



IT IS  
POSSIBLE  
“TO REPRODUCE  
DESTROYED  
THINGS”

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5 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL  
CAMPAIGNS, THEIR RESULTS,  
THE PERSPECTIVES  
OF A NEW “SOFT POWER”



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Graphic Design  
*Riccardo Bizzicari*

Photos  
*Gabriel Stabinger*

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[www.incontrodiciviltà.it](http://www.incontrodiciviltà.it)  
[segreteria@incontrodiciviltà.it](mailto:segreteria@incontrodiciviltà.it)

## MAN CAN RE-BUILD WHAT HAS BEEN DESTROYED, IF HE WANTS

Francesco Rutelli

President Associazione Incontro di Civiltà and Associazione Priorità Cultura

As he walked through the tombs of the Appian Way at the end of the 18th century, Alessandro Verri narrates that he heard the subdued bewailing of the ghosts of the Ancients, saddened by the destruction of the monuments and the bleakness of the countryside. The author of *The Roman Nights* (of Milanese origin, brother of the founder of the periodical *Il Caffè* and he himself a contributor to it, a polemicist of the Enlightenment, a friend of Beccaria's, and man who loved Rome where he died in 1816) wrote: *"We too, who now live on these ruins, look at them, grieved by their being almost a spectacle of cruel devastation. Indeed, we seek to safeguard and revere them, but we cannot, surely, overcome the forces of nature and reproduce the things that have been destroyed."*

Contemporary Man has much greater capacity for destruction. But he also has, if he wants to, the capacity to rebuild the things that have been destroyed.

For five years now, we have been striving to offer concrete evidence of the feasibility of this latter possibility. We have been doing this through steadfast voluntary work and also with the contribution of distinguished scholars and technical experts (I would like to recall the vision of a great Master like Paolo Matthiae and his school as it is dutiful to recall the collaboration of an archaeologist and administrator who has unfortunately passed away, Sebastiano Tusa) and with the precious support of enlightened patrons - first and foremost, Emmanuele Emanuele. And here I especially thank Elena Giacomini for her great passion and dedication.

This volume summarizes and updates the results of our Campaign, carried out with the Associations Incontro di Civiltà (Meeting of Civilizations) and Priorità Cultura (Culture. A Priority). I think it is interesting to take stock of how much ground we have covered. On the one hand, it bears witness to a vast and far-reaching awareness, to which we have certainly contributed, not only within the scientific worlds and lovers of art: suffice it to glance at the names of the places where our initiatives have been carried out and in which hundreds of thousands of people participated: from the Colosseum to the headquarters of the great international institutions, from Rome, to Paris, to Brussels, to Berlin; and then Venice, Spoleto, Palermo. At the same time, we did not restrict ourselves to crying out against the new iconoclastic disasters, especially in Syria and Iraq, and to making them widely known: we actually worked, together with the most qualified experts, specialized companies, and competent institutions, to prove that **it is possible to reproduce the things that have been destroyed**.

This is a complex journey that requires care and caution. But, as we declared since 2014, we shall not accept that the destroyers of cultural heritage should have the last say. It does not make any difference whether they act for political purposes, for religious fanaticism, or for the drive towards hegemonic and anti-pluralistic domination. Whether, deliberately or not, after their clamorous work of destruction

come the wretched scumbags who engage in illicit trade, in marketing works of art that drip with blood. For the benefit of buyers who are no less delinquent than criminals with explosives, or with excavators and trucks who engage in trafficking the cultural heritage of mankind.

There are no doubts that this is not very much, but it is consoling to see that the effort to restore some of the devastated works of art was rewarded by the return home of the "wounded in action", once again restored. So the reconstruction of some of the works that were destroyed can again be admired today: in the Damascus Museum; or in a hall of the La Sapienza University of Rome for the students to see, in front of the tablets of the Ebla Archive reproduced to how they were at the time of their discovery. This is where the oldest dictionary in the world was found. A dictionary dating back to about 4300 years ago containing lists of common words translated into Sumerian and into the local language, and also the oldest international treatise, between Ebla and the city of Abarsal on the Euphrates.

