athists. The campaign also targeted Ba'athists who did not support Saddam or his progressively Neo-Ba'athist views. In response to the Iranian Revolution, several prominent Iraqi Shias revolted against the Sunni-led government, which led to the collapse of the Ba'ath Party in certain areas of the country. This chaos allowed Saddam to take over the offices of President, Ba'ath Party leader and Revolutionary Command Council chairman. Immediately after Saddam seized power, over 60 members of the Ba'ath Party and the government leadership were charged with fomenting an anti-Iraqi Ba'athist plot in collaboration with al-Assad and the Damascus-based Syrian Ba'ath Party (Tripp 2007). Following the campaign, Saddam entered the Arab-world stage.

Although initially neo-Ba'athist, Saddam's political ideology quickly shifted to Saddamist Ba'athism or Saddamism (al-Marashi and Salama 2008; Bengio 1998). This unique ideology involved several important tenets. First, Iraq was represented as the center of the Arab world historically, currently, and in future (Bengio 1998). All aspects of Arab culture were viewed as flowing out of Iraq, which was considered the pinnacle of Arab cultural development. Second, the modern people of Iraq were represented as descended directly from the Babylonian and Assyrian peoples with no external admixture (Bengio 1998; Niblock 1982). This was especially important to Saddamist thought as it allowed for a commonality to be forged between the diverse Iraqi ethnic groups. Third, Marxist concepts of class struggle and state atheism were western-centric and not universally applicable concepts. Socialist theory had to be developed in accordance with each nation's unique character (Niblock 1982). Saddam looked to Ho Chi Minh

and Fidel Castro as leaders who were able to create socialist movements in non-western countries while maintaining their nation's independence from the global socialist system led by the USSR (Niblock 1982).

Saddam quickly developed a cult of personality, which further spread Saddamism in Iraq. He was represented as the "Father of the Nation" and of the Iraqi people and likened (encouraged by his own pronouncements) to Nebuchadnezzar II, the longest-reigning and most powerful ruler of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (c. 605- c. 562 BCE) (De Cesari 2015). The remaining Ba'ath Party also contributed to the Saddamist cult of personality; by the end of 1979 it was a nationwide organization and became a propaganda center for pro-Saddam literature (Tripp 2010). The propaganda campaign created a common sense of nationhood for many Iraqis. The Shia were not happy with Saddam's Sunni-led government and protests continued despite these propaganda campaigns. The establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran influenced many Shias to stand up against Saddam's Sunni-dominated government.

At first relations between Iran and Iraq were stable, but major ideological differences could not remain concealed forever. The new Iranian leadership was composed of Shia Islamists, while the Iraqi Ba'athists were Sunni. Shia and Sunni differ on their interpretation of how leadership of Islam should be passed on. Shiites (Shia) believe that the Prophet Muhammad's descendants should hold positions of power within Islam, whereas Sunnis don't believe that Islamic spiritual leadership should necessarily be determined by heritage. Tehran was concerned about the Iraqi government's continued repression of Iraqi Shias (Tripp 2010). In 1980, border clashes took place between the two countries. Iraq considered the newly established Iran to be

weak as it was in a state of continual civil unrest, and the Iranian leaders had purged thousands of officers and soldiers simply because of their political views.

Based on differences in military size and development it was assumed that the Iran–Iraq War would result in a quick Iraqi victory. Saddam's plan was to strengthen Iraq's position in the Persian Gulf and on the Arab world stage, a feat necessary to legitimize himself as heir to Babylon. A quick victory would restore Iraq's control over all of Shatt al-Arab, an area which Iraq had lost to Iran in 1975. On September 17, 1980, Iraq conducted several preemptive strikes on Iran. Saddam believed that the Iranian government would have to disengage in order to survive. Saddam overestimated the strength of the Iraqi military, while the Iranian government saw the invasion as a test of the revolution itself and all its achievements, inspiring them to not capitulate (Tripp 2010) (Figure 2.2).

In 1982, Iran counter-attacked and was successful in driving the Iraqis back into Iraq. The defeats of 1982 were a blow to Iraq. With the economic situation worsening because of falling oil prices (and the rising military budget), the Iraqi standard of living worsened. The war developed into a stalemate with neither side gaining any ground nor achieving any strategic victories. The Iraqi government shifted focus on Iraqi Kurdistan which had revolted due to dissatisfaction with Saddam's government and the efforts of clandestine Iranian forces. Saddam appointed his cousin Ali Hasan al-Majid as military chief in Kurdistan. Al-Majid initiated the al-Anfal campaign in which chemical weapons were used against civilians (Tripp 2010). In April 1988, a ceasefire was agreed between Iraq and Iran, however no peace treaty was signed (Figure 2.2).

In the aftermath of the Iran–Iraq War, Saddam focused on rebuilding Iraq’s economy and reuniting the Iraqi people after eight years of war. He worked to increase oil output to compete with foreign oil manufacturers. Within Iraq, Saddam focused on restoring ancient sites and educating the population on the importance of these places to Iraqi national identity (Figure 2.4).



Figure 2.4. Saddam era reconstruction of the Great Ziggurat of Ur at Ali Air base (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_ziggurat_at_Ali_Air_Base_Iraq_2005.jpg)

In 1990 Saddam ordered the invasion of Kuwait to help fund his national identity restoration projects, with the professed goal of uniting Kuwait with Iraq. Kuwait was considered by many Iraqis to be part of Iraq, as the modern border had been only recently established by the British for their own interests (Brown 1994). The invasion led to an international outcry; the United Nations, United States and the United Kingdom condemned the invasion and introduced sanctions against Iraq, and the Soviet Union and several Arab states also condemned the invasion. The Persian Gulf War was initiated by a United States-led coalition, which succeeded

in winning the war in less than a year (Figure 2.2). Several days before the Gulf War ceasefire was signed in Safwan, the Saudi Arabia-based radio station Voice of Free Iraq (funded and operated by the Central Intelligence Agency) broadcast a message to the Iraqis to rise up and overthrow Saddam (Fisk 2005). The speaker on the radio was Salah Omar al-Ali, a former member of the Ba'ath Party. Al-Ali's message urged the Iraqis to overthrow the Saddam regime. The broadcast encouraged Iraqis to "stage a revolution" and claimed that "[Saddam] will flee the battlefield when he becomes certain that the catastrophe has engulfed every street, every house and every family in Iraq" (Fisk 2005:646). Believing that coalition forces would support the uprising, a nationwide rebellion against Saddam's rule began in March 1991, which was quickly repressed by Saddam's loyalist forces. The UN established a no-fly zone to halt the advance of Saddam's forces. Instead of wasting resources occupying Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdish Autonomous Republic was established, with thousands of Iraqi troops stationed at the Iraqi-Kurdish border.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, U.S. president George W. Bush included Saddam in his Axis of Evil. In 2002 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1441, which stated that Iraq had failed to fulfill its UN obligations by refusing to abandon its weapons of mass destruction program, a violation of UN Resolution 687 (Borger 2004). This claim was based on documents provided by the CIA and the British government that were later found to be unreliable (Borger 2004). The United States and the United Kingdom would use Resolution 1441 as a pretext for a ground invasion. In 2003 the US-led invasion of the country forced the Ba'ath Party and Saddam to go into hiding. Saddam was captured that year and was publicly executed in 2006.

After the invasion, the United States established the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to govern Iraq. In May 2003 Lewis Paul Bremer, the chief executive of the CPA, issued orders to exclude Ba'ath Party members from the new government (CPA Order 1) and to disband the Iraqi Army (CPA Order 2) (Pfiffner 2010) (Figure 2.5). The order to disband the Sunni-dominated Iraqi Army excluded many of the country's experienced government officials from participating in the country's governance structure, an action that created a prime recruiting ground for extremist groups (Pfiffner 2010). Thousands of Iraqi academics, professors, doctors and over 40,000 schoolteachers were prevented from employment, including those who had joined the Ba'ath Party simply to keep their jobs, further shaping the chaotic post-invasion environment (Pfiffner 2010).

Elements of the former Iraqi secret police and army formed guerrilla units and engaged in an insurgency against the US-led coalition rule of Iraq. In fall 2003, self-proclaimed 'jihadist' groups began targeting coalition forces. Many members of these groups were unemployed Iraqi soldiers. In the ensuing chaos the unity that Saddam had forged fractured further as Sunni militias were created in Sunni-dominated communities and intense inter-ethnic violence between Sunnis and Shias dominated Iraqi cities. The Mahdi Army – a Shia militia created in 2003 – began to fight the coalition forces in 2004 (Jackson 2007) (Figure 2.5). Sunni and Shia militants also fought against the new Iraqi Interim Government that was installed in June 2004. The Sunni militia *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* became *Al-Qaeda in Iraq* in October 2004 and targeted coalition forces as well as civilians, predominantly Shia Muslims, worsening ethnic tensions.

In January 2005, the first elections were held since the invasion and a new Constitution

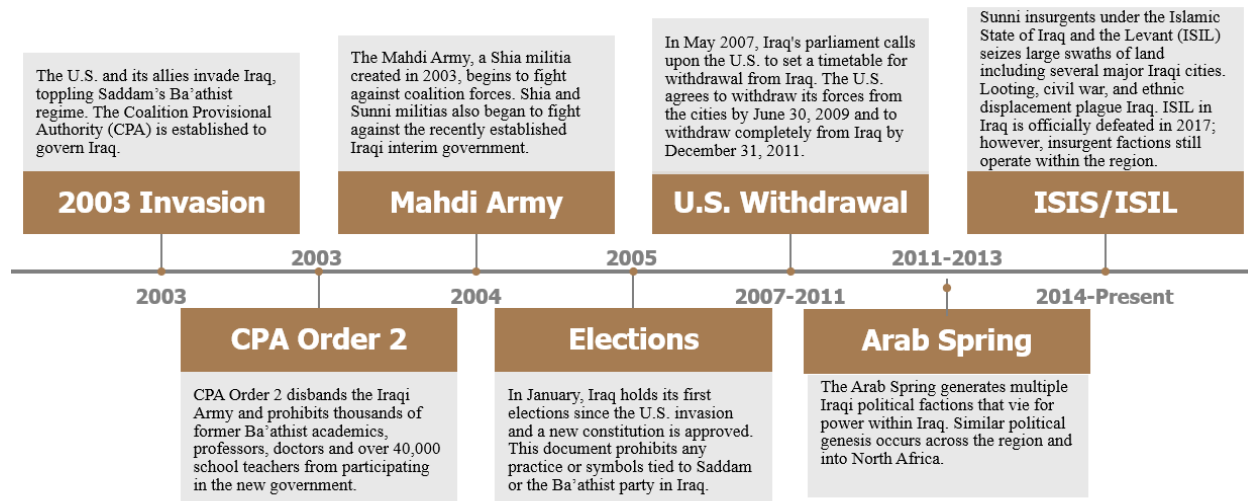


Figure 2.5 Timeline of Iraqi Political events from 2003 to the present.

was approved (Figure 2.5). In late 2006, the US government's Iraq Study Group recommended that the US begin focusing on training Iraqi military personnel as they were more suited to interacting with the diverse populations of Iraq, similar to the US attempts at Vietnamization four decades earlier (Miller 2020). In May 2007, Iraq's Parliament called on the United States to set a timetable for withdrawal. The Iraqi government signed the US–Iraq Status of Forces Agreement, which required US forces to withdraw from the cities by June 30, 2009 and to withdraw completely from Iraq by December 31, 2011 (Figure 2.5).

After the withdrawal of US troops in 2011, the insurgency continued and Iraq suffered from rampant political instability. In February 2011, the Arab Spring protests spread into Iraq. Unlike in Egypt, initial protests did not topple the Iraqi government. In 2012 and 2013, violence increased and armed groups inside Iraq were increasingly stimulated by the Syrian Civil War, which was yet another conflict involving a Ba'athist regime. During 2013, Sunni militants increased attacks targeting Shia populations in an attempt to undermine the Nouri al-Maliki-led government. In 2014, Sunni insurgents under the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

terrorist group seized large swathes of land including several major Iraqi cities, including Tikrit, Fallujah and Mosul, displacing hundreds of thousands of people and resulting in the plundering of both natural and cultural resources. Bowing to the protests, Maliki stepped down as Prime Minister to back al-Abadi in order to safeguard the interests of the country. On September 9, 2014, Haider al-Abadi formed a new government and became the new Prime Minister. Fighting between Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish factions led to debate about splitting Iraq into three autonomous regions along cultural lines, including Sunni Kurdistan in the northeast, a Sunnistan (for Sunni) in the west and a Shiastan (for Shia) in the southeast (Committee on Foreign Relations 2015). The evidence used to support these claims was based on the geographical distribution of adherents and not archaeological evidence.

