Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage

Construction, Transformation and Destruction

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Edited by Veysel Apaydin

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Acknowledgements

The idea behind this volume began during my fieldwork on the Ilisu Dam rescue project in southeastern Turkey. Over five years I witnessed how landscapes' natural, tangible and intangible heritage are crucial for a sense of belonging and identity construction by local communities. I also perceived the ways in which archaeology and recent history play a major role in how people construct, change and transform heritage through the interaction of nature, landscape and material culture. Over the years tens of thousands of local people were forced to leave their homes and landscapes because of this mega project, a deracination that has similar echoes in many parts of the world. I would like specifically to acknowledge the contribution of these people to the shaping of this volume, and to thank all those who shared their experiences with me.

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Cultural memory as a mechanism for community cohesion: Dayr Mar Elian esh-Sharqi, Qaryatayn, Syria

Emma Loosley Leeming

The destruction of Mar Elian and Palmyra

At the end of August 2015 the monastery of Mar Elian was destroyed in the town of Qaryatayn, Syria. This small settlement is located roughly in the centre of an imaginary triangle created by the three points of Damascus, Homs and Palmyra; it exists, as Palmyra does, because of an ancient oasis. In this case the town is located in the arid zone where the Syrian steppe shades into desert, rather than being at the heart of the Syrian Desert, and is therefore significantly less picturesque than Palmyra. At the time when the monastery was destroyed by *daesh* the act was overshadowed in the international media by events taking place in Palmyra, several hours drive to the east at the centre of the Syrian Desert. In fact it is arguable that this particular episode of destruction would never have reached a wider audience at all had *daesh* not elected to post one of their propaganda videos on the internet recording this event.[1] Such a public performance (Harmanşah 2015, 170–7) was notably at odds with their more clandestine demolition activities over in Palmyra.

While the concentration on the destruction of a UNESCO listed World Heritage Site in the mainstream media is entirely understandable, the majority of the world overlooked the simple fact that most people are more emotionally invested in monuments that have played a formative role in their emotional and psychological development. A nationally important symbol such as the Houses of Parliament for the British or the Arc de Triomphe for the French may trigger national pride and stand as a symbol of a nation, but we must question how far people are emotionally

connected to such sites in the long term. Of course there would be major shock and dismay if these buildings came to harm, but would their loss leave an *emotional* or *spiritual* void behind?

This article is not the place to pursue this speculation further. The author's intention is rather to point out that whereas the loss of the monuments of Palmyra has yet to be fully explored in emotional terms, the destruction of Mar Elian can already be said to have had an immediate impact on the mental wellbeing of the Qurwani.[2] We can assert this with relative surety because the presence of the shrine marked not only the religious centre of the town for Christians and Muslims alike, but it also represented the tangible proof of a foundation myth central to their self-perception.

The two villages: a story of tolerance and co-existence

> Once upon a time, over a thousand years ago, there were two villages that stood side by side in the Syrian Desert. They were called in Syriac, their native language, *quryo tartain* or 'the two villages'. Both were Christian and they lived alongside each other peacefully. There came a time when a new religion was brought to them across the desert by the desert Arabs, and so the people of the two villages got together to decide what they should do for the best. After some discussion it was agreed that one village would remain Christian while the other adopted this new religion. At that time there was no knowing which of these two faiths would prove triumphant in Syria and so a pact was made: whichever faith became dominant, the people of that village swore to protect their brothers and neighbours from oppression and to uphold their right to maintain their religious beliefs. As we now know, the Muslims won this battle, but ever since the Muslims of Qaryatayn have respected and protected their Christian neighbours, remembering the pact made by their ancestors.[3]

This story is at the centre of how the people of Qaryatayn define themselves and why this relatively small community[4] argued that their intra-confessional relationships were more stable and respectful than those in neighbouring settlements. One pivotal aspect of this narrative begins with what it means to be *Qurwani*. Unsurprisingly there is a range of opinions on who is, and is not, considered a fully accepted native citizen of the town, and of course there is a difference between self-perception and the perception of other people. This issue came into sharp relief in the first years of the twenty-first century, when the author

was undertaking archaeological fieldwork at Mar Elian. Local people of different religious beliefs would visit the site to pray at the tomb, and to stop and chat with the interesting foreigner who had started to live in the old mudbrick tower in the semi-ruined cloister.

