CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN A FRAGMENTED MIDDLE EAST

IN COOPERATION WITH
THE UNIVERSITY OF TURIN’S DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL STUDIES

THURSDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2019

Magna Hall | Rectorate Building – University of Turin
Via Giuseppe Verdi, 8 – Turin, Italy

Working language: English

With the support of
AGENDA

9:00-9:30 Registration of participants

9:30-10:00 Introductory Remarks

GIANLUCA CUNIBERTI, University of Turin
NICOLÒ RUSSO PEREZ, Compagnia di San Paolo of Turin
LORENZO KAMEL, University of Turin & New-Med Research Network
EMILIANO ALESSANDRI, OSCE

10:00-10:15 Setting the Stage

FRANCESCO BANDARIN, Aga Khan Trust for Culture

10:15-11:45 Session I – The Destabilization of the Middle East: a non-Eurocentric Perspective

According to data provided by the US State Department, “incidents of terrorism” increased of 6500% since the “war on terror” began in 2001: half of them have been registered in Afghanistan and Iraq, whose collapse has had a sort of earthquake effect on the all region. Session I aims to assess the issue of cultural heritage and illicit trafficking within the frame of a destabilized region and provide a historical and geopolitical understanding of what the Middle East is currently experiencing. Speakers will explore the link between local hotbeds of conflict/violence/terrorism in countries such as Syria and Iraq, war economics, transnational criminal networks and the politics of deliberate destruction and theft of cultural heritage. They will also analyze the impact of violent and non-violent non-state actors, failed and fragile states, forced migrations, environmental degradation and demographic changes on the safeguarding of cultural heritage sites and/or risks related to conflict, smuggling or destruction.

Chair  
MICHAEL YOUNG, Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut

Panelists  
PINAR BILGIN, Bilkent University
GILBERT Achcar, University of London
TAMIRACE FAKHOURY, Lebanese American University
ZAID EYADAT, University of Jordan

Open debate

11:45-13:15 Session II – Tracking and Mapping Damaged Cultural Heritage and Human Suffering

Dramatic events affected the Cultural Heritage in Middle Eastern countries, such as the sack of the Iraq Museum, the destructions of Nimrud, Nineveh, and the smashing of Palmyra monuments, the systematic spoliation of important sited by clandestine diggers. The brutal killing of Khaled al-Assad signed the peak in the cycle of violence and devastation. Session II deals with the damages inflicted to the cultural heritage, and investigates how local and international institutions reacted to those terrible happenings.

Chair  
CARLO LIPPOLIS, University of Turin

Panelists  
ANNIE F. CAUBET, The Louvre Museum
ABBAS ALI AL-HUSSAINY, University of Al-Qadisiyah (Iraq)
ALESSANDRA PERUZZETTO, World Monuments Fund
PASCAL BUTTERLIN, Paris Sorbonne – InsSciDe Project

Open debate
AGENDA

13:15-14:30 Break

14:30-16:00 Session III – The Rebirth of Cultural Heritage in a Post-Conflict Middle East

Several national and international projects deal with the rebirth of cultural heritage in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. The Assyrian galleries of the Iraq Museum were fully renewed, National Museum in Damascus recently reopened, evaluation of damages in Iraqi and Syrian sites are currently carried out by several institutions. Speakers of session III will present the situation of four countries, namely, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan and the main projects, museums, archaeological excavations, and restoration of damages monuments. This session will also deal with the huge amount of cuneiform tablets that clandestine excavations have brought in the hands of antique dealers and collectors.

Chair: Stefano de Martino, University of Turin

Panelists: Zaki Aslan, ICCROM-UAE
           Helen Sader, American University of Beirut
           Cigdem Maner, Koç University, Turkey
           Omar Mohammed, Mosul Eye, Iraq

16:00-17:00 Session IV – Concluding Remarks and Next Steps

Chair: Ettore Greco, Istituto Affari Internazionali

Panelists: Edoardo Greppi, University of Turin
           Dennis Cosgrove, OSCE
           Giovanna Segre, University of Turin
           Marta Dionisio, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
           Laura Basagni, German Marshal Fund of the United States (GMFUS)

17:00 End of the Conference