In response to rapid territorial gains made by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) during spring 2014, and its universally-condemned executions and reported human rights abuses, many western states began to intervene against it in the Iraqi Civil War (2014–2017) (Figure 2.5). Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed in Iraq in ISIL-linked violence. The genocide of Yazidis by ISIL has led to the expulsion, flight and effective exile of the Yazidis from their ancestral lands in Northern Iraq. Since 2015, ISIL has lost territory in Iraq, including Tikrit in March and April 2015, Baiji in October 2015, Sinjar in November 2015, Ramadi in December 2015, Fallujah in June 2016 and Mosul in July 2017. By December 2017, ISIL had no remaining territory in Iraq, following the 2017 Western Iraq campaign (Figure 2.5).

Brief History of Archaeology in Iraq

The first documented archaeological excavation in Mesopotamia was led by Abbé Pierre Joseph Beauchamp (1752-1801), a French diplomat, clergyman and astronomer who uncovered the sculpture now generally known as the "Lion of Babylon" (Kramer 1963). Abbé Beauchamp

recorded his travels in memoirs published in 1790 and created a sensation in the scholarly world that resulted in numerous archaeological expeditions to Iraq in the decades that followed.

One of the first challenges in studying the archaeology of Iraq that early scholars had to face was the decipherment of the triangular markings inscribed on many of the artifacts and ruins uncovered at Mesopotamian sites. In 1700 Thomas Hyde (1636-1703) named these markings “cuneiform” but determined that they were not a script but decorative marks, as earlier scholars had suggested. Although Hyde was the first to name the writing, other scholars were also examining the marks and were able to determine that they did indeed constitute a script (Kramer 1963). In 1778 Carsten Niebuhr (1753-1815), a Danish mathematician, published accurate copies of three trilingual inscriptions from the ruins at Persepolis (Kramer 1963). Niebuhr argued that the inscriptions were written from left to right, and that each of the three inscriptions contained three different types of writing, which he labeled Class I, Class II, and Class III.

Class I was found to be alphabetic in nature and consisted of 44 characters. It was written in Old Persian and was first deciphered by Georg Friedrich Grotefend (1775-1853) and Henry Creswicke Rawlinson (1810-1895) between 1802 and 1848 (Sayce 2019). Class II proved more difficult to translate. In 1850, Edward Hincks (1792-1866) published a paper explaining that Class II was not alphabetical, but was in fact both syllabic and ideographic, a discovery that led to its translation between 1850 and 1859 (Cathcart 2011). At first the language of the inscriptions called Babylonian or Assyrian but is now known to be Akkadian. As the study of cuneiform progressed a debate arose as to whether it had connections to the contemporary Semitic residents in the region. In 1850, Edward Hincks suggested that cuneiform was instead invented by a non-Semitic people who had preceded the Semites in Babylon (Kramer 1963; Cathcart 2011). In 1853, Sir Henry Rawlinson came to a similar conclusion and the Class III inscriptions were

understood to have been written in this more ancient language, which was dubbed "Akkadian" or "Scythian", but is now known to be Sumerian (Kramer 1963). This was the first indication that this older culture and people, the Sumerians, existed at all.

In 1811, Claudius James Rich (1787-1821), an Englishman and operative for the East India Company in Baghdad, began mapping the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh (Kramer 1963). Before his death at the age of 34, he wrote two memoirs about the ruins of Babylon and the inscriptions found there. He collected numerous inscribed bricks, tablets, boundary stones, and cylinders, including the famous Cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar and the Sennacherib Cylinder. This collection became the nucleus of the Mesopotamian antiquities collection at the British Museum (Kramer 1963). This removal of Mesopotamian antiquities by collectors and archaeologists to western museums would characterize the 19th century and eventually lead to efforts by Saddam Hussein's government to have artifacts repatriated to Iraq (Macaskill 2002; Al-Ansary 2009)

Systematic excavation of Mesopotamian sites truly began in 1842 with the explorations of Paul Emile Botta (1802-1870), the French consul at Mosul (Lloyd 1980). The excavations of Botta at Khorsabad and those of the English antiquarian Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) at Nimrud and Nineveh, paired with the successful decipherment of cuneiform script, opened up a new world of archaeological potential. Layard's discovery of the library of Assurbanipal in 1849 put the resources for reconstructing the ancient life and history of Assyria and Babylon into the hands of scholars (Lloyd 1980). He also was the first to excavate in Babylonia, where Claudius James Rich had already done some useful topographical work. During excavations at Nimrud and Nineveh (1852-1854) Hormuzd Rassam (1826-1910), an Ottoman archaeologist, discovered the epic of Gilgamesh, which was later deciphered by George Smith (1840-1876) and determined to be the oldest work of literature in the world (Reade 1993).

An expedition was sent by the British Museum between 1877 and 1879 under the direction of Hormuzd Rassam to continue his work at Nineveh and its environs. This included excavations in the mounds of Balawat, called Imgur-Bel by the Assyrians, 15 miles east of Mosul, resulting in the discovery of a small temple dedicated to the God of Dreams by Ashurnasirpal II (Reign 883-859BCE), containing a stone ark in which were found two inscribed alabaster tablets of rectangular shape. Also uncovered was a palace that had been destroyed by the Babylonians but was restored by Shalmaneser III (Reign 859-824 BCE) (Reade 1993). The latter also erected the bronze gates with hammered reliefs that are now displayed in the British Museum (Kramer 1963).

In 1878 the palace of Ashurbanipal at Nimrud was excavated and hundreds of enameled tiles were uncovered (Reade 1993). Two years later, Rassam was sent to Babylonia, where he discovered the site of the temple of the Sun God of Sippara at Abu Habba, making it possible to identify the location of the two Sipparas, or Sepharvaim, mentioned in the Bible (Reade 1993).

The French consul Ernest de Sarzec (1832-1901) conducted excavations at ancient Girsu between 1877 and 1881, uncovering monuments of the pre-Semitic age that included the diorite statues of Gudea, ruler of Lagash, the stone of which (according to the inscriptions found on them) was brought from Magan in the Sinai Peninsula (Kramer 1963). The subsequent excavations of de Sarzec at Telloh and its environs pushed the city's history back to at least 4000 BCE. A collection of more than 30,000 tablets was found there that were still arranged on shelves dating to the time of Gudea when the excavators uncovered them (Kramer 1963).

In 1886–1887 a German expedition under Dr. Robert Koldewey (1855-1925) explored the cemetery of El Hiba, south of Telloh, shedding light on the burial customs of ancient Babylon (Kramer 1963). Another large-scale German expedition was dispatched by

the Orientgesellschaft in 1899 with the object of exploring the ruins of Babylon, the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II, and the great processional road. Dr Walter Andrae (1875-1956) a member of Dr. Koldewey's expedition, subsequently conducted excavations at Qal'at Sherqat, the site of Assur (Pedde 2015). The Turkish government also funded excavation work in Iraq. In 1897, Jean-Vincent Scheil (1858-1940) excavated numerous tablets on the site of Sippara and these tablets made their way to the National Museum at Istanbul (Kramer 1963).

As always, the dark side of archaeology reared its head in the form of the looting of Mesopotamian antiquities for profit, an activity that plagued the 19th century excavations. As early as 1888, the British Museum was concerned enough to send investigators to Baghdad to confirm the sudden appearance of cuneiform tablets on the local art market as coming from already excavated sites (Kramer 1963). The Museum's detective purchased several tablets and confirmed they had been stolen by site guards and excavators who had worked with Hormuzd Rassam years earlier.

By the early 20th century, European and American archaeologists in Mesopotamia had begun to adopt "the German method" — the earlier practice of searching for tablets and display-quality artifacts was replaced by a desire to understand the evolution of a site over time, and the context in which artifacts are found, an approach pioneered by Robert Koldewey 1886 (Kramer 1963).

After the First World War, the provinces of the old Ottoman Empire were replaced by a League of Nations under the control of the victorious powers. Gertrude Bell (1868-1926) played a pivotal role during this period, as the Oriental Secretary of the British Embassy, in the creation of Iraq as a national entity (Wallach 1996). Bell also directed the Iraqi Antiquities Service under the British and became the driving force behind the founding of the Iraq National Museum in

Baghdad (Wallach 1996). At Bell's insistence, archaeologists were obliged to adopt rigorous recovery, recording and curation standards, excavation permits limited archaeologists to work only at a single location, and the majority of finds would henceforth remain in Iraq, to be stored and displayed at the National Museum (Wallach 1996).

Leonard (1880-1960) and Kathrine Woolley (1888-1945) exemplified Bell's standards in their excavations at Ur during the 1920s and early 1930s, which drew the public's attention to ancient Mesopotamia as Howard Carter's excavations in the Valley of the Kings had done in Egypt (Winstone 1990). The Woolley's most sensational discoveries came from the Royal Cemetery at Ur in what came to be known as the "Great Death Pit" (Winstone 1990).

Leonard Woolley also played a role in assembling the chronology of Mesopotamian prehistory. His work at Tell al Ubaid, Seton Lloyd's (1902-1996) work at Samarra, Max Mallowan's (1904-1978) work at various sites (Chagar Bazar, Arpachiya, Nineveh), Ernst Herzfeld's (1879-1948) excavations at Hassuna, Stephen Langdon's (1876-1937) at Jemden, and Max von Oppenheim's (1860-1946) work at Tell Halaf, all established the pottery-based associations for the Mesopotamian cultures known through textual evidence (Kramer 1963). Researchers from the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago also played a role in these discoveries and interpretations. Significantly, the implementation of the Iraq Antiquities Law in 1934 mandated that archaeological discoveries could not leave the country without an official permit (Kramer 1963).

After the Second World War in the mid-20th century, scientific advances in other fields, such as the 1949 invention of radiocarbon dating, spurred a series of interdisciplinary investigations by the Oriental Institute's Robert Braidwood (1907-2003) at Jarmo on the transition to agriculture and urbanism (CPTR Iraq 2006). Large-scale archaeological survey

techniques introduced by the Oriental Institute in the 1930s managed to reconstruct the ancient built environment and changing patterns of settlement at specific sites and entire regions stretching over thousands of years (CPTR Iraq 2006).

The "Golden Age of Iraq Archaeology" began after the Second World War. The 1950s through the early 1980s were the most fertile period of scientific discovery in Iraq at sites both historic and pre-historic (CPTR Iraq 2006). Although Iraq experienced several violent regime changes during this time, each of these successive political regimes was very protective of Iraq's cultural heritage. The most prominent was the Ba'athist regime, which viewed Iraqi archaeology as an important part of the nation's identity and was quick to both politicize archaeology and support archaeological research. In 1979, the Iranian Revolution closed Iran to foreign archaeologists, some of whom redirected their efforts toward excavation of sites in Iraq, especially eastern Iraq. Archaeological research continued intermittently even during the Iran-Iraq War (CPTR Iraq 2006). Large scale restoration projects were also conducted by the Iraqi government throughout the 1980s but as the war with Iran dragged on, funding for these projects became scarce.

With Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent UN response, including Operation Desert Storm and 12 years of UN-mandated economic sanctions (1991-2003), foreign participation in archaeological excavations in Iraq ground to a halt. As a result, newer technologies — such as GPR (ground penetrating radar), magnetometry, satellite imaging and GIS mapping and database systems — had rarely been used on Iraqi archaeological sites (CPTR Iraq 2006). These technologies had been used at sites in Syria and Turkey and have been used to reinterpret discoveries already made in Iraq, for example, at Uruk (CPTR Iraq 2006). The other

result of the UN sanctions was an uptick in looting at sites, partially due to mass layoffs of site guards and the catastrophic economic climate of Iraq in the late 1990s.