At the centre of this communal self-belief was the monastery of Mar Elian, specifically the Byzantine tomb at the heart of the complex. This represented for the local population the tangible historical proof of the veracity of this legend. The saint is believed by the local Christians to have been the teacher of the great Syriac theologian, poet and hymnographer St Ephrem. He is believed to have died in the vicinity of Qaryatayn as he returned from a pilgrimage in the Holy Land to his home in Mesopotamia. Dayr Mar Elian esh-Sharqi translates as the 'Monastery of St Julian of the East'. The saint was also referred to in Arabic as Mar Elian esh-Sheikh and in Syriac as Mar Yulyano Sobo, both of which mean St Julian the Old Man, with the word *Sheikh* carrying extra implications of a wise elderly leader. Finally, his 'other' identity in the town was that of Sheikh Ahmed Hauri or *Khouri*, an Arabic word used for Christian priests, and this was the designation used by the Muslim Qurwani.

It appeared to matter little to the Qurwani whether their neighbours venerated Mar Elian or Sheikh Ahmed. An easy co-existence at the shrine meant that the sarcophagus was draped not only with Christian tapestries featuring images of the Virgin underneath a pile of votive offerings, but also, beneath the other coverings, the tomb was covered with the green satin shroud familiar from the graves of Muslim Holy Men.

Insider or outsider? The liminal role of Qaryatayn's Christian *bedu* and other outsiders

When it came to unravelling the underlying attitudes that underpinned the life of Qaryatayn, the first surprise was that the inhabitants were not all *fellahin*. This is the term applied to settled villagers who work the land or run small artisanal or commercial premises in the town. Instead it transpired that Qaryatayn also had a *bedu* population; they remained slightly apart from the majority, maintaining their own traditions and following a different domestic arrangement. Specifically this meant an entire *bedu* clan living in one village house that was sparsely furnished with little more than sponge mats, rugs and cushions for sitting on in the day and sleeping on at night, and cooking utensils in the kitchen. Whereas the inter-generational settled village families often hosted grandparents, parents and all unmarried children, whatever their age, under one roof,

a *bedu* household would also include multiple married siblings, along with their spouses and children, in the same home so that uncles, aunts and cousins all lived together. The next surprise was that not all these *bedu* were Muslim. Indeed, the most numerous family to attend the Syrian Catholic Church every Sunday and to send the most children to catechism classes each Friday was *Bayt Habib,* who were Christian *bedu*.

Bayt Habib were easily distinguishable from their friends and neighbours by the fact that they bore a strong physical rememblance to one another;[5] they also tended to use names that referred to the natural world rather than traditional Christian names.[6] They were headed by the family patriarch, Abu Nasif, – one of the last generation to remember the traditional life of the *bedu* before the twentieth-century evolution of nation-states in the Levant.

Abu Nasif had been educated on the Mount of Olives by French Benedictine monks at a time when his family still roamed the desert on camelback. He said that the family, like all other Syrian *bedu,* had been forced by financial constraints to sell the camels to wealthier *bedu* from the Arabian Peninsula in the 1950s. Since that time they had followed a pattern of half the family following the herds in the summer, with the rest remaining in the family home in Qaryatayn. Transport was usually by donkey, with trucks hired to move the herds longer distances if the usual pastures proved insufficient – an increasing problem due to the droughts Syria has experienced from the 1990s onwards. During the winter all the family could live together as there was sufficient grazing around the town for the herders to keep close to home. Alternatively in the long school summer holidays almost all the family went with the herds – only the very old, the very young or sick, and those needed to care for them, remained behind. This financial model also relied on some members of the family working outside the herd by taking on more conventional paid employment. Fatlullah, one of Abu Nasif's sons, was a schoolteacher and his salary was paid into the family budget to support the costs of running the household for all the Habib clan, despite the fact that he and his wife had no children.