This book ends with pictures of the boxes containing pieces that, in the Museum of Basra, will be put back together to reconstruct the Bull of Nimrud; today they are waiting to leave the port of Umm Qasr. This is the right and most telling conclusion. To date – given the serious conflict underway in Iraq - we do not know when it will be possible to complete the work.

In fact, our contribution is part of a process; it is not an assertive or unilateral exercise. It would not be possible to leverage the values of our universal cultural Heritage aimed at improving the understanding and dialogue between people and between peoples, if we expected to do it alone, imposing our own exclusive evaluations. I would like to recall my experience with the return of stolen Heritage: not only did we want and obtain that many stolen and trafficked masterpieces be returned to Italy, but not infrequently, we also took action so that works that were in Italy because they had been stolen could be returned to their rightful owners. We knew that some recipient governments were not 'champions of liberal democracy'; but we knew, and we know, that when you engage in a symbolic, political-juridical and scientific commitment you must look at the long-term interests of the populations, who have the right not to be deprived, as far as possible, of items that are their real roots that reach back into the distant past: cultural heritage that will be known and appreciated also by future generations.

Our campaign will continue. In the next few years, we want people to pay more attention to the relationship between climate change - with the now inevitable increase in sea levels - and the protection of complex heritage, like urban settings and archaeological and architectural heritage rising along the coasts. The case of Venice must and can prompt people's awareness that can then turn into planned action and actual results.

It is a matter of a paradigm shift. We need to rethink the Soft Power doctrine: from an instrument used by the States to affirm their legitimate national interest, to a more widespread and shared action. A Soft Power where the protagonists are also the representatives of organized society, of the creative industries, of the digital worlds, of the global companies that want to act in a humanistic manner. The objectives would be the protection of cultural heritage and an increasing participation of the people, also as a part of the fight against exclusion. In difficult times, where divisions and polarization tend to grow more and more, we must and can focus on the promotion of Culture putting it at the service of human and economic development, and promoting respect for diversity and respect for others.

# THE “RISING FROM DESTRUCTION” CAMPAIGN

R O M E

MUSEO NAZIONALE DEL PALAZZO DI VENEZIA

19 JUNE – 31 AUGUST 2014

EXHIBITION SYRIA. SPLENDOR AND TRAGEDY

A first important international mobilization aimed at reawakening the attention of public opinion and the institutions, so that already in 2014 (with a recently started conflict) every possible action could be taken in order to limit the damage and risks to Syrian Cultural Heritage

The “red room” of the exhibition: the destruction of syrian cultural heritage

Polychrome funerary relief representing a woman with child, limestone, 3rd century BC



19 June 2014:  
Exhibition opening

Casts of some Early Syrian cuneiform tablets  
from the State Archives of Ebla, 2300 BC

R O M E

COLOSSEUM

7 OCTOBER - 11 DECEMBER 2016

EXHIBITION RISING FROM DESTRUCTION.

EBLA, NIMRUD, PALMYRA

The exhibition also proposed two damaged busts from Palmyra (2nd-3rd century AD), which were recovered in the National Museum of Palmyra by DGAM after the liberation of the city from the from the armed groups of the self-proclaimed Islamic State.



Reconstruction of the ceiling of the cella of Bel's Temple in Palmyra at the Colosseum

Reconstruction of Archive Room of Ebla at the Colosseum



6 October 2016: exhibition opening in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, Ministers Paolo Gentiloni and Dario Franceschini, with Francesco Rutelli, Paolo Matthiae and Emmanuele F.M. Emanuele



Colosseum, the two busts from Palmyra  
On the left: Female bust 2nd-3rd century AD  
On the right: Male bust 2nd-3rd century AD



Exhibition opening

## R O M E

### ISCR - THE ITALIAN INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION DECEMBER 2016 – FEBRUARY 2017 THE EXCEPTIONAL ADVENTURE OF TWO WAR-WOUNDED OF PALMYRA

After the end of the Exhibition at the Colosseum “Rising from Destruction. Ebla, Nimrud, Palmyra” the two busts from Palmyra were restored by the Italian Institute for Conservation and Restoration (Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il Restauro- ISCR) through the use of innovative methodologies. At the end of February 2017, once restored, the two sculptures went back to their homeland, Syria.