In the new millennium, as a result of years of site looting, over ten years of UN-mandated economic sanctions, and the 2003 Coalition invasion of Iraq, the fall of Baghdad, the looting of the Iraq National Museum, and burning of the Iraq National Archives, thousands of artifacts and associated knowledge representing nearly 150 years of archaeology in Mesopotamia have been lost (CPTR Iraq 2006). Many objects found their way onto the black market or were destroyed during the invasion or subsequent unrest. The rise of the Islamic state in the aftermath of the US withdrawal led to expanded looting and site destruction. Some limited excavations are still underway in Iraq, especially prehistoric-focused projects in northeastern Iraq in Iraqi-Kurdistan where there is more stability (Kopanias et al. 2015) but in general the systematic exploration of archaeological sites has been largely put-on hold. Although the current Iraqi government supports archaeological investigations the extent to which these excavations can operate safely is limited by the infrastructural and security situation in the country.

Chapter 3: The Impact of Political Systems on Archaeological Resources

Nationalism and Archaeological Resources

Archaeological resources such as sites, artifacts, and research have been used by different governments in a number of ways historically. These resources have a substantial amount of potential power by allowing whoever controls them to control the collective memory of a people. In many contexts governmental control of archaeology is deeply tied to nationalism and the ideology of the nation's controlling regime. Nationalism itself penetrates all aspects of a society, including things buried beneath the earth. The interplay between archaeology and nationalism has been examined by many scholars (Trigger 1984; Kohl and Fawcett 1989, among others) in an attempt to understand how the two can affect each other. Many nationalist movements are in one way or another reliant on a specific interpretation of archaeological research to validate their existence. There is a difference between national archaeology and nationalist archaeology, however. National archaeology is simply a collection of archaeological evidence from within the geopolitical borders of a particular nation-state, while nationalist archaeology makes use of archaeological data for political ends (Kohl 1998). Nationalist archaeology implies the existence of national archaeology but the reverse is not necessarily the case.

In most cases archaeologists need the support of governments for research funding and legal rights to excavate (Trigger 1984; Sommer 2017). Many museums are at least partially funded by governments and as such governments have some sway over how the past is presented in this context as well. For example, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC receives 64% of its funding from the Federal government (Smithsonian Institution 2020). Nationalist and authoritarian regimes will often turn to archaeology for validation in the form of a narrative that gives structure to a nation's history. Various regimes throughout history have attempted to use history and archaeology to create a stronger sense of national unity. In 19th century Europe, the

interest in archaeological research was partially influenced by the strong nationalism that characterized the post-Napoleonic era (Trigger 1984). Social class disparity may have also played a role in cementing the link between nationalism and archaeology. By creating a narrative of national unity nationalist archaeologists can distract the population from recognizing class inequality. This type of redirection of energy is an effective tactic used to keep large populations focused, comparable to the way contemporary US political factions will use a perceived common foe to attract followers that would normally be at odds.

National prestige is a powerful driving force behind governmental control of archaeology. Modern day Egypt is a great example of a government using its archaeological resources to bolster national prestige. This practice dates back to 19th century European imperialism, as a result of which French and English colonial forces gathered ancient works of art from all around the world and filled their respective national museums with them in an attempt to highlight the dominance of their modern states. The main motivation was not to research these ancient cultures or to try to rewrite their national historic narratives; rather the seizing of archaeological resources was an attempt to validate the current power of their modern states. However, over time this practice evolved into a cultural inheritance mindset through which various European nations attempted to represent themselves as the inheritors of ancient cultures such as Egypt or Rome. France, Germany and England funded major archaeological expeditions around the world but focused heavily on North Africa and the Middle East as discussed in Chapter 2. The character of these expeditions was extremely competitive, with each team believing that their national pride was at stake if they did not gather up as much archaeological material as possible (Kohl 1998). This interest in acquiring archaeological remains from distant lands meant that many prehistoric European sites were completely ignored.

In late 19th century Germany for example an emphasis on Mesopotamian and Hellenistic Greek archaeology meant that the archaeological sites located within the borders of Germany were largely ignored from a research standpoint but were subjected to looting by local antiquarians. Consequently, the national archaeology of Germany was mostly untouched research wise until after the First World War. With the German economy in ruins, overseas work was more difficult so sites closer to home would have become more enticing. This coupled with the rise of National Socialism and its nativist and racist approach to prehistoric archaeology led to more sites within Germany being studied (Arnold 1990, 2006). Unfortunately for scholarship at the time, these studies were so deeply intertwined with the destructive ideological program of the Nazi regime that the interpretation of data gathered at these sites was politically compromised. In these Nazi era projects, archaeological evidence of social hierarchy in ancient cultures was often ignored in favor of a racial hierarchal narrative, intent on proving the superiority of the Germanic people (Arnold 2006). Classical Near Eastern civilizations were viewed by some elements in the Nazi government as tainted due to their proximity to racially inferior multicultural groups (Arnold 2006). Nazi Germany was not attempting to represent itself as an inheritor of classical empires (as Mussolini did in Italy), it was attempting to increase its national prestige via displays of other cultures to highlight its own perceived superiority. The fusion of national archaeology and nationalist archaeology is clearly visible in Nazi Germany and serves as a warning for how dangerous this combination can be.

Archaeology can be used as a tool to identify a national or cultural origin point which can in turn support a nationalist regime. Most national bodies claim to have an identified origin, or a critical moment when a group of past peoples suddenly becomes a new people. This is similar to how some modern Americans view the US War of Independence as a shift from being British

colonial subjects to a new uniquely American identity. A nation will often trace its history back to a specific moment like a battle, revolution or declaration, and every historical event that comes after is treated as the historical property of that nation. The further back in time a nation can trace its roots, the more validity its sovereign and controlling regime can lay claim to. The Chinese government has worked extensively to self-validate its power through this process (Friedman 1994; Sommer 2017; Trigger 1984), for example. This perceived national unity and validity may result in the misrepresentation of archaeological remains as being related to the contemporary group in power.

The discovery of a previously unidentified archaeological phenomenon can result in a national label being assigned to it. The lake dwelling sites in Switzerland are a good example of conveniently connecting national identity to archaeological sites. Being geographically situated between Germany, Austria, Italy, and France, Switzerland has been influenced by the cultures of all the nations that surround it (Sommer 2017). This influence from multiple vectors is one reason why the Swiss lacked a single national origin narrative and as a result were characterized by a certain degree of disunity. The discovery of the Neolithic and Bronze Age lake dwelling sites at the end of the 19th century was seen as uniquely Swiss (although in fact such sites are found as far east as Slovenia) and the government immediately coopted it as a national symbol (Sommer 2017). The appropriation of the lake dwellers as a proto-Swiss group filled the void the Swiss felt as a nation.

When national unity is weakly developed in a country, archaeological resources can be used as a morale booster. In post-WW II Denmark, for example, a renewed interest in the Viking era was effectively used to create sense of national unity (Trigger 1984) by emphasizing distinctions between the people of Denmark and the other northern European countries. This type

of reasoning often assumes that the modern people of a nation-state are ethnically the same as the past inhabitants. In Denmark this was combined with the archaeologically-based Three Age System to claim that modern Danes were the same as the people living in the area during the Iron, Bronze, and Stone Ages (Trigger 1984). Both Mexico and China have also traditionally emphasized archaeological research as a means to create national unity, Mexico with an emphasis on Mayan and Aztec sites and China with an emphasis on the Han culture (Trigger 1984; Friedman 1994). Responsible use of archaeology and nationalism does not inherently distort factors such as race, language, and culture (Kohl and Fawcett 1989). However, the ways that Viking Age archaeology or Han-centric Chinese archaeology have been used to support modern national identity would not be considered responsible based on the way Kohl and Fawcett describe responsible national archaeology. In both of these cases, governments have deliberately skewed the interpretation and representation of the evidence for different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups in hopes of creating a more glorified version of their history. In the case of Denmark, the emphasis was on the superiority of the ancient Danes as exemplified by the fact that they were never conquered by the Romans (Trigger 1984:358). This is also an irresponsible use of nationalist archaeology, as it implies cultural superiority over other groups (Kohl and Fawcett 1989). The Third Reich was infamous for using archaeology (Arnold 1990), biological anthropology (Schafft 2004) and ethnography (Lixfeld 1994) to try to validate the supposed superiority of their ancestors along with the presumed genetic purity of these ancient peoples.

Occasionally nationalism and archaeology are used by governments in an attempt to rewrite the cultural history of a people or region. In such cases a group in power will attempt to resurrect past cultural traditions and link these to a specific group in the present, regardless of

whether the group being resurrected is related to them at all. When Yugoslavia changed its name to the Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Macedonia, the Yugoslavians were attempting to make two separate claims about their ties to the ancient past. First, they were attempting to de-emphasize their Slavic heritage by focusing on the ancient kingdom of Macedonia (Silberman 1989). This use of a single cultural designation ignores over two thousand years of history and cultural change that occurred between the height of Alexander's kingdom and the dissolution of the USSR. Second, by connecting itself to Macedonia, Yugoslav nationalists were attempting to strengthen their ties to classical Greece (Silberman 1989). This is also problematic as the Macedonians were not viewed as Greek by the ancient city states and it is only recently that Macedonia has been associated with Greek culture and vice versa. The approach taken by Yugoslavia is a perfect example of using archaeology to cherry pick which parts of history should be considered representative of the nation.

Regimes have also used archaeological resources to justify intrusions or hostile actions (Trigger 1984). Modern day Israel uses a combination of archaeology, history, and Biblical studies to justify its existence as a nation as well as its territorial expansion (Feige 2008). While Biblical era studies are emphasized in Israeli archaeology, prehistoric archaeology is often overlooked (Trigger 1984). This highlights another common characteristic of nationalist archaeology in which a specific time period or cultural group receives more emphasis than others. This is demonstrated in Egypt, where the emphasis traditionally has been placed on ancient Egyptian civilization, while other periods and groups receive little attention or are ignored (Trigger 1984). During times of national emergency Egypt has put additional emphasis on the pharaonic period, and deemphasized other periods of Egyptian archaeology (Silberman 1989). This includes the adoption of ancient symbols by government agencies during the

governments of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970) and Anwar Sadat (1918-1981) (Silberman 1989). This type of adoption can be also seen in the National Socialist German government's emphasis on using parts of the runic alphabet to create a connection to their perceived Germanic past. Possibly the most infamous example of Nazi use of ancient symbology is the appropriation of the swastika, a generic Indi-European sun symbol used in many cultures, or the use of the *sowlio* (𐌽) rune by the SS organization and the Waffen SS, its paramilitary arm (Windrow 1982).

Regimes that attempt to control archaeological research for their own purposes have a tendency to suppress knowledge that goes against their doctrines or that challenges the archaeological institutions they have already created. For example, S. N. Bykovski (1896-1936) and V. B. Aptekar (1899-1937), two Soviet archaeologists, were executed for challenging the established archaeological narrative of the ethnic superiority of the Russian people (Kohl and Fawcett 1995:130). Literally executing scholars whose ideas do not support the regime is an extreme example of how nationalist archaeology protects itself but other methods such as ostracization or defunding research that challenges the dominant narrative are more commonly used and also quite effective.

Finally, when looking at how regimes and governments use archaeology it is important to ask "Who physically controls archaeological research and materials?" Nationalist movements will often appropriate histories and symbols. This not cultural appropriation, but rather temporal appropriation, in the sense that a particular time period is used by descendant communities to promote a particular agenda in the present. Regimes not only engage in temporal appropriation but more subtly they can also appropriate research results. During the Pacific War of 1899, for example, Chile annexed portions of Peru. Along with the capture of strategic territory and resources, Chile also captured the archaeology of the region (Gänger 2009). They did this by

literally seizing primary source material from Peru and all the research that went along with it. This allowed Chile to become an archaeological authority on ancient Peruvian sites and materials virtually overnight. The intellectual prestige of Chile increased with all this acquired source material and items of archaeological importance became intertwined with a nationalist movement. To maintain this prestige the Chilean government sent two major archaeological expeditions into the newly annexed territory to build on the coopted work of the Peruvian archaeologists (Gänger 2009). These expeditions had several goals: they were to gather as much archaeological material as possible by any means necessary and transport them back to the national museum and they were to survey the newly conquered lands and report back to the national government on potential strategic and infrastructural use (Gänger 2009). The annexation of territory and archaeological remains allowed early 20th century Chile to redefine itself as a scientific authority via a fusion of nationalism and archaeology.