Until the 1980s, when a termite problem led to the collapse of the range of mudbrick buildings along the east side of the monastic enclosure,[7] *Bayt Habib* had lived in the monastery of Mar Elian and acted as the *de facto* guardians of the site. This initially appeared to be evidence of how the clan were a fully integrated part of the town, but further exploration proved the opposite to be true. Abu Nasif was clear that the family were incomers, having emigrated from the village of Basireh at some point in the seventeenth century. Until then, he said, they had been custodians of a *Khan* at a crossroads on the road to Palmyra, but the combined factors of a

change in routes across the desert coupled with a failure of the water supply had seen the clan relocate to Qaryatayn.[8] At no point was it made clear at what time they had taken up residence in the monastery. However, since textual evidence suggests that it may have fallen into disrepair from the seventeenth century onwards (Kaufhold 1995, 48–199), and this was the period in which the family left Basireh, it is possible that their occupation of the monastery could indeed have stretched back that far.

It soon became apparent that it was the perceived *otherness* of *Bayt Habib* that would have equipped them to guard the shrine. While the official narrative of the shrine was that Mar Elian was the unifying presence behind peace in Qaryatayn, his presence had also sparked a vicious, intra-communal feud. This discord was not between Christian and Muslim Qurwani, but rather occurred as a result of Christian factionalism. In the seventeenth century the Catholic Church founded the Syrian Catholic Church to cater for Arabic and Syriac-speaking Syrian Orthodox Christians who had been converted to Rome by missionaries, but who continued to pray in their ancestral language and keep many of their ancient liturgical practices. It is unclear when Dayr Mar Elian ceased as a functional monastic community. What we do know is that so many Christians in the Qalamoun region converted to Syrian Catholicism that Syrian Orthodoxy was wiped out in the area, and the monastery of Mar Musa al-Habashi near Nabk was passed to the Catholic Church in the early nineteenth century.

Approximately 45 km to the northeast of Mar Musa, Qaryatayn was located at the faultline between places such as Nabk, which had adopted Catholicism, and the villages further towards the desert such as Sadad, which had resolutely remained Syrian Orthodox. The two village priests thus fought each other for the custodianship of the monastery which, although ruined, still housed a small chapel and the tomb of the saint. This was such a problematic issue that as late as the 1950s local people report the two priests breaking each other's limbs in a fist fight over who was the worthy custodian of the shrine. None of this impacted on the Christian-Muslim relations in the village, but it did lead some Muslims, not without reason, to question the validity of a Christian faith that appeared to have leaders incapable of forgiveness.

Given this animosity, it was therefore advantageous to have a group who, though active members of the Syrian Catholic congregation, occupied a liminal role as residents of both the desert and of Qaryatayn, as *Bayt Habib* was viewed in a number of ways as being outside the mainstream of settled village life. This impression that an outsider should be the site guardian was reinforced by the appointment of a new custodian in the 1990s. Abu Fadi is a member of the Atallah family who, although

relatively populous and self-identifying as Qurwani, are also referred to as outsiders by other Qurwani. This is largely because they only arrived in Qaryatayn from Damascus in the early twentieth century and, like *Bayt Habib*, maintained a pronounced tradition of first cousin marriage. In fact any marriages conducted outside the family have favoured the bringing in of wives from outside Qaryatayn and the wider region entirely; this marks them out as not fully Qurwani to their neighbours, who marry within the town or choose to take a spouse from the nearer villages such as Sadad. In both these cases it raises the question as to whether the choice of a slightly 'alien' guardian was a mechanism employed to defuse the internal tensions simmering over which Christian faction controlled access to the shrine.

