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"Iraq may soon end up with no history." - (Archeologist Joanna Farchakh, quoted in Cultural Cleansing in Iraq, Pluto Press, 2010.)

In his indispensable book "from Sumer to Saddam" (1) Geoff Simons writes:

"The region of the world that the ancient Greeks called Mesopotamia (land between the rivers) ... was a fount of civilization – a veritable crucible ... cradle, womb of cultural progress ... Here it was the first cities were born, writing began and the first codified legal systems were established. Here, through such ancient lands as Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia and Assyria that the vital cultural brew was stirred, the quite remarkable concoction from which Western civilization would emerge."

That chapter “The Ancient Crucible” concludes: “We may reflect also that a modern Iraq is entitled to contemplate with awe and pride the fructifying richness of the cultures that first emerged in this land more than five thousand years ago.”

From the day of the US-UK invasion that “fructifying richness”, societal, cultural, historic has been systematically, deliberately erased in one of the most devastating, despotic, desecrating, pulverizing cultural armageddons in history.

March 19th commemorates the twelfth anniversary of the destruction of that “crucible”, it’s wonders still unceasingly pillaged and destroyed.

When the National Museum was looted (10th - 12th April 2003) American troops stood by – whilst their colleagues diligently guarded the Oil Ministry.

As some of antiquity’s most sublime, wonders – fifteen thousand items – were looted, Donald Rumsfeld, demonstrably a cultural cretin, remarked: “stuff happens.”

The US military were given co-ordinates of all Iraq’s museums, monuments, archeological sites. “All of Iraq is an archeological treasure”, remarked an archeologist at the time. Yet the US troops led destruction’s way, creating a military base in Babylon (dating from c 2,300 BC) site of the Hanging Gardens. Ancient miracles were bulldozed to build a military helicopter landing pad. They did the same next to the believed birthplace of Abraham, near Ur’s great Ziggurat. Ur dates from 3,800 BC but is recorded in written history from 26th century BC. War crimes of enormity.

After George W. Bush declared a “Crusade”, the (literally) crusading American soldiers entered predominately Muslim Iraq (as Afghanistan) with thousands of give-away Bibles, yet were clearly supremely ignorant that Babylon, as Ur, which they were destroying was sacrosanct in the three Abrahamic religions. Babylon is recorded in the Bible in the Books of Daniel, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Ur is recorded three times in Genesis and in Nehemiah.

The US soldiers' criminal vandalism resulted in: "Babylon being rendered archeologically barren." (Guardian, 8th June 2007.) The: "courtyard of the 10th-century caravanserai* of Khan al-Raba was used for exploding captured weapons. One blast demolished the ancient roofs and felled many of the walls. The place is now a ruin." Barbarians through the Ishtar Gate.

Destruction has continued across Iraq by both occupation forces and the unchecked gangs and factions which flocked in with the invasion and due to the feckless abandonment of border controls by the US and UK – countries near paranoid about such controls on their own borders.

The latest archeologists and historians compare again to the sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258.

On Friday, 9th March, the Muslim Sabbath, the ancient city of Nimrud was bulldozed by self declared "Islamic State" primitives destroying what became the capital of the Neo-Assyrian empire, dating back to the 13th century BC. The site also contained the remains of the palace of Ashurnasirpal, King of Assyria (883-859 BC) who made Nimrud his capital.

A local source told Reuters valuables were looted then the city razed to the ground. One entrance to this haunting place was guarded until last week by human headed bulls and lions with hawk's wings. These guardians prevailed through the region's turmoils for nearly three thousand years, to be destroyed with all they watched over by terrorists spawned by Bush and Blair's criminal invasion.

In the south western palace is the temple of Nabu, God of wisdom, the arts and sciences, believed son of the Babylonian God, Marduk. Construction was probably between 810-782 BC.

Historian Tom Holland told the Guardian:

"It's a crime against Assyria, against [Iraq](#), and against humanity. Destroy the past, and you control the future. The Nazis knew this, and the Khmer Rouge – and the Islamic State clearly

understand it too.”

Two days later another of the world’s wonders, Hatra, was reported largely destroyed. Hatra was built circa 3rd or 2nd century BC, at the same time as the great Arab cities of Syria’s Palmyra, Petra (“rose red city half as old as time”) in Jordan and Lebanon’s Ba’albek. Hatra withstood repeated attacks by the Roman Empire to be defeated by those spawned by Bush and Blair’s actions.

A 1982 Iraqi Ministry of Tourism guide describes in Hatra:

“... a frieze with sculptures which seem to tell a religious story enacted by Gods and musicians – the most beautiful work of art so far discovered” in this vast, ethereal city of creamy stone which shimmers golden under the sun, glowing amber under dawn’s rays and the setting sun.

The columns, temples, statues communicate not alone from the temples of the Gods, but surely from the architecture of the Gods, rendering a writer searching for words seemingly not yet devised.

There is the Temple of the goddess Shahiro (“the morning star”). An area is:

”paved with veined marble, with walls decorated with geometrical designs and eagles – eagles being the main element in the Hatra religion. Over a decorative frieze, Arabic writing dates from the second half of the Abbasid era” (750-1258 AD.) The Abbasid Caliphate oversaw the “golden age of Islamic civilization.”

Hatra abounds with temples to creation. They were dedicated to the Sun God, to Venus (the morning star) “called variously Allatu, Atr’ta and Marthin – our lady.” The God Nergoul, also with a dedicated temple, symbolized the planet Mars. The revered, great, soaring eagle had his temple, where his statues looked down from on high.