In summary, political systems interact with archaeological resources in four primary ways: misrepresentation; cooption; annexation; and seizure. Misrepresentation occurs when a political body misrepresents an archaeological resource to change or influence public perception, as is seen in Nazi Germany, modern day Israel and China. Cooption is when a national entity decides to use an archaeological resource to further its own political goals by attempting to show a linkage between the national entity and the resource, as demonstrated in some Chinese and Israeli archaeological contexts. Annexation is when knowledge or resources are controlled as part of a larger gambit, for example European colonial archaeology, which revolved around archaeological resources as a means of justifying the annexation of territory. Seizure is when a national entity takes over a resource for its own benefit, as seen when Chile annexed portions of Peru during the Pacific War of 1899. The nation of Iraq has experienced all of these forms of

archaeological politicization over the course of its history. The following section will address how the government of Iraq used archaeology during the regime changes in the second half of the 20th century and early 21st century.

The Use of Archaeology in Transitions of Power in Iraq

Iraq's archaeological resources have been influenced by both nationalist and national archaeology. How Iraq's successive regimes have used and interacted with its archaeological past varies deeply over the course of its history. Ba'athist Iraq and Saddam Hussein used archaeology differently from the post-invasion government and ISIS/ISIL, for example.

Archaeological studies in Iraq were initiated by colonial European nations such as France, England, and Germany. Archaeological research was almost completely in the hands of white Europeans and Iraqis themselves often had no idea what was being excavated or why (Goode 2007). Due to the Mandate for Iraq and the installation of the Hashemite monarchy, British archaeologists had exceptional access to Iraq beginning in the second half of the 19th century and most early archaeological research in the region was conducted by the British under the auspices of the Hashemite government, neither of which was representative of the majority population.

In the early 1970s the Ba'athist national reforms created an economically and culturally independent Iraq that enabled more Iraqi archaeologists to receive funding for projects within Iraq. Although Iraq has more than 6000 years of archaeological heritage, the Ba'athist regime emphasized Mesopotamian civilization over all others. This may be because the former colonizers placed so much emphasis on it in their research that Iraqi archaeologists expanded on the existing data in much the same way as the Chilean government did after the annexation of

portions of Peru. During the reign of Saddam Hussein, the archaeology of Iraq went through a further transformation and was fused to his nationalist view of a powerful modern Iraqi nation-state, creating a Saddamist archaeological tradition. Saddam focused on Babylon specifically, and funded excavations and restorations of various ziggurats and sites using government resources. These restorations were part of a national strategy to create a unified “Babylonian” identity in Iraq, comparable to the Macedonian identity featured in Yugoslavian archaeological attempts to appropriate that aspect of the region’s past. The plan was to create a system of well-funded, restored, protected and accessible sites that could be visited by the Iraqi public. These efforts were a major part of Saddam’s 1970s literacy campaign to create a standard education system in Iraq. At these restored sites Iraqis could explore reconstructed buildings, see artifacts, shop, eat, and learn about the Ba’athists national narrative for the county. Saddam made sure to have his name prominently inscribed on the bricks at his reconstructed Babylon as King Nebuchadnezzar had done before him (Figure 3.1) (De Cesari 2015; Amin 2019).



Figure 3.1. (Left) Brick at Babylon inscribed to commemorate Saddam’s reconstruction of the wall mimicking Nebuchadnezzar. Photo by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin (<https://www.ancient.eu/image/9875/saddam-hussein-plaque-in-babylon/>). (Right) An Original Nebuchadnezzar brick from 6th-7th c BCE Babylon. (<https://britishmuseum.withgoogle.com/object/a-building-block-from-babel>)

In Saddam's reconstruction of the temple of Nebuchadnezzar, he referred to himself as the son of Nebuchadnezzar and as the force that would glorify Babylon (Amin 2019). This was part of the campaign to pander to his personal ego and his need to effectively indoctrinate the populace to validate his regime's rule. In fact, Saddam's personality cult did as much as possible to present the leader as a Babylonian hero, with art, merchandise, and even coinage being produced to underline this connection with the ancient past (Figure 3.2). The Iran-Iraq war slowed down this production and reconstruction mentality but projects continued throughout the 1980s regardless of resource constraints, as the Ba'athists felt these were high priority endeavors.



Figure 3.2. Commemorative coinage depicting Saddam and Nebuchadnezzar from 1987 (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285573015_POST-COLONIAL_RUINS_Archaeologies_of_political_violence_and_IS)

This attempt to engage in temporal appropriation of Babylonian culture did not end with the cooption of archaeological sites; even the military and infrastructure of Saddam's Iraq emulated this heritage. Weapon systems were renamed to elicit Babylonian symbology, such as the ubiquitous soviet T-72 battle tank, which in Iraqi service was slightly modified for desert use and nicknamed the 'Lion of Babylon' (Cordesman 2003). This adoption of symbols associated with the archaeological past is not unlike the use of runes on Nazi uniforms and some German weapon systems during WWII. Public architecture was also redesigned to emulate perceived

Babylonian styles, as can be seen in the Babylon Oberoi Hotel (aka the Babylon Rotunda Baghdad Hotel) and several other buildings in Baghdad, including multiple half-scale Ishtar gate reconstructions at the entrances of public buildings and spaces (Figures 3.3 and 3.4) (Kulić 2015: Figs. 2, 12). These building projects were halted during the latter half of the Iran-Iraq war, resulting in some unfinished structures.



Figure 3.3. The Babylon Oberoi Hotel. Image from Building the Non-Aligned Babel: Babylon Hotel in Baghdad and Mobile Design in the Global Cold War (Kulić 2015: Fig. 12). (<https://journals.openedition.org/abe/docannexe/image/924/img-12.jpg>)

Protections for archaeological sites and government oversight were strong during most of Saddam Hussein's rule. Sites were well maintained and guarded; looters were punished as capital offenders for daring to plunder Iraq's national property. However, after the Persian Gulf War and subsequent unrest in Iraq, looting began to increase as Saddam's government was in disarray and its military forces had either deserted or were severely underfunded throughout the mid-1990s (Brodie 2011).



Figure 3.4. Stylized Ishtar gate entrance Baghdad. Image from Building the Non-Aligned Babel: Babylon Hotel in Baghdad and Mobile Design in the Global Cold War (Kulić 2015: Fig. 2) (<https://journals.openedition.org/abe/docannexe/image/924/img-2.jpg>).

Although looting was a constant occurrence, analysis of auction market lots of artifacts from Iraq spiked during times of civil unrest such as after the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war, and the War on Terror (Figure 3.5). The drop in lots immediately after 2003 can be attributed either to the items stolen being too “hot” to sell or to increased media attention and the work of Interpol and various academic institutions efforts to bring awareness to the issue. Furthermore, the use of the term “Iraq” by online retailers rapidly decreases in the post- invasion market and is replaced by the term “Mesopotamian” (Brodie 2011). This indicates that those engaged in the antiquities market were very much aware of the potential that these items were in fact stolen. Loosely defining where these items came from protects both the seller and buyer. While Iraq is a specific geographical location and political entity, Mesopotamia is not an entity that maps onto any

modern geopolitical environment. This allows sellers to avoid losing clientele while circumventing local legislation regulating trade in stolen antiquities.

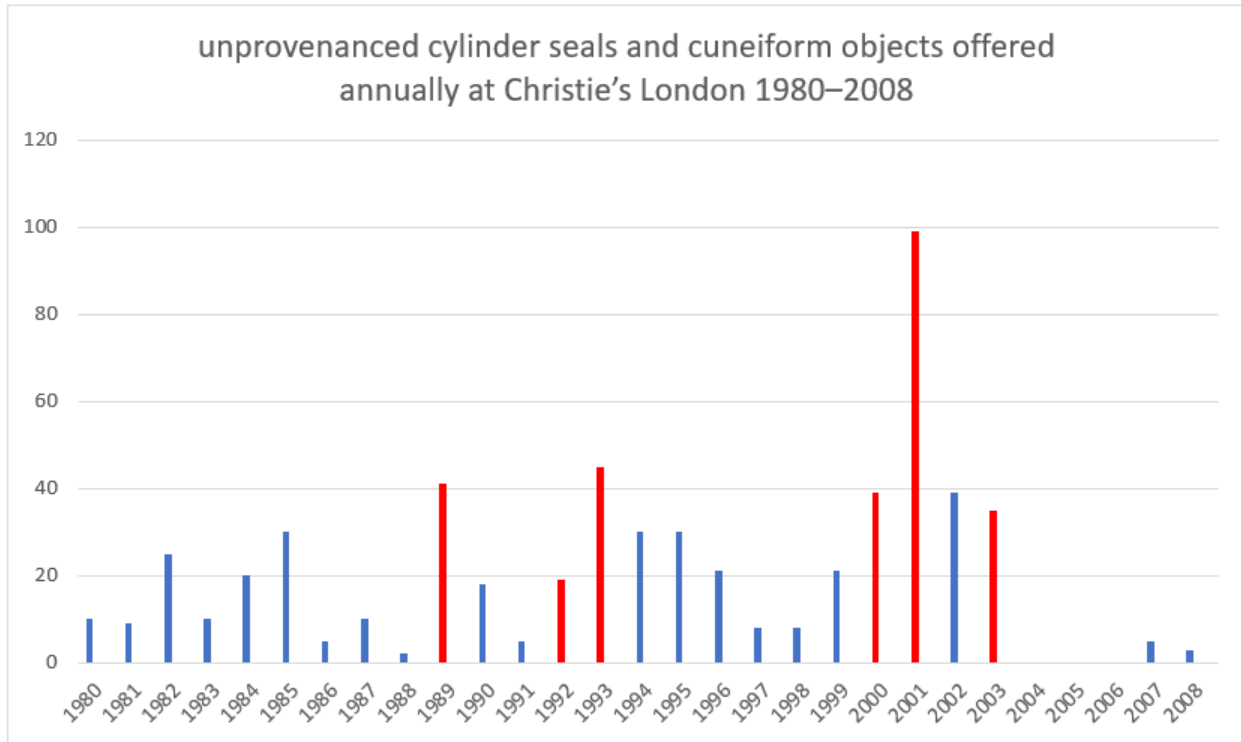


Figure 3.5. Number of lots of unprovenanced cylinder seals and cuneiform objects offered annually at Christie's of London from 1980 to 2006. Years of civil unrest in Iraq during which sites had less state protection are marked in red (emphasis by author). The years 2004-2006 have no reliable data, although looting and sales undoubtedly took place (Brodie 2011: 7.1).

Awareness of this potential can in some cases be attractive to prospective buyers motivated by risk as well as the fiction that the buyer is “saving” the object (Yates and Smith 2019). Online retailers also stopped presenting their full stock of Mesopotamian artifacts but allowed prospective clients to inquire about non-displayed items, in some cases going so far as to openly state the buyers should reach out to them privately “off-list” (Brodie 2011). Clients ranged from individuals to large organizations; a good example of the latter is Hobby Lobby’s purchase of 5548 artifacts. Beyond just acquiring artifacts to donate to the Museum of the Bible,

Hobby Lobby used the donation of these artifacts to receive federal tax breaks (Brodie 2020). Although the number of lots of Mesopotamian goods on the market appears to decrease between 2003 and 2008, it is likely that substantially more antiquities from the region were being sold than were reported when the amount of money changing hands is considered (Brodie 2011). An increase in the sale of very rare and unique items, such as Sîn-iddinam barrels, after 2003 indicates a substantial unreported antiquities market developed under cover of the chaos that accompanied Iraq's transition of power (Brodie 2011).