These strong views among the Christians of who was truly Qurwani and who was still perceived as an outsider, even after a century or more of their ancestors living in the town, pointed to the fact that the shared communal memory of the settlement was extremely strong, and that oral traditions relating to faith and lineage were far more important to inhabitants than conventional written modes of recording history. Part of this pride can perhaps be ascribed to the fact that the Qurwani perceived themselves to be truly 'people of the book', as Qaryatayn has been identified with the city of Hazar Enan in the Old Testament (Numbers 34:9–10, Ezekiel 47:17, 48:1) and the settlement was the centre of a kingdom in the Middle Bronze Age.[9] This presumed biblical history, coupled with the narrative that argued that both Christianity and Islam were adopted early by the inhabitants of the town, meant that faith was seen as a central element of communal identity; there was great pride in the antiquity of these unbroken lines of religious transmission. With this being the case it could be argued that this 'purity' of religious lineage was what the Qurwani saw as being central to their identity, and why they were so adamant that others were not true Qurwani, even after the passage of four centuries.

Conventional historical and archaeological discourse and their intersection with oral histories

Interestingly we have a number of accounts of European travellers who passed through the town in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These have proved surprisingly helpful in verifying many of the oral traditions recounted by local people. These verifications relate to both people and locations, and have acted as a useful mechanism for gauging whether or not the oral memories of the town appeared to have been transmitted in a largely factual and accurate manner.

The first instance of this intersection occurred on a visit in 2001 with Fr Jacques Mourad, the Syrian Catholic priest of the town, and some of his parishioners to the substantial *tell* lying to the south and slightly to the east of the modern settlement. On the way the road passed a small rise with a substantial mudbrick building standing on the raised ground. The car was stopped for us to get out and explore the large ruins of a building. It was more elaborate than most village constructions, with the builders going to the trouble of shaping ogee arches above doors and windows. The local men explained that this had been the Ottoman police station and barracks of the town until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War had led to the end of the garrison and the abandonment of the building.

There were many ruined mudbrick structures in the vicinity and it was explained that the settled area of the town had progressively moved northwards over the twentieth century, leaving the earlier habitations to collapse. The presence of a significant garrison (although no details of where it was located in the town) is supported by the testimony of Isabel Burton (Burton 1875, 214ff), who visited in the early 1870s. She reports that her party was greeted by the village sheikh and an ecclesiastical representative, and that later they were introduced to Omar Beg, a Hungarian Brigadier-General, in command of 1600 Ottoman troops stationed in Qaryatayn. The location pointed out in 2001 was in the vicinity of where the nineteenth-century town had been built, with local people clarifying that new homes had been built of cinder blocks and cement throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Modern water supply networks had meant that they no longer needed to be located close to the oasis and its accompanying network of irrigation channels that directed water to a labyrinth of small walled kitchen gardens and orchards. It was explained that the drier climate of the modern town was more comfortable in the summer than the humid area near the oasis. There was also a lower risk of spreading waterborne disease if people only frequented the area as a sort of allotment: for a start, there was less chance of sewage contaminating the main water supply.

The second instance of an earlier testimony being directly supported by a contemporary inhabitant of the town occurred in 2002, when I called on Fr Jacques in his parish house in the centre of Qaryatayn. A young Muslim man was visiting him for coffee – a regular occurrence, given the generally relaxed community relations between the two religions – and they were discussing local history, the visitor being a direct descendant of the famed sheikh of the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries, Fayyad Agha. I had read about this figure in the letters and diaries of Gertrude Bell,[10] but did not admit this to the visitor. He proceeded to talk about

the 'English lady who said she was an archaeologist, but we all knew she was a spy' and to ask if as another British female archaeologist I too was engaged in espionage. Despite this assertion, he was proud of his great-grandfather's friendship with Bell, saying that the two had remained friends for many years. This is also supported by the written evidence. Bell records a journey to Palmyra by car, stopping at Qaryatayn for lunch,[11] in a letter to her father of 1925. Taken together, the two letters mentioned here point to a pattern of visiting the town that lasted for at least 25 years. This echoes the testimony of Fayyad Agha's relative that Bell was viewed as a close family friend who visited often over a period of many years, rather than being somebody who had only a fleeting relationship with Qaryatayn.