The inscriptions are predominantly in ancient Aramaic, some reading: "Kings and princes of Hatra are the victorious kings of the Arabs." They are surely weeping.

For those who know these marvels, hearts will never mend. Tears will never dry.

On my last visit I stood in front of the statue of Abbu, wife of Santruk 1st. I remembered James Elroy Flecker's reflections on the British Museum. I repeated them aloud, alone in an azure dawn:

"There is a hall in Bloomsbury

That no more dare I tread,

For all the stone men shout at me and swear they are not dead

And once I touched a broken girl, and knew that marble bled."

The day after Hatra was destroyed, so was the fourth capital of Assyria, Khorsabad, built by Sargon 11 (721-705 BC.)

Writings show a city with a royal hunting park and gardens with: "all the aromatic plants" found in the fertile Euphrates river valleys. Thousands of fruit trees, including quinces, almonds and apples were planted.

Khorsabad was extensively looted by the French in the 19th century and by the Americans in

between 1928 and 1935.

In excavation initiated by the French Consul General in Mosul in 1842, an attempt was made to: “move two 30-ton statues and other material to Paris from Khorsabad on a large boat and four rafts”(2.) Two rafts and the boat were scuttled by pirates and Iraq’s stolen treasures lost for good.

In 1855, a further effort to ship remaining treasures: ” as well as material from other sites being worked by the French, mainly Nimrud, was undertaken. Almost all of the collection – over two hundred crates – was lost in the river. Surviving artifacts from this excavation were taken to the Louvre Museum in Paris.”

Between 1928–1935, American archaeologists from the Chicago’s Oriental Institute dug in the palace area. “A colossal bull estimated to weigh 40 tons was uncovered outside the throne room. It was found split into three large fragments. The torso alone weighed about 20 tons. This was shipped to Chicago.”

The British and Germans did a fair amount of looting in southern Iraq and notably Babylon and Ur, as their national museums bear witness.

The week before the destruction of Nimrud nearly 113,000 irreplaceable books and manuscripts in Mosul Library were burned by IS savages in what Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, described as “cultural cleansing” and: “One of the most devastating acts of destruction of library collections in human history.”(3) Some items were on a UNESCO rarities list.

Set alight in a pyre outside the library included Syriac books printed in Iraq’s first printing house; eighteenth century manuscripts; volumes from the Ottoman era (1534-1704 and 1831-1920.) Irreplaceable rarities – an astrolabe, an astronomical “computer” for calculating the timing of the positions of the sun and the stars, used in classical antiquity and the Golden Age of Islam also destroyed, as were superb sandglass creations.

Over a hundred personal libraries of notable families from Mosul held “over the last century” were also incinerated.

The library was then blown up.

In the same week, the Mosul Museum was also attacked. Assyrian and Hatrene statues – including one of a Hatrene King holding an eagle – were smashed, with a winged bull and the God of Rozhan. Other items are believed to have been stolen to sell, possibly in Turkey and Syria.

In July last year the centuries old tomb believed of the Prophet Jonah in Mosul was obliterated with ISIS laid explosives with the Mosque in which it lay, dating back to the 14th century. Prior to that it was a church. “The Mosque of Jonah” was also reputed to have held part of the remains of the whale which swallowed him.

All destruction described here lay in Nineveh Province, of which John Masefield wrote:

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,

Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,

With a cargo of ivory,

And apes and peacocks,

Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Iraq, as Palestine, is being erased, with Libya, Syria and even the great pyramids of Egypt now threatened by the monsters Bush and Blair's "Crusade" has created.

The US, UK, Canada and other countries have "military advisors" in Iraq. They are silent and inactive on these war crimes of the new Mongols.

The US and UK Baghdad Embassy websites are equally mute. Yet on the US Embassy's site is:

"Regarding the Status of the Iraqi Jewish Archive:

"January 28, 2015

"The Iraqi Jewish Archive remains in the custody of the U.S. National Archives and Record Administration while plans are finalized on future exhibitions in the United States. None of the materials in the Iraqi Jewish Archive have traveled outside of the United States. The United States continues to abide by the terms of its agreement with the Government of Iraq."

A government under occupation of course, cannot legally make such agreements.

"The exhibit of the material in Washington in 2013 and New York in 2014 has led to increased understanding between Iraq and the United States, and a greater recognition of the diverse heritage of Iraq. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the Government of Iraq on this matter so that the exhibit can be displayed in other cities in the United States."(4)

Thus, Iraqi Jewish Archives (seized by the US in May 2003) safeguarded in Iraq for hundreds

of years was spirited away by the United States. Yet they have been complicit in (Babylon, Ur, Baghdad Museum and more) or inactive as the “diverse heritage of Iraq” is systematically looted and destroyed.

Curiously, in in 2005, former US Department of Justice lawyer, John Yoo, suggested that the US should go on the offensive against al-Qaeda, having

“our intelligence agencies create a false terrorist organization. It could have its own websites, recruitment centers, training camps, and fundraising operations. It could launch fake terrorist operations and claim credit for real terrorist strikes, helping to sow confusion ... ” (5) See also (6.)

Incidentally, Israeli and US “military advisers” were reported arrested nearby as destruction befell vast swathes of Nineveh Province, in a story that has gone quiet.

There are far more questions than answers.