Shortly after the 2003 invasion an effort was made by the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute to track damages to archaeological sites using aerial and satellite imagery. This method was found to be very effective at identifying looting and other site preservation issues. Overflights were conducted by the Italian Carabinieri with academic support from McGuire Gibson and John M. Russel using helicopters as early as May 2003. These initial observations provided the first photographic evidence of mass looting at large sites across southern Iraq, but due to the limits of time, safety, and geographical scale, these flyover surveys could not effectively observe small to medium sized sites. Early satellite images confirmed previously unverified reports that mass looting had occurred at small to medium sized sites as well, providing a way for archaeologists to examine large tracts of land and avoid the limits of direct aerial observation. Based on images obtained between 2003 and 2006 it was determined that looting took place near towns but just far enough on the outskirts of sites so that it would go more or less unnoticed (Stone 2008). This indicates that locals were the ones mainly engaged in the looting as opposed to distant groups; it also indicates that the looters needed to be near resources and were not equipped for prolonged field operations. It was also found that the majority of sites looted were from the third millennium BCE (Stone 2008), which indicates that

the looters had targeted them for artifacts with particular market value. The looters also may have targeted such sites specifically because the Ba'athist regime had put such an emphasis on that time period. The looters would have been very familiar with this time period and the market value of such items after years of Ba'athist indoctrination.

Not all of the destruction has been caused by looting. During the 2003 invasion many archaeological sites fell into ruin or were destroyed by over-zealous weapons fire. For instance, just outside of the town of Najaf, the restored ruins of several Babylonian structures were destroyed in an attempt to make room for helicopters until community members and professors from the local university pleaded with US troops to stop. With the disbanding of the Iraqi military and police forces, the nation's museums were looted and countless artifacts made their way onto the black market (Poole 2008). Iraqi archaeology fell into disarray as museums that housed archaeological collections were unable to confirm what they did and did not have. The Baghdad Museum lost over 15,000 artifacts to looting (Bogdanos 2005); the identity of these looters is still murkily veiled by the fog of war and was not limited to the Baghdad Museum. Corruption ran rampant within the destabilized regime and artifacts were found, lost, and found again many times over. This represented a change from the limited looting of pre-invasion Iraq, illustrating the chaotic nature of Iraqi archaeology under the transitional government.

Archaeological sites were left unprotected and looters dug pits and toppled standing structures in an attempt to find things to sell. Due to Coalition Provisional Authority Order 2 (one of a series of orders used by the CPA to restructure Iraq), members of the former regime were not permitted to participate in the transitional government. This added to the problem as many archaeologists and academics were members of the former regime, creating an archaeological power vacuum in the country and destabilizing the archaeological community within Iraq. The same thing had

happened in Iran after the Revolution (1979) when former regime members were removed from academic posts as part of a campaign to reject the previous government's interest in pre-Islamic archaeology. Tehran's Department of Archaeology was closed in 1979 and didn't resume activities fully until 1990 (Abdi 2001).

Work to preserve archaeological resources was conducted on a local scale in different Iraqi cities, such as Baghdad, Najaf, and Mosul. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani was instrumental in stopping large scale looting operations and worked with Italian and US troops to establish patrols near archaeological sites (Lawler 2008), and the US military (particularly US Army Civil Affairs) carried out several programs intended to educate US troops on protecting archaeological resources in country. These stopgap measures had a limited effect and did not create a system of protections such as those established by the prior regime. The chaos of war gutted institutional oversight of Iraqi archaeology and transitional government attempts to regulate the situation were futile at best (Figure 3.6) (Adams 2001). Under the transitional governments some research conducted during the coalition occupation of Iraq was by private individuals from the US and UK similar to archaeological projects at the beginning of the 20th century (Adams 2001).

The chaos of Iraq's transitional government destabilized the protection of archaeological sites to such an extent that in some cases lawmakers arrested lawmakers. Abdel-Amir Hamdani, the Director of Antiquities in the Nasiriyeh region of Iraq, was arrested by the Iraqi government for attempting to enforce protection of archaeological sites when he stopped the building of several economically important factories (Lawler 2008). In addition, the Iraqi government has had to break its own heritage protection laws in order to keep its population alive. In several cases large mounds were destroyed to make way for emergency agricultural projects (Gibson 2003). This is in sharp contrast to the Ba'athist regime's treatment of archaeological sites and

clearly shows that the post-Saddam government views its archaeological resources as expendable and secondary to other priorities, including development.



Figure 3.6. Looter's Pit and Pot Sherds on the surface at the site of Kish.
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeological_looting_in_Iraq#/media/File:A_looter's_pit_\(left\)_at_the_ancient_Sumerian_city_of_Kish,_Iraq._Fragments_of_pottery_\(right\)_are_scattered_near_the_pit.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeological_looting_in_Iraq#/media/File:A_looter's_pit_(left)_at_the_ancient_Sumerian_city_of_Kish,_Iraq._Fragments_of_pottery_(right)_are_scattered_near_the_pit.jpg)).

After US and coalition troops withdrew from Iraq, a power vacuum opened up that led to the rise of ISIS. This organization weaponized the destruction of Iraqi national archaeology in two ways. First it destroyed or sold any pre-Islamic artifacts it could, a reversal of the Ba'athists' over-emphasis on pre-Islamic archaeology (Harmanşah 2015). This tactic was successful in destroying a unified Iraqi identity that might have been fostered by pre-Islamic artifacts. The second objective was to punish Western powers for their interference in Iraq. The more attention Western scholars paid to the destruction of sites and artifacts by ISIS the more destruction occurred (Harmanşah 2015; Arnold 2018). While ISIS/ISIL was never the official government of Iraq, they did operate as a government in areas they captured and as such they demonstrate another regime's treatment of archaeological resources in the region. Regions governed by ISIS/ISIL were subject to the organization's objections to idolatry, and as such pre-Islamic

archaeological resources that could be defined as idolatry – including most figural representations – were subject to ISIS/ISIL’s destructive wrath. Members of ISIS/ISIL hailed from over 85 countries and represented multiple ethnicities. Many of these individuals have little or no connection to Iraq’s archaeological past and would not be disturbed by destroying these resources.

When considering how Iraq’s archaeological resources were treated by incoming governments compared to previous regimes several trends emerge. First, Saddam’s Iraq venerated archaeological resources for their power to influence and control people rather than purely out of intellectual curiosity. Archaeological evidence in Saddam’s Iraq was treated as a national resource to be exploited, similar to Iraq’s oil reserves. Saddam’s government relied on selective exploitation of the archaeological record, a system in which cultural resources with little political power are ignored in favor of resources that can be exploited (Arnold 1999). This process can be likened to mining the past for valuable bits of knowledge while discarding the rest. Secondly, the transitional government of Iraq had other more urgent priorities than nationalizing archaeological resources. This, coupled with the rejection of Ba’athist policies and symbolism (as seen in the Constitution of Iraq), may have led to a general disinterest in archaeology among the transitional governments. This is not to say that there were no concerted efforts in some departments of government to protect these resources, but on the whole archaeological resources were not valued as they had been before. Third, ISIS/ISIL’s destruction of archaeological heritage is a counter-institutional revolt that uses attacks on cultural patrimony as a medium through which to send a message to the West, a process also seen during Roman expansion into Europe (Arnold and Fernández-Götz 2020). Although some members of ISIS/ISIL were former Ba’athist party members under Saddam, their willingness to completely

reject these resources indicates that they are partly motivated by anarchist impulses to simply burn everything to the ground and start anew. This contrasts with Saddam's approach of "we need to take care of this" and the transitional government's "we'll get to it later" approach and instead asks "Why get to it at all?". In addition, the prevalence of iconoclastic attitudes among members of ISIS/ISIL also fueled this destruction. In Islam, iconoclasm is not a general belief but rather a specific theological attitude held by some toward artistic representation.

Contemporary iconoclastic attitudes are not only displayed by ISIS/ISIL but also in destruction of Sufi shrines in Mali during the Tuareg rebellion (Tharoor 2012) and the destruction of Buddhas in Afghanistan (Arnold 2014; Rathje 2001).

These three contrasting approaches to archaeological resources provide us with a window into what is happening on the ground with Iraqi archaeology and allow us to peer into the mentality of these regimes through combined political and strategic lenses.

Chapter 4: Citizen Interactions with Archaeological Resources

In addition to how governments and academia interact with archaeological resources, it is important to investigate how ordinary people interact with them as well, since they can have a major impact on how archaeological resources are treated, valued and represented within a country. Popular opinion on how these resources should be used is an especially powerful force when political regimes change.

Due to the climate of the Cold War and the mass destruction of records in the course of the 2003 invasion of Iraq as well as the more recent Iraqi civil war, there is limited information available in the west on how the general population may have viewed or interacted with Iraq's archaeological resources. To supplement the relative scarcity of primary and secondary documentary material an examination of governmental policies that impacted the general public, evidence of looting activity, and first-hand accounts of those who lived under these different regimes is necessary to identify possible changes in how the people of Iraq viewed their archaeological resources over time.

Iraq under the Dictator

Finding information on how citizens during the Ba'athist regime operated can be difficult. Many public records were destroyed by retreating Iraqi forces in 2003, and many more were lost in the years of chaos that followed. To understand how citizens interacted with archaeological resources it is necessary to examine in what ways Saddam's government emphasized cultural, particularly archaeological, resources to the public, the prevalence of looting and destruction of sites under Ba'athist control, and what individuals who lived under the regime are willing to share about their experiences.

As Iraq's leader, Saddam was a very self-serving individual whose undertakings were always based on the potential payout he could gain. He knew that to be a strong leader (and fulfil his fantasy of being a modern Babylonian king) he would need to obtain and maintain public support and public interest, which meant creating a strong Iraq. It is unclear whether Saddam coopted the Iraqi public's interest in archaeology for his own gains or if the public adopted his interest in the archaeological past of Iraq to survive under his rule. Undoubtedly there was some public interest in archaeology unrelated to Saddam's regime, as is the nature of the field. Saddam used public imagery to invoke his regime's ties to the ancient past. A common vector for this type of propaganda was the public display of murals featuring Saddam and various ancient Mesopotamian rulers such as the lawgiver Hammurabi (Figure 4.1). The mural in this case juxtaposes portraits of Hammurabi, in the characteristic headgear of a 2nd millennium BC Babylonian ruler, and Saddam in modern military uniform to reflect Saddam's view of himself as bringing law and order to Iraq. The famous Ishtar Gate (currently Berlin) as well as the basalt stela inscribed with Hammurabi's Law Code (currently in the Louvre) are also prominently referenced in the mural and it seems unlikely that these references to objects of Iraqi patrimony still held in foreign museums was coincidental. These murals were located in schools, public buildings, and along roadways and were used to send the message to the people that Saddam and the Ba'athists represented a link between an unbroken lineage from his subjects to ancient Iraq. Messaging like this was also effective as it circumvented the need for literacy or any formal knowledge of the subject matter. Because history and archaeology played a substantial role in the education system, this imagery could then be used by the Ba'athists to further solidify their rule. This was especially effective as youth educated in this system could then interpret the meaning of these murals to members of society that didn't receive this education (CI#2).

