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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

Roundup: Conflict Antiquities: Forging a Public/Private Response to Save Iraq and Syria's Endangered Cultural Heritage

Following below are some notes on last evening's event at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. I have linked to supporting documents where I know of them, Please comment if you have corrections, additions, or your own synopsis of what was said. [Updated as new material becomes accessible]

Conflict Antiquities: Forging a Public/Private Response to Save Iraq and Syria's Endangered Cultural Heritage

The Department of State and The Metropolitan Museum of Art are co-sponsoring an experts' symposium at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on September 29 from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. that will feature two panels reviewing international cooperation against the looting and trafficking of antiquities from the conflict in Iraq and Syria...

Opening speakers include Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Thomas P. Campbell, and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, followed by two panels.

Speakers on the first panel on "Looting and Destruction of Iraqi and Syrian Cultural Heritage; What We Know, What Can Be Done" were:

- Michael Danti, American Schools of Oriental Research [See below]
- Andrew Keller, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, Department of State [See below]
- Robert Hartung, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Department of State [See below]
- Lev Kubiak, Assistant Director, International Operations, Homeland Security Investigations, Department of Homeland Security
- Richard W. Downing, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
- Mauro Miedico, Chief of Section, Terrorism Prevention Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Speakers on the second panel on "The Role of Private Institutions and Collectors in Fostering Best Practices and Public Education" were:

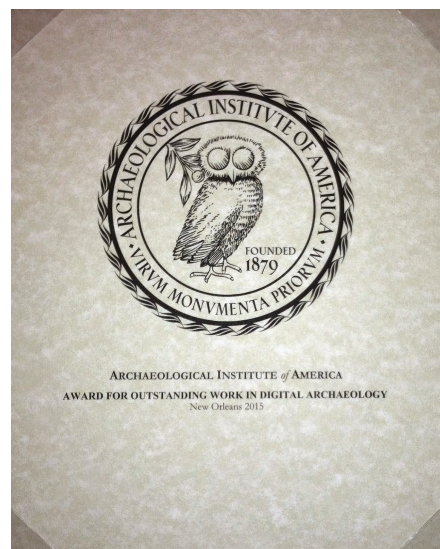
- Jennifer Janisch, Investigative Producer, CBS News [See below]
- Sharon Cott, Senior Vice President, Secretary, and General Counsel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Ute Wartenberg Kagan, Executive Director, American Numismatic Society [See below]

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Morag Kersel assembled the Twitter traffic on the hashtag [#HeritageInPeril](#) as follows:

A Symposium on Conflict Antiquities: September 29 [2015]
MET/State Department sponsored
by Morag M. Kersel

Needless to say there will continue to be residual comment using that hashtag. Many thanks in particular to [Andrew Reinhard](#) and [Christopher Jones](#) who were present in the room and who live-tweeted the conference making it live for us who were not there especially after the video stream went dead in the second half of the program.

In the first panel:

- [Video of Assistant Secretary Ryan's introductory comments at the Symposium on Conflict Antiquities](#)
- [Video of Deputy Secretary Blinken's introductory comments on Endangered Patrimony of Iraq and Syria](#) Among other things he highlighted the Nimrud ivory looted from the Mosul Museum. [n.b. Eight volumes of final [publications of Ivories from Nimrud](#) are available online, open access], and recovered in the Abu Sayyaf raid.
- Michael Danti summarized the issues on the basis of the work of the *ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives*
- Andrew Keller presented on *Documenting ISIL's Antiquities Trafficking* and presented new details of information gathered in the Abu Sayyaf raid. [His slides are available here.](#)
- The remaining members of the panel presented a variety of activities of law enforcement agencies. In particular it was noted the [Rewards for Justice program](#) is offering a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to the significant [disruption of the sale and/or trade of oil and antiquities by the Islamic State](#). Noted (eg.) that this reward appears to be specific to activity of Da'esh. What about other illegal actors?

The second panel was not visible remotely:

- Jennifer Janisch presented on [investigative work](#) by CBS News on the trade in antiquities
- Ute Wartenberg Kagan's presentation was based on a longer text, available in full on the webspace of the American Numismatic Society: *Collecting Coins and the Conflict in Syria*. Also at [Academia.edu](#)
- Markus Hilgert presented the efforts of the museum he represents and noted in particular the new cooperative effort

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AWOL began with a series of entries under the heading AWOL on the [Ancient World Bloggers Group Blog](#). I moved it to its own space here beginning in 2009.

The primary focus of the project is notice and comment on open access material relating to the ancient world, but I will also include other kinds of networked information as it comes available.

The ancient world is conceived here as it is at the [Institute for the Study of the Ancient World](#) at New York University, my academic home at the time AWOL was launched. That is, from the Pillars of Hercules to the Pacific, from the beginnings of human habitation to the late antique / early Islamic period.

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through their organizations.

Other summaries:

- Highlights from “Conflict Antiquities: Forging a Public/Private Response to Save Iraq and Syria's Endangered Cultural Heritage” at the ARCA Blog
- New Documents Prove ISIS Heavily Involved in Antiquities Trafficking, by Christopher Jones at Gates of Nineveh

Please comment if you have corrections, additions, or you own synopsis of what was said.

POSTED BY [CHARLES JONES](#) AT [7:03 AM](#)

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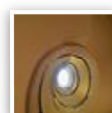
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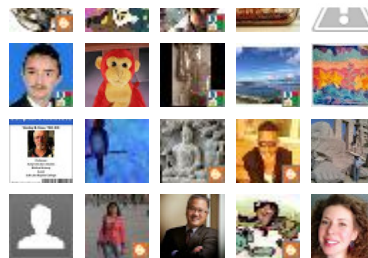
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