Interestingly oral evidence also proved accurate when speaking to the older members of the community about vanished monastic buildings. Before excavations began at Dayr Mar Elian, Abu Nasif pointed to the areas in which the kitchen had been located and the storeroom where the parish priest had kept the eucharistic wine. Excavations in these sectors yielded a large amount of kitchen waste such as poultry and domesticated animal bones, as well as fragments of eggshell and broken ceramics and large amphorae respectively. When the residue in the amphorae was filtered in a flotation tank, it was found to contain many grape seeds; these verified the claims that it had been the area to store parish wine and other grape products such as grape molasses. Older female visitors pointed out features such as where they had lived before the collapse of the walls, and where their smaller kitchens had been built. All of these reminiscences were supported by the archaeological evidence, when features such as drains and *tannour* ovens were later excavated in the sectors indicated.

Therefore, taking all the evidence into account, it was clear that oral history was the accepted way for the Qurwani to record their past and pass it on to the next generation. While it was only possible to verify these stories as far back as the nineteenth century (the examples above), or at the most the seventeenth century (Abu Nasif's story of the *Khan* in Basireh), in each case encountered by the author the textual sources or the archaeology supported the oral testimony, whether or not the source was *fellahin* or *bedu*.

Shared memory as a social unifier

The collective memory of a shared historical past common to all Qurwani has always been most evident each year on 9 September. This is the feast day of Mar Elian and *eid Mar Elian* was the most significant day in the town each year, apart from Christmas and Easter for the Christians and

Ramadan, *Eid al Fitr* and *Eid al Adha* for the Muslims. Preparations for the *eid* would begin several days in advance of the feast. A framework of metal poles was stretched across the cloister interior. This was then covered with a large tarpaulin to create an open-sided marquee so that participants were shaded from the sun during the festivities – a necessary precaution, given that the heat in early September is often still in excess of 30 degrees C. The western end of the cloister was given over to a *Bayt Sha'ar*, a traditional *bedu* tent that acted as a field kitchen. Here large cauldrons were heated over portable gas rings to prepare the desert speciality of *mansaf*, goat or mutton cooked with bulgur wheat, pistachios, almonds and mixed spices, for everyone attending the festival.

While Christians from neighbouring towns would visit for the feast – including the Syrian Catholic Metropolitan of Homs, Hama and Nabk, who would officiate at the mass – the Muslim participants in the *eid* were drawn only from Qaryatayn itself. Throughout the day those taking part in the event would pray at the tomb and light candles in the shrine, regardless of whether they were Muslim or Christian, Syrian Catholic or Syrian Orthodox. While only Christian participants took Holy Communion during the mass, the other elements of the service were open to all. This was particularly the case with the homily. In 2001 the author witnessed the late Monsignor Georges Kassab deliver an address which told the life of Mar Elian, and how modern Christians could learn from his example. Immediately afterwards Sheikh Assad, Mufti of Qaryatayn, spoke on the life and deeds of Sheikh Ahmed Hauri/Khouri. There was no controversy about these variant accounts of the life of the figure believed to be interred in the Byzantine sarcophagus in the shrine. After the service the religious leaders retired to a small reception room together while the laity sang, danced the *dabkeh* and ate *mansaf* together. This annual ritual was pivotal in underpinning the shared historical past of all Qurwani, who believed that their home was special as it had been chosen by a Holy Man as the place for his human remains to rest in perpetuity.