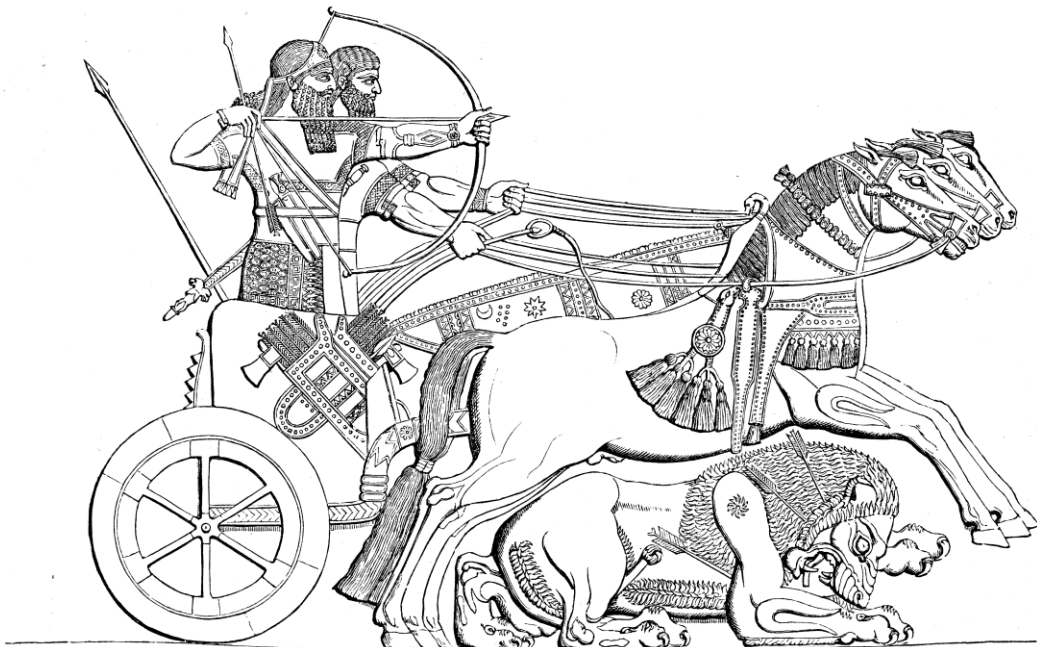


Figure 4.1. Saddam and Hammurabi mural from Babylon. Murals like this one were common at archaeological sites to remind the people of their (and particularly Saddam's) connection to the past. (Getty Contributor; <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20180419-saddam-disney-for-a-despot-how-dictators-exploit-ruins>)

Another popular visual Saddam depicted his armed forces as the direct successors of the ancient Babylonian soldiers seen in the reliefs at archaeological sites. In Figure 4.2 he rides on a chariot accompanied by modern MiG-25 Fighters, a Mi-8 helicopter, and an Iraqi Coast Guard patrol boat. The missile in the picture is most likely an Iraqi made "Al Hussein" missile, which is serving as a representation of the arrows fired from Saddam's bow. This representation of Saddam directly mimics the artistic style of ancient Mesopotamia (Figure 4.3) and explicitly implies continuity and cultural connection between the Ba'athist regime and ancient Iraq. This type of propaganda was common in public buildings, archaeological sites, and billboards across central and southern Iraq until the 2003 invasion.



Figure 4.2. Saddam often mixed his love of ancient Babylon and Mesopotamia more generally with his love of the military (Getty Contributor <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20180419-saddam-disney-for-a-despot-how-dictators-exploit-ruins>).



Assyrian Warriors hunting a Lion. (N W. Palace, Nimroud.)

Figure 4.3. A drawing of a relief from the northwest corner of the Assyrian palace at Nimrud depicting ancient warriors hunting lions. The resemblance between this relief and how Saddam portrays himself in Figure 4.2 is striking (Layard 1864; https://biblicalarchaeology.org.uk/book_nineveh-and-its-remains_layard.php)

Saddam's public policies were initially considered to be very progressive, especially in a nation that had been under either Ottoman, colonial, or monarchical rule for 430 years. To strengthen Iraq and by association his own political position, he worked diligently to modernize Iraq's economy, education system, and infrastructure. In emphasizing economic independence, he moved to create Iraq-owned firms to exploit natural resources in the region. Although economic independence was critical to creating the Ba'athist vision of a reborn Iraq, Saddam focused substantially more of his time and resources on social development. It is important to keep in mind that all of this progress was contingent on loyalty and submission to his government and personality cult. Healthcare, accessible college, and the elimination of illiteracy were key social policies backed by Saddam and provided to those loyal to him. These programs combined with the threat of brutal retaliation garnered him substantial support during the 70s and early 80s and some of these programs affected the Iraqi population in positive ways. This is indicative of the paradox that most 20th century dictatorships seem to be wrapped in. On one hand authoritarian political entities will often emulate progressive practices such as accessible education, as seen in Nazi Germany, or woman's suffrage, as seen in the USSR, that are common in most western democracies, while conversely and simultaneously embracing authoritarian policies. This paradox could be seen as a way for authoritarian governments to proactively counteract public distaste for their more brutal control practices. Offering the population services and limited and contingent rights can help disguise a political entity's oppressive policies. Iraqis knew Saddam was a cruel leader but he was also the one creating education reforms and infrastructural development. Perhaps the population was willing to put up with the oppression in exchange for the obvious benefits, but more likely they had no means to actually overthrow the

oppressor. Under those conditions it is expedient to endure and find whatever silver lining one can.

During his reign Saddam set aside funding to establish 11 public universities and nine private institutions, including the University of Tikrit, which is one of Iraq's largest and most reputable. Iraq also boasted the highest education spending in the region at 5% of GDP (Ranjan and Jain 2009). These institutions allowed Iraqi students to engage in archaeological research that would otherwise would have been inaccessible and allowed members of the public to engage with archaeological resources in a way not seen before in the Middle East. In his general education reforms, Saddam's government emphasized ancient Mesopotamian history as a core subject to be taught in primary school. Students in grades 5-7 participated in courses related to ancient Babylon three days per week and such courses continued with regularity until graduation in 12th grade (CI #2). This mass education campaign focused on archaeology and history and although it was skewed by Ba'athist ideologies it also created a sense of appreciation for cultural resources in the general public. Coupled with the mass propaganda campaigns intended to paint Saddam and Iraq as part of a great Mesopotamian inheritance these programs created a sense of reverence in the public for the country's archaeological resources.

Archaeology was an exceptional weapon in the Saddam's arsenal, as it does not require literacy to be an effective tool for communicating propaganda. Archaeological resources include physical objects that can be displayed in a museum or restored at sites as well as features in the landscape that can be visited. Iraq during the 1970s had a very low literacy rate; in 1977 rural Iraqi literacy rates topped 48.67% (Ranjan and Jain 2009). While Saddam did work to establish paths to literacy for the Iraqi population, having these populations interact with archaeology was a highly effective way to indoctrinate them in the meantime. Public artwork and reconstructions

were used to convey the messages of Saddam's regime concerning archaeological resources for those who could not read. Iraqis I spoke to between 2012-2014 and 2018-2020 reported that during this time Iraq's archaeological resources were highly respected by most segments of society as they felt that it was their shared property and part of a common origin narrative. Saddam also hosted a public festival in the Gardens of Babylon called Al-Mirbad, a month-long event that showcased Iraq's ancient art and culture. This festival was comparable to a Renaissance Festival in the US and included people dressing up in period costume and selling reproductions of ancient artifacts (Tracy 1989). Its primary objective was to engage and unify people around the regime's interpretation of Iraq's grand history, while its secondary objective was to allow Saddam a month to play to his ego as the great king of Iraq. Regardless of the political indoctrination that undoubtedly motivated it, this festival was a popular way for the Iraqi public to interact with the archaeological record of the region and further cemented the peoples' love for the ancient past (Tracy 1989; Iraq Ministry of Culture and Information 1989; CI #3).

Saddam didn't necessarily express imperial aspirations with his self-evocation of Nebuchadnezzar II. While the Neo-Babylonian empire stretched across modern day Iraq and into the Saini, Saddam didn't expand much outside Iraq's borders; instead, he seemed focused on developing and ruling Iraq within its modern geopolitical borders. His forays into other nations were primarily concerned with acquiring something that could be used to build up Iraq or to eliminate a perceived foreign threat, rather than conquering vast swaths of territory. This restraint may be due to the fact that Saddam understood that although he had a large military he couldn't capture and hold large areas without focusing undesirable international attention on his activities that could destabilize his regime, as in the case of the invasion of Kuwait. When

Saddam invaded Iran his objectives were to annex portions of the Persian Gulf coastline to expand Iraq's coastal access to the gulf and to destabilize the Iranian government, which Saddam saw as a threat after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini called for the Iraqi people to overthrow the Ba'athist government in 1979 (Karsh 2002). This didn't warrant a large international military response aside from several surgical strikes conducted by the Israeli Airforce in 1981 (Fainberg 1981). Saddam's expansion into Iran seems to have been primarily focused on consolidating his rule and served as an opportunity to use his modern military forces against a foreign threat instead of his own subjects. When he invaded Kuwait in 1990, his objective was to capture Kuwait's oil resources to fund further development in Iraq. Among the Iraqi public there was some belief that Kuwait's geographic location was actually part of Iraq that had been cut off by colonial powers, but this notion was only used to make the war appear to be about more than money (CI #1; CI #3). While territorial expansion is an imperial trait, Saddam's expansion seems to have been largely inward facing, concerned primarily with preserving the image of himself as king of his own kingdom. It seems telling that in his public murals he was careful to associate himself with constructive leaders like Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar but avoided invoking images of conquerors such as Sargon of Akkad, credited with having created the world's first empire.

Saddam's hybridization of his political agenda and the promotion and protection of archaeological resources was very effective in creating a period of public stability and cohesion rarely seen in the modern Middle East. This cohesion was first tested during the Persian Gulf War, when mass desertion from the military and economic destruction put many of Saddam's public archaeological projects on indefinite hold. What Baathist funds remained were channeled into stabilizing the economy and paying reparations to Kuwait. Many of the sites were shut down

and fenced off and small groups of soldiers were left to garrison them against looters. Saddam's inability to continue providing public services led to the fracturing of the unity he had created through the 1970s and 1980s. With Saddam's defeat at the hands of the US in 1991 the cruel practices of his regime became more of a factor in his popularity. The Iraqi people were not feeling the sense of unity they had once felt and as a result the regime's use of archaeology as a unifying element in the public sector deteriorated steadily. Looting operations expanded in remote regions with the layoff of many site guards. Auction house data show spikes in unprovenanced artifacts appearing through the late 1990s (Brodie 2011: Fig. 3.5).

Saddam's public display of interest in archaeology seems to have faded by the turn of the millennium. He became reclusive and the Iraqi people saw less and less of him while he spent much of the early 2000s writing political allegories set in Babylon (Bengio 2002). His four novels outlined the perceived instances of persecution he had experienced at the hands of the western powers combined with his vision of creating a new Babylon. These books were made available to the Iraqi public and *Zabibah and the King*, *The Fortified Castle* and *Men and the City* were part of the public-school curriculum until 2003. Saddam's byline was replaced by "a Novel Written by its Author" to preserve his anonymity and prevent these screeds from looking like blatant indoctrination. The use of anonymity by someone who publicly styled himself after Nebuchadnezzar is paradoxical. By the time these books were written Saddam was an older man and had become increasingly paranoid and reclusive. It is believed but not verifiable that in his final years Saddam was becoming more and more out of touch with the public and self-conscious about interacting with people, suggesting he had developed a degree of stage fright and used the novels as a proxy for appearing at public events. Interestingly, it was no secret to the general public that he was the author, although it was suspected that he had relied upon ghost writers (CI

4). In addition, Saddam may have been worried about looking weak in the eyes of those critical of his rule and the release of poorly written books after a decade of military, economic, and diplomatic humiliation would have given his opponents additional ammunition to argue that he should be deposed.

Saddam's waning emphasis on archaeology corresponds with the public's disapproval of his regime and the growing divides within the power structure and Iraq as a whole. Sa'adoon Al - Zubayadi (Saddam's personal translator and Iraqi ambassador to the US between 1995 and 2001) noted that his withdrawal from the public sphere coincided with the general public's drop in enthusiasm for Saddam's regime and that although many factors led to the collapse of the regime, the erosion of cultural unity centered around the idea of a Babylonian identity was significant (Cremonesi 2003). The 2003 invasion of Iraq and subsequent destabilization of the regime was the final nail in the coffin for nationalist Iraqi archaeology.

2003 Invasion and Transition Government

The chaos of war that accompanied the 2003 invasion put an end to much of the institutional oversight of Iraqi archaeology and funding for research in Iraq (Gibson 2003); it also destabilized the public university system the Ba'athists had established. This eliminated public engagement with archaeological resources, protections, and accessibility to the artifacts. The elimination of public involvement, the reality of war, and the desperation that soon gripped Iraq opened the door to mass looting.

The value the general public placed on accessibility to archaeological resources can be seen even after the elimination of the Ba'athist party, however. In post-invasion Iraq one of the more common complaints or grievances reported by older Iraqis (those who would have attended

school after Saddam's education reform began) was the loss of culture and history. Although the coalition invasion did not destroy the history of Iraq and did make efforts to protect it, the destruction of the Ba'athist nationalist education programs and the rise in mass looting meant that for a time the only way archaeological resources were accessible to the younger generations was via written sources, especially as it was far too dangerous to visit sites in person. The artifacts, reconstructions, and museums that had once created the link between the people, the past, and the Ba'athist party were all gone.