October 2016. Arrival at the Colosseum of the busts and their fragments

February 2017. The two busts from Palmyra at the ISCR for the restoration



Final part of the restoration of the male bust

Press conference after the end of the restoration of the two busts in the presence of Dario Franceschini, Minister of Culture, ISCR Gisella Capponi and Francesco Rutelli

## B R U S S E L S

### JUSTUS LIPSIUS BUILDING (EU COUNCIL)

5 – 21 APRIL 2017

#### EXHIBITION **EBLA. A NEW CULTURE, A NEW LANGUAGE, A NEW HISTORY**

The exhibition 'Ebla. A new culture. A new Language. A new history' was held at the headquarters of the Council of the European Union from 5-21 April 2017, on the occasion of the conference 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' co-chaired by the European Union, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar, the United Kingdom and the United Nations. The discovery of the first Ebla (2400-2300 BC) was a real revolution in our knowledge of the history of the ancient Near East for several aspects and the discovery of the different core of archive of the central administration is certainly the most relevant. The site has been excavated since 1964 by an Italian archaeological expedition led by Paolo Matthiae.



5 april 2017, inauguration of the exhibition in the presence of Federica Mogherini, former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Angelino Alfano, former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs

## R O M E

### PALAZZO POLI - OTTAGON AULA OF THE DIOCLETIAN'S BATH

19-20 MAY 2017

#### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE **DOCUMENTING OUR HERITAGE AT RISK**

Representatives of Governments, Foundations, Associations, personalities from the international cultural scene, heritage professionals and technology experts shared experiences and views on the future prospects of documentation for heritage in crisis zones. Participants explored the question of how the international community can create a viable system to standardize documentation and tracking of cultural heritage under threat. The conference aimed to open a debate on the theme of documentation and to investigate whether the creation of a standardized documentation system to track all cultural heritage under threat represents a viable option for the international community to follow.



19 may 2017,  
Sala Dante, Palazzo Poli

20 may 2017,  
Ottagon Aula of the Diocletian's Bath

## P A R I S

**UNESCO HEADQUARTERS**  
6 NOVEMBER 2017 – 15 JANUARY 2018  
**EXHIBITION NIMRUD : THE HUMAN-HEADED BULL**  
**PROTECTING THE KING'S PALACE**

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The inauguration of the 3D replica of the Statue of the Lamassu, which once protected the North West Palace of Ashurnasirpal in the archaeological site of Nimrud, Iraq, took place on the 6th of November 2018 at UNESCO's Fontenoy during UNESCO's 39th General Conference. The full-size reproduction of the statue stands as a symbol of recovery and resilience, and raises awareness of the destruction of heritage in Iraq and its neighbouring countries. It seeks to remind us of the importance of safeguarding heritage to preserve our common human history and the role of culture in patching the social fabric that has been frayed by this destruction.



The reconstruction of the Bull of Nimrud  
at the entrance of UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

## R O M E

**FAO (ICCRUM GENERAL ASSEMBLY)**  
29 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER 2017  
**EXHIBITION PALMYRA.**  
**RISING FROM DESTRUCTION**

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The exhibition “Palmyra: Rising from Destruction” was organized at FAO headquarters in Rome during the 30th ICCROM General Assembly (29 November – 1 December 2017), featuring two examples of heritage originating from Palmyra. The first, the 1:1 scale reconstruction of the ceiling of the Temple of Bel (part of the exhibition at the Colosseum); the second, a funeral bust looted from Palmyra which was recovered in Italy by the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, and will be sent back to Syria when conditions permit.