Therefore, even when tensions arose between the communities as they did at times – for example when younger Muslim men became too persistent in their attentions to Christian girls walking through the village in jeans and with uncovered hair – the shared shrine and the continuing presence of Mar Elian was invoked as an example to encourage good behaviour and inter-religious friendship. The *kufic* inscription that hung above the entry/exit to the monastery dated to 1473. It was a warning by a local *emir* that all pilgrims to the site were under his personal protection; any attacks on them would be severely punished. The pervasive presence of Mar Elian across the town, and his central role as the spiritual patron of

all Qurwani, was a major part of Qaryatayn's belief that, although one of the most economically deprived settlements in Syria, the town had a great past and was still a significant cultural and historical element of Syrian history. The monastery was pointed to as the marker of this ancient religious significance, in the same way that the *tell* was used as a signifier of great antiquity and former political and territorial greatness.

The question we face now is that in a situation where the cultural memory of a community is so inextricably linked with a physical location, what will be the long-term effects on that community when their shrine is destroyed?

The future for Dayr Mar Elian and Qaryatayn

The first thing that must be addressed here is that despite the destruction of the monastery by *daesh* in 2015, and the fact that the entire Christian population of the town had been taken hostage by the terrorists, the overwhelming majority of Christians managed to reach Homs and safety in the autumn of 2015.[12] Only a handful of Christians elected to remain in their homes or were unable to leave as they had been arrested and sent to Raqqa. At the time of writing, this group of survivors remain internally displaced within Syria or have tried to leave the country.[13]

We are thus immediately faced with a cultural dislocation. For the first time in over 1500 years Qaryatayn has been stripped of its Christian population. The churches are empty shells. It still remains unclear when it will be safe for the Christian Qurwani to return and, if they do so, how many of them will actually remain in Syria at that time? Some are in Canada and others in Europe already. Are they going to want to return to a difficult future when many have young children now in education and building a new life overseas?

The Muslims were divided between those who remained and those who left. However, since their Christian neighbours were forced to leave in order to avoid forced conversion or death at the hands of *daesh*, the remaining Qurwani have seen their town destroyed by the Syrian and Russian forces who retook it from the terrorists. This caused the complete destruction of amenities such as the bakeries, water-purification and pumping works and the electrical network, as well as the levelling of many private houses and the looting/burning of the kitchen gardens, relied on by many to feed themselves. Nor did this mark the end of their problems, as in 2017 *daesh* returned and the pattern was repeated a second time – only this time a significant number of Qurwani were massacred.[14]

This again marks a significant point in the history of the town, which throughout the twentieth century had observed the tragedy of others. Elderly people recount tales of families adopting Armenian children who had escaped across the desert from Ottoman concentration camps, for example, but Qaryatayn had remained relatively untouched by the conflicts experienced in less remote settlements. Here the war has been brought into a previously peaceful region, and there is currently no indication of how the events of the past few years will impact on future generations. Will the latest massacre mean that the Christians fail to return entirely? Will the remaining Muslim inhabitants feel so traumatised that they encourage their children to seek their futures elsewhere? Or will the strong sense of community and emotional attachment to the town draw the inhabitants back to rebuild a new future together when things become more stable? At the moment the situation is unclear, leaving the town facing an uncertain future. It has been agreed that no decisions on the rebuilding of the town can be undertaken without some degree of certainty that there will not be another outbreak of violence in the region.

Just as the future is uncertain for the inhabitants of the town, so the monastery's continued existence is held in the balance at the time of writing. Although the ancient monastery, notably the chapel with the shrine, was ostentatiously destroyed by *daesh*, with the sarcophagus being smashed and the bones being scattered, the new church at the site was left almost untouched; they simply burnt the books found in the church and the monastic library and took away the bell. However, the church was then burnt out in the Syrian and Russian advance on the town, leaving only a stone shell of the building. There is a determination to return and rebuild the site and, from an archaeological standpoint, the destruction of the medieval cloister means that there is no ethical reason why we should not now dig deeper in an effort to reconstruct the original late antique foundation.