Mass unemployment, the disbanding of the government and military and the elimination of the education infrastructure all contributed to the loss of protections for archaeological sites and museums (Silberman 1989). Under the Ba'athists, extremely harsh punishments had dissuaded potential looters across Iraq, looting being regarded as stealing directly from the nation. Now with a disbanded army, the potential for punishment was greatly reduced and many unemployed soldiers found quick and easy money looting the sites they were supposed to guard (CI #3). Local corruption created more chaos as museums that housed archaeological collections were unable to confirm what they did and did not have and, in some cases, museums simply did not report what they had as they were fearful of being looted. Some museum staff attempted to protect the Iraqi National Museum's collections by either wrapping exhibits in foam or barricading section of the museum (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). Museum staff also were found to have conveniently "lost" items that later re-appeared for sale. In some cases, museum workers just as conveniently "recovered" lost items when questioned by US Marines (Bogdanos 2005:497). The value of Mesopotamian artifacts increased substantially as a result of the chaos of the war, becoming a sellers' market and making looting more attractive (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.4. (Left). Iraqi National Museum staff attempted to barricade this doorway, but looters with heavy equipment breached the room and looted the contents (Gibson 2003: Fig. 2).
 Figure 4.5. (Right) The destroyed archives of the National Museum. Countless documents and site reports were lost during the 2003 conflict (Gibson 2003: Fig. 3).

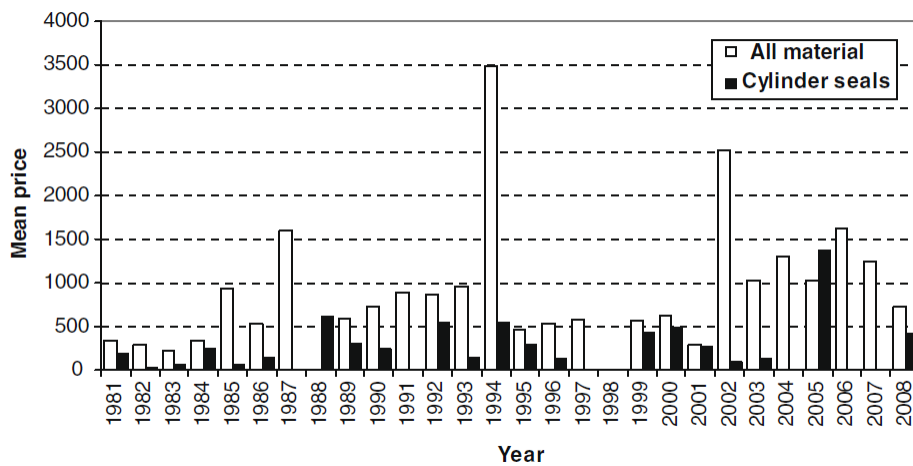


Figure 4.6. Mean price per lot offered (£) for Mesopotamian artifacts between 1981 and 2008 at Christie's, London (Brodie 2011: Fig. 7.4).

To add to the disconnect between the public and archaeological resources, many archaeological sites fell into ruin due to lack of maintenance or were destroyed by overly zealous weapons fire during the initial invasion (Gibson 2003) (Figure 4.7). For instance, just outside of the town of Najaf, the restored ruins of several Babylonian structures were destroyed in an attempt to make room for landing helicopters until community members and professors from the local university pleaded with US troops to stop.



Figure 4.7. M1 Abrams tank in front of the Children's section of the Iraqi National Museum. The hole above the arch was caused by a US tank round during fighting between US and Iraqi forces (Gibson 2003: Fig. 1).

Najaf was one of the few places to retain some control of archaeological sites. During interviews conducted with Iraqi residents in 2014, numerous older community members stated

that archaeological sites needed protection as they were part of the national legacy. This is an indicator of the successful indoctrination of this generation by the Baathist regime, and how important the sites were to this demographic. Conversely, those residents who were born after the Persian Gulf War and the subsequent struggles of the early 2000s, when archaeology was no longer emphasized in the curriculum, felt little connection to the sites and saw them as simply “old houses”.

Another crisis created by the disbanding of the Iraqi military and the fall of the Ba’athist regime was a substantial growth in violent looters. After the nation’s museums were looted by disbanded troops, countless artifacts made their way onto the black market (Poole 2008). Partly this was because these fledging insurgencies needed funds to purchase weapons, material, and loyalty. After 2003, and especially after the 2013 Iraqi Civil War, the illicit artifact trade in Iraq went from a fledgling cottage industry to a militarized operation. Although most looting operations were conducted by small teams with hand tools, larger and larger operations that were far from institutional control began to use heavy machinery (CI #3). In addition, it was not uncommon for looters to bring gunmen with them for the sole purpose of killing witnesses (CI #3). Archaeological sites were left un-managed and looters dug pits and toppled standing structures in an attempt to find things to sell. Some of this looting was conducted by former antiquities officials, Ba’athist government members who knew the value of the sites, but much of it was carried out by desperate individuals who fall into the category of subsistence looters. The term subsistence looting or subsistence digging defines individuals who excavate archaeological sites and sell artifacts due to poverty (Hollowell 2006; Matsuda 2005). It is important to consider how conflict thrusts people into poverty because it displaces people, destroys resources, and disrupts social order. Looted artifacts found their way to dealers in Turkey, Hong Kong, and

Switzerland. Under the hastily formed transitional government in 2004, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani was instrumental in stopping some large-scale looting operations and worked with Italian and US troops to establish patrols near archaeological sites (Lawler 2008) (Figure 4.8). These patrols were initially effective in preventing looting, but distinguishing between professional looters, insurgents, or just down on their luck subsistence diggers proved difficult (Figure 4.9). The level of looting in transition Iraq could be an indication that the sites were simply not as valued by the youth who grew up without the Ba'athist regime's indoctrination, that the desperation of war and recovery pushed more people into engaging in looting activities, or most likely a combination of both.



Figure 4.8. Helicopter gunner scans site for potential looters and looks for evidence of newly dug pits at Ur. Note the weapon is a 5.56mm FN Minimi, a Squad automatic weapon with less penetration than larger 7.62mm and .50 cal door guns typically equipped on combat helicopters. This weapon is well-suited for use around archaeological resources. (Undated)(Cristiano Laruffa <https://iwa.univie.ac.at/iraqarchive19.html>).



Figure 4.9. Looters captured by Italian forces at Tell el-Lahm in 2004. Determining their motives and allegiance is often difficult (Cristiano Laruffa <https://iwa.univie.ac.at/iraqarchive19.html>).

ISIS/ISIL and Archaeology

After US and coalition troops withdrew from Iraq and the Iraqi government went through several phases of restructuring, a power vacuum opened up, leading to the rise of ISIS/ISIL. The organization itself was an unrecognized proto-state founded on extremist Sunni teachings and Salafi Jihadism. Under Salafi Jihadism, adherents attempt to return Sunni Islam to its roots. This is why ISIS/ISIL considers pre-Islamic cultures to be blasphemous and archaeological resources associated with them fit only to be destroyed or sold to benefit the state (Dirven 2015).

The ISIS/ISIL attitude toward Iraq's antiquities is interesting as they on the one hand saw them as blasphemous and only worthy of destruction while on the other hand, they recognized their financial value. As most ISIS/ISIL soldiers were born after the Persian Gulf War and were often transplants from other countries, they usually had not received the indoctrination implemented by the Ba'athist regime. This further separated them from a connection to the archaeological resources their ideology told them to destroy. Furthermore, the massive destruction of sites could in part be attributed to an extreme rejection of the Baathist emphasis on

history and archaeology. Many of the ISIS/ISIL fighters would have grown up during the later years of the Ba'athist regime or during the Iraq war, and as such felt angered and distrustful of anything the prior regime valued due to its association with previous trauma.

ISIS/ISIL also was engaged in a war with the West on ideological grounds. Destroying archaeological resources was a strategic move to anger and insult western nations who had put so much value on these resources since the colonial period (Arnold 2018). It also gained extensive media attention for ISIS/ISIL abroad, allowing them to spread their influence outside the Middle East and in a sense bring the war to the doorstep of militarily powerful western nations with a minimal expenditure of resources (Figure 4.10). This tactic has been used by other groups attempting to gain attention and strike at the West through academia, most notably the Taliban's destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan in 1998 and 2001 (Rathje 2001). Destroying an ancient temple after all is much cheaper than bombing civilians, shooting up public places, or crashing aircraft into buildings (Figure 4.11). In fact, with the images of looting and destruction of these sites finding their way onto CNN, FOX, BBC, Al Jazeera, and many more large-scale news outlets along with social media, ISIS was able to spread its message faster than anyone could have imagined. The message being sent to the western academic establishment was clearly that ISIS/ISIL can rip out and destroy what western academics value most and there is little that can be done to stop them. This move alone gave ISIS/ISIL more ideological power than even Saddam had wielded with his politicization of Iraq's archaeological resources.



Figure 4.10. The remains of the University of Mosul, destroyed by retreating Islamic State militants during the battle for Mosul. (Reuters/Marko Djurica).



Figure 4.11. Barrel bombs primed by ISIS/ISIL militants at Nimrud's Northwest Palace. (Video released by ISIS on April 11, 2015).

People and Archelogy in Iraq

Several trends emerge when attitudes toward Iraq's archaeological resources and their treatment by its people before, during, and after regime changes are considered. The Ba'athist's use of archaeology to indoctrinate the public by making archaeological resources and archaeologically based education more accessible served a stabilizing role in the Iraqi community and created a system of reverence and respect for archaeological research and the ancient cultures of the region. This reverence aged with the community and faded under the problems the late Ba'athist regime had either created for itself or had inflicted upon it. The transition government put archaeology on the backburner, as it had more pressing issues to deal with, along with general disinterest on the part of the public, leading to additional neglect and eventually a sense that these resources were there to be exploited if they could no longer be protected and had ceased to be meaningful as symbols of national unity. Combined with the reality and scarcity accompanying a state of constant warfare, these changing attitudes led to archaeological resources being less revered and viewed increasingly as commodities. The ISIS/ISIL rejection of the Baathist politicization of archaeology represented the final stage in the separation of Iraq's people from the archaeological resources within its borders. ISIS/ISIL effectively weaponized archaeological resources against the prior regimes and the greater geopolitical community. Over the course of Iraq's modern history, archaeological resources have shifted from being a source of community building and focus of academic interest to a weapon used to self-destructive effect in a larger global conflict.

Chapter 5: Implications for Military, Transitional Governments, and Intelligence Communities

Military involvement with archaeological resources during invasion and occupation

As the 2003 invasion of Iraq clearly demonstrated, military forces will inevitably come into contact with archaeological resources in conflict zones. This contact typically results when active conflict occurs in close proximity to archaeological sites, making it necessary to secure buildings like museums and universities or artifacts being found or sold within and outside the country. Military units operating in such areas should consider the potential use of both education and physical force in devising strategies to protect archaeological resources.