Exhibition Opening

The funeral bust looted from Palmyra,  
recovered in Italy by the Carabinieri Command  
for the Protection of Cultural Heritage

VENICE (2014)  
 SPOLETO (2016)  
 PALERMO (2018)

**CULTURAL HERITAGE RESCUE PRIZE**

The purpose of the Cultural Heritage Rescue Prize, founded in 2014, is to identify those individuals brave enough to defend and safeguard the World Cultural Heritage and to award them.

**2014 Winner:** Mamamoun Abdulkarim, Director-General of Antiquities & Museums in Damascus

**2016 Winner:** Ahmad Naser Sarmast, an Afghan musicologist who marked his commitment to the freedom of culture.

**2018 Winner:** the al-Qadiriyya library of Baghdad, which has distinguished itself for its exemplary commitment to the protection of its book heritage despite the numerous looting and burning in 2003 and a bomb attack with a car bomb in the 2007.

From left: Giovanni Nistri, Abdul Waheed Omer, Ilaria Borletti Buitoni, Ahmad Naser Sarmast, Francesco Rutelli, Giorgio Ferrara, Fabrizio Cardarelli, Bonnie Burnham, the interpreter, Valentina Deponti, Stefano de Caro



from left: Paolo Matthiae, Domenico Cuttaia, Stefano De Caro, Sandro Gozi, Joris Kila, Maamoun Abdulkarim, Fabrizio Spada, Francesco Rutelli, Mounir Bouchenaki, Bonnie Burnham, Giovanni Nistri, Alberto D'Alessandro, Renata Codello, Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, Cristina Tonghini, Carlo Bagnasco



7 June 2018, Villa Niscemi, Palermo.  
 From left: Sebastiano Tusa, Councilor for culture, Regione Sicilia; Paolo Matthiae, Leoluca Orlando, Sindaco di Palermo; Khalid Al-Gilani, owner of the Al-Qadiriyya library (Baghdad), winner of the Cultural Heritage Rescue Prize 2018; Francesco Rutelli; Carlo Bagnasco, Managing Partner CB&Partners

Speech by Nello Musumeci, President Regione Sicilia.  
 From left: Sebastiano Tusa, Nello Musumeci, Leoluca Orlando, Francesco Rutelli

B E R L I N  
22 JUNE 2018  
EUROPEAN UNION PRIZE  
FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE  
EUROPA NOSTRA AWARD

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Launched by the European Commission and run by Europa Nostra, it is Europe's most prestigious heritage prize. It recognises the best achievements in conservation, research, dedicated service as well as education, training and awareness-raising. On the evening of 22 June 2018 the European Heritage Awards Ceremony took place at the Berlin Congress Centre in the presence of Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Ceremony was attended by 1,000 people, ranging from high-level officials from EU Institutions and Member States to leading representatives of heritage organisations from all over Europe. The "Rising from Destruction" Campaign won an Award in the category "Education, Training and Awareness-Raising".