The element of the unknown is how the community will view the site without the sarcophagus. If some bones have been salvaged and placed in a small ossuary, can this become the new focus of community veneration? If all the remains have been lost, will the sanctity of *place* endure without the central focus of prayer that the sarcophagus offered in the past?

These questions are issues that many communities have faced in the past, but it is only now that such destructive acts are viewed as crimes against humanity.[15] As we move forward with more recognition and a deeper understanding of the value of how a place of worship, cemetery or meeting place may be integral to the mental, emotional or spiritual

wellbeing of a community, this will become a growing area of study. We cannot hope to end these senseless acts of destruction, but we can perhaps learn how to try and mitigate the long-term impact of these events and to develop strategies for aiding community renewal in the future.

Notes

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q84NWoEHQuE . Accessed 11 January 2018.
2. This is the term that the people of Qaryatayn use to describe themselves, and so the townspeople will be referred to in this way throughout the article.
3. Oral history of the Qurwani, told to the author on one of her first visits to the town in 2001 and repeated and referred to on many subsequent occasions.
4. Local inhabitants reckoned their town to have housed 20,000–25,000 people before the war began in 2011.
5. Less charitable neighbours claimed that they all had the 'same face'.
6. For example, *Kawkab* (planet), *Qamar* (moon) or *Nimr* (tiger).
7. The exact date of this event was a little unclear, but most people settled on 1986 as the year of the collapse. The mudbrick tower where the author lived was the only part of the accommodation to remain standing.
8. This testimony was supported by the fact that a brief inspection of the land at the place where the older Homs–Palmyra road and the Damascus–Palmyra highway meet showed the outline of a long-abandoned *khan* (caravanserai) in the triangular intersection.
9. Pers. comm., November, 2015, Michel al-Maqdissi, former Director of Excavations of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM), Damascus.
10. See, for example, her letter of 17 May 1900 to an unknown recipient at http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=1190 and the possible image of Fayyad Agha at http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=260 . Accessed 11 January 2018.
11. http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=851 . Accessed 11 January 2018.
12. Pers.comm., May, 2016. The details behind this amazing feat cannot be made public until the end of the war in order to protect those involved.
13. Tragically several of these people subsequently drowned trying to reach Greece by boat from Turkey. Pers. comm. Fr Jacques Mourad.
14. See http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-al-qaryatayn-syria-attack-kills-civilians-raqqa-islamic-state-army-revenge-a8014746.html and http://syriadirect.org/news/after-dozens-reported-killed-in-qaryatayn-'massacre'-one-resident-tells-her-story/. Accessed 12 January 2018.
15. In fact the case of Qaryatayn was included in the consultation document prepared by the OHCHR for presentation to the UN Assembly in New York on Cultural Rights. See http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Nairobi/images/N1625444.pdf. Accessed 12 January 20018.

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Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage focuses on the importance of memory and heritage for individual and group identity, and for their sense of belonging. It aims to expose the motives and discourses related to the destruction of memory and heritage during times of war, terror, sectarian conflict and through capitalist policies. It is within these affected spheres of cultural heritage where groups and communities ascribe values, develop memories, and shape their collective identity.

Chapters in the volume address cultural memory and heritage from six global perspectives and contexts: first, the relationship between cultural memory and heritage; second, the effect of urban development and large infrastructure on heritage; third, the destruction of indigenous heritage; fourth, the destruction of heritage in relation to erasing memory during sectarian violence and conflict; fifth, the impact of policymaking on cultural heritage assets; and sixth, a broad reflection on the destruction, change and transformation of heritage in an epilogue by Cornelius Holtorf, archaeologist and Chair of Heritage Futures at UNESCO.

The range of sites discussed in the volume – from Australia, Brazil and Syria, to Bosnia, the UK and Taiwan – make it essential reading for researchers in Museum and Heritage Studies, Archaeology and History seeking a global, comprehensive study of cultural memory and heritage.

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