Education

Education of military personnel is essential, particularly for those in the combat branches of the armed services, as they are the most likely to come into contact with archaeological resources. In the early stages of the war in Afghanistan and later Iraq, there was a degree of pushback (Pollock 2003, 2004, 2008) from the anthropological community concerning the ethics of providing guidance to the armed forces. Most notable was a statement published by the American Anthropological Association in which interactions with US military forces, including the Human Terrain Mapping Project, were described as a violation of its code of ethics (Emberling 2008). Another issue was the discomfort felt by many archaeologists about speaking to the media for fear that their words might be twisted by external interests to justify an agenda (Pollock 2003). The media as an institution represent one of the most effective tools for archaeologists to disseminate information to non-archaeologists, and as such could help to mitigate archaeological losses; however, this tool can also be used as a weapon, leading to the

reluctance of some archaeologists to engage in media interactions. In 2003 this type of information dissemination was easily weaponized by western news outlets to justify military actions taken within the country or to blame others (such as Iraqis themselves) for the destruction of sites (Pollock 2004). This type of media manipulation shifted the public's attention from the destruction caused by coalition troops and blamed local communities instead. Naturally this is ethically problematic and pushed many archaeologists away from engaging with the media and government entities that could have benefitted from professional archaeological expertise in protecting archaeological and other forms of cultural heritage in Iraq (Pollock 2003, 2004). There are of course many ethical considerations to take into account during any form of military operation, and as a former soldier and an archaeologist I can attest to the complexity of the issue. However, by standing on the sidelines or claiming scientific exceptionalism, individuals or organizations are simply allowing harm to come to archeological resources through inaction. There is no one-size-fits-all doctrine or approach for dealing with this complex issue and unfortunately, the reality of a situation like Iraq is that once a war is in progress people will suffer from it. It is the ethical responsibility of anthropologists to mitigate this suffering, even if that requires engaging with groups that they are uncomfortable with (Emberling 2008). Anthropologists can interact with the armed forces in constructive ways, such as providing informational guidance on peoples, locations, and cultures, as well as providing education to forces that will directly engage with these populations (Emberling 2008). During the Iraq War the US military's "CENCOM Historical/Cultural Advisory Group" provided a fairly comprehensive education for US troops on Iraq's archaeological resources and cultural sites (CENTCOM 2006). The advisory group used qualitative research presented in an understandable way to train those not inducted into the mysteries of archaeology by focusing on the history of

Iraq and the different types of archaeological resources found within the country. However, this training could be improved by explaining to troops how nationalism and political regimes interact with archaeological resources. This would provide troops with a better understanding of how the local populations might view these resources and could allow for smoother interactions between US forces and local communities. This would in turn strengthen relationships between civilians and US military personnel, creating a more secure operational environment.

Physical Force

Limitations on physical force to protect archaeological sites should be considered by military forces operating in areas with cultural resources under certain circumstances, such as in proximity to ruins, historic buildings, or even known yet unexcavated archaeological sites. In the past establishing no strike zones around sites has helped to prevent massive damage, such as limiting Israeli troops' use of heavy equipment in and around Jerusalem during the 6-Day War in 1967 (Oren 2002) and limiting the US Air Forces use of ordinance during the First Gulf War (Cordesman 1994). No strike zones do limit a military's ability to project force, but in the long run are likely to preserve the sites and keep public opinion positive. Typically, no strike zones apply to the use of aircraft ordinance but I would argue that no strike zones should be established that also apply to smaller arms. In 2004 the Italian Carabinieri restricted their forces to the use of lower penetrating weapons such as those chambered for 5.56mm ammunition near sites in Iraq (Deblauwe 2004) and a similar approach should be adopted by any force operating near an identified archaeological resource. As a soldier myself, I understand that there is a difference between want and need. The reality is that in some cases larger scale weapons with more penetrating power are necessary. This is where educating ground forces plays such a key role. It would be unreasonable to restrict an infantry officer to only using smaller calibers like 5.56mm

when their soldiers/marine's lives are at stake, but educating them on the potentially irreparable damage larger weapons will cause to archaeological resources could lead some officers to consider other approaches before resorting to high penetration armaments. This would help to protect both the artifacts and the local communities. Education and training along these lines could be conducted in the pre-deployment phase, as it is already done in some cases, but should be continually reenforced during deployment.

Governments, Transition Governments and Communities

After a regime is toppled or a transition of power occurs, it is important to maintain protections of archaeological resources. Regardless of whether an occupying force has control of a nation or a transitional government does, the dual factors of collaboration and conservation need to be considered.

Collaboration

A transitional government or occupying force should seek to collaborate with the nation's academic community and with its primary education community (grades K-12 or equivalent as well as university educators). The nation's academic community will know its own cultural resources better than any foreign academic community. During the Iraq War the international academic community was consulted by the US and the transitional government, but the local academic community was mostly excluded from providing insights into Iraq's archaeological resources due to its connections to the prior regime. The primary school teachers were completely ignored by both the transitional government and the coalition occupation forces. These teachers should be consulted because not only do they know the community better than anyone, but they also are raising the next generation, a generation any transitional government or

occupying force would want to be on good terms with. Both the academic community and primary school community can also help identify local archaeological resources that may not be recognized on an international scale. These resources often don't receive the benefit of no strike orders or protections from security forces. How these institutions initially interact and continue to interact with archaeological resources is key to winning the general populace over in nations with a tradition of strongly politicized archaeology.

Conservation Forces

Funding and training a dedicated conservation force are also important actions to take in safeguarding local cultural patrimony in conflict zones. Although the use of Italian and US troops has proven effective in Iraq, a force that has stable funding and is staffed by local populations should be the goal of a transitional government or occupying force dedicated to protecting archaeological resources. The establishment of such a force ties into community building around archaeological sites and museums. Creating community and encouraging buy-in by all stakeholders will deter looters and deter radicalization, criminal enterprise, and insurgency, all factors that thrive in weakened communities. If the population is allowed to have a hand in the protection of these resources this will strengthen the local community and create a more secure environment that transcends the archaeological sphere. Providing alternative employment has effectively reduced instances of subsistence looting across the world at locations such as Tell Yoqne'am (Hemo and Linn 2017), Fayum (Wendrich 2006), and Bo Sauk (Charoenwongsa 2006). The important role played by community engagement in the protection of resources is not limited to archaeology; conservation scientists have found that community involvement and development have proven effective at reducing poaching in Thailand (Steinmetz et al 2014) and Namibia (Anderson and Jooste 2014).

Archaeological Resources and the Intelligence Community

Archaeological resources and how they interact with national and ethnic goals can be very valuable sources of intelligence and should not be overlooked as merely interesting supplemental knowledge. Along with all the factors examined earlier in this chapter, understanding how a nation's people interact with archaeological resources can provide intelligence on how the people interact with their own government. In the case of Iraq, the people, the regime, and the archaeology are all interlinked and to understand one, you need to understand the others. These interconnections can be used to gather information on the attitudes of a regime, the displacement of regime resources, or the attitudes of the people, warranting more investigation and a greater investment up front by all parties concerned. This knowledge in turn can be effectively used to better understand how to interact with a group under observation and how to effectively influence said group on the world stage. During the First World War, Gertrude Bell used cultural and political knowledge she had gained while conducting archaeological work in the Middle East to train British officers to operate in the region along with guiding them on the nuances of tribal Arab politics, which were instrumental in organizing an Arab led guerrilla campaign (Bell 1920; Wallach 1996). Simultaneously behind enemy lines, T.E. Lawrence used his historical and cultural knowledge of the diverse Arab tribes to organize a large-scale guerrilla campaign that played a significant role in turning the Middle Eastern theater in favor of the British and destabilized the Ottoman Empire, which in turn allowed for the redeployment of military resources to Europe as these forces were no longer needed in the Middle East (Lawrence 1926; Murphey 2011). Bell's and Lawrence's understanding of the complex origins of the region was directly related to their ability to apply the interconnections between history, culture, and people to contemporary geopolitical policies, changing the course

of a World War. The study of archaeological resources and how they connect to governments and people is an effective tool for intelligence gathering that has been and continues to be applicable to research and studies of other geopolitical entities beyond the Middle East.

Conclusions

This thesis posed the question “How has Iraq, a nation that has historically promoted archaeology as a national resource, handled archaeological sites and artifacts in the aftermath of military conflict and civil unrest that destabilized the Ba’athist regime?” The following considerations were outlined at the beginning of the thesis:

1. How were archaeological resources treated by incoming governments compared to previous regimes? Were they viewed as valuable resources, burdens, or simply ignored?

Although the Ba’athist regime seems to have viewed the archaeological record largely as a national resource, it is clear that the transitional government put archaeology on the backburner, as it had more pressing issues to deal with, along with increasing disinterest on the part of the public in a self-reinforcing spiral of economic decline. The constant stress and scarcity brought on by war led to archaeological resources being less revered and viewed more as commodities. The nation’s archaeological resources were not forgotten, but a concerted effort was not made by the government to preserve them. Instead, protection of archaeological resources in Iraq fell into the hands of foreign powers and local governments. With the rise of ISIS/ISIL, the more mature post-2003 government of Iraq was unable to protect these resources as there wasn’t enough institutional stability after the destruction of the Ba’athist Regime.

2. What relationship do these resources have to the nation’s cultural identity?

Iraq's archaeological resources have a strong connection to Iraqi national identity. Although institutional protection of archaeological resources and emphasis on their value decreased between the Ba'athist regime and the transitional government, it is clear that at least some segments of the population continue to identify with both Iraq's archaeology and ancient history. With the rise of ISIS/ISIL these resources were rejected as part of the national identity by extremists, but the general population still considered them part of their national heritage, as evidenced by the rebirth and rebranding of the Ba'athist era Babylon Festival (Al-Thawra 2019; CI #3) and the concerted efforts of Iraqi civilians and government to preserve what remains after 20 years of conflict (Al-Thawra 2020; CI #3, CI #2).

3. How are/were archaeological remains treated by private citizens pre- and post- regime change? Are/were they respected, looted, or used as an economic draw?

This question is very difficult to answer, as there are many possible interpretations of the available information and data. Private citizens treat these resources based on the nature of the conditions prevailing at the time. That is, when not in desperate situations driven by hunger, unemployment, and war, the citizens revere these resources, but when faced with dire economic circumstances the same resources may be harvested for survival. Although the archaeological patrimony of the region was an economic tourist draw historically, war and unrest have made this industry unproductive, leading to the more destructive looting industry. This type of activity can be seen outside Iraq and is especially prevalent in Egypt. After the revolution of January-February 2011, large-scale looting of both archaeological sites and museums coupled with corruption, mass unemployment and shifting institutional control created significant problems for Egyptian archaeology. These factors combined with the rise of extremist militants and civil unrest have led to a fall in tourism which largely supported Egypt's pre-revolution

archaeological resources, a process seen in many post-conflict societies including Iraq and southern Mexico, where the rising power of the cartels has followed a similar trajectory (Woody 2018). Egypt's interim government's mass release of the Mubarak regime's political prisoners also added to the nation's unrest, allowing both passive and extremist elements to gain power (Hessler 2019; Tovrov 2012). The prevalence of looting there is illustrated by aerial images of the looter's pits at the sites of Lisht and Saqqara, which increased 520% over the course of one season (Parcak 2015). While Iraq may not have as much analyzed or declassified satellite data available for study, analysis of the auction markets illustrates the similarities between the two case studies. Just as in Iraq, looting in Egypt can be interpreted as the result of a combination of economic instability, geographic distance from centralized control and the instability of institutional control (Ikram 2013). Overall, across regions it can be said that some of those who loot these sites may be reluctant looters, or those who only do it out of necessity, while others simply see opportunity in an otherwise bleak economy, especially with the rise of extremist organizations like ISIS/ISIL.

4. What conclusions can we draw from contemporary conflicts to develop a toolkit/protocol for dealing with and protecting archaeological resources in future conflict zones?

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the answer to this is a tripod, each leg of which must be stable for the whole to stand. Military forces must be educated on the nation's archaeological resources and must have weapons type and use regulated in proximity to resources. Transitional governments need to collaborate with the international and most importantly local education community. They must also establish conservation forces or request forces from allied governments if resources are not available to establish homegrown organizations. The intelligence community's role is to understand the population affected by

these conflicts in relation to their archaeological resources and be able to advise and direct the before-mentioned factors before, during, and after conflict.

Although the list of ways political entities can negatively influence archaeological research is quite long, the relationship between the two is both good and bad. Political entities can abuse archaeology but, in some cases, can also use archaeology to benefit their people. The Ba'athists used archaeology to indoctrinate and distract the public from atrocities carried out by members of the regime but they also created a system of public museums, monuments, and parks that became a strong force in the Iraqi state and created a system of reverence and respect for archaeological research. Similar responses to conflict and regime change have been reported for Egypt (Meskell 2020), Thailand (Shoocongdej 2011), China (Friedman 1994), Japan (Pearson 1992), Israel (Feige 2015), Peru (Burger 1989), Taiwan (Zorzin 2018), and South Korea (Kim 2013), which have all successfully used government institutions as an apparatus to build a strong public connection to the ancient past. However, these strong connections to the past can be weaponized when a system implodes, as in the case of the ISIS/ISIL rejection of Ba'athist politicization of archaeology and destruction of archaeological resources to assert power. Ultimately, anytime political interests are combined with cultural resources outside the political sphere, there is the potential to create a maelstrom that destroys more than it creates.

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