22 June 2018,  
Award Ceremony

OUR  
RECONSTRUCTIONS  
AND RETURNS:  
SIGNS OF HOPE

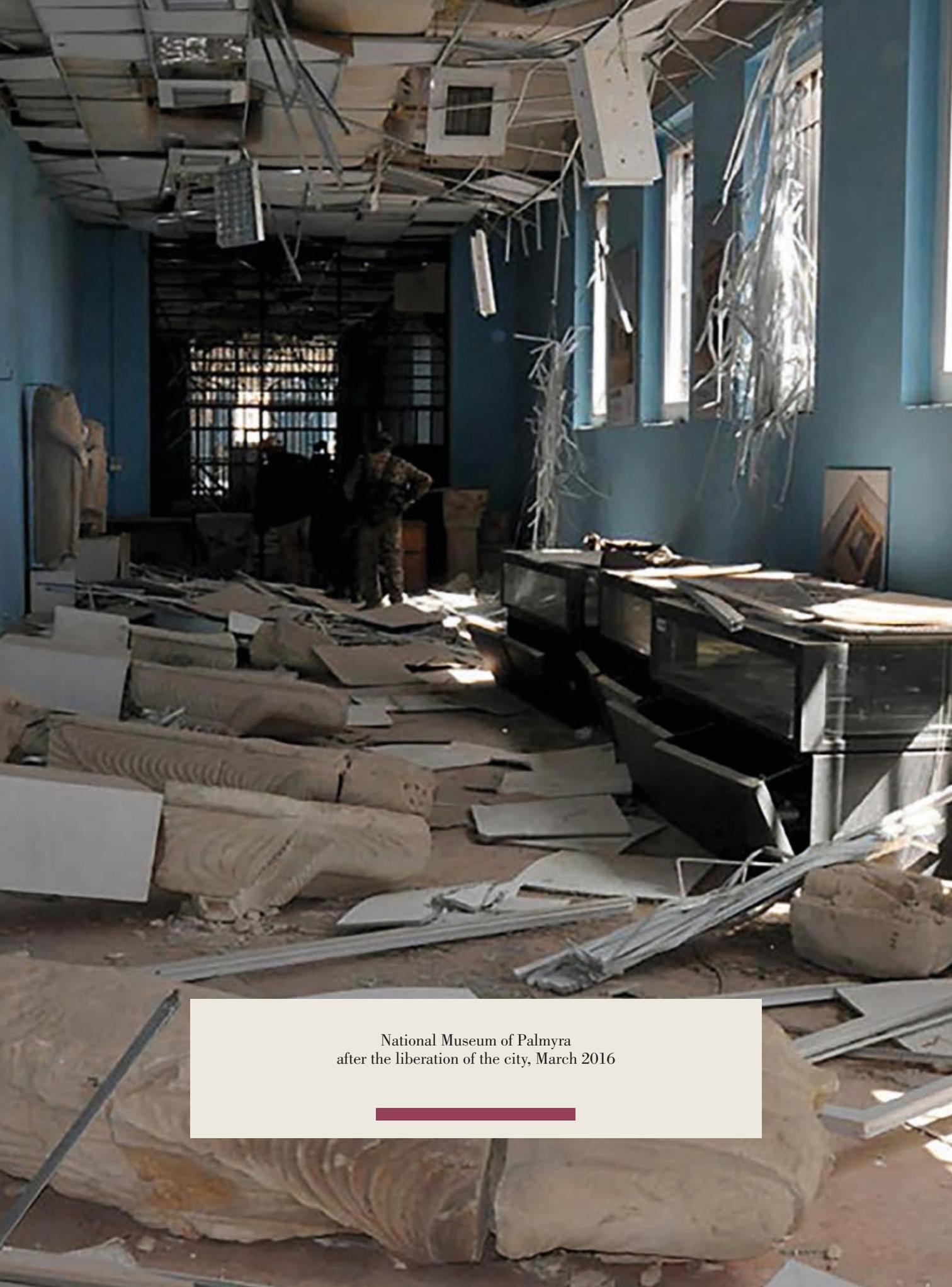
## RESTORED BUSTS RETURN TO SYRIA

# 2.1

### EARLY 2017

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After being exhibited at the Colosseum on the occasion of the exhibition “Rising from Destruction. Ebla, Nimrud, Palmyra”, the two busts from Palmyra were transferred to the Italian Institute for Conservation and Restoration (ISCR) from where, in February 2017, at the end of an accurate restoration with the use of innovative methodologies, they were sent back to Syria. The busts were displayed to the public on various occasions, along with items recovered from illicit traffic, most recently in an important gallery and art school in Damascus. As soon as possible, the busts will return to the Museum of Palmyra, their place of origin.



National Museum of Palmyra  
after the liberation of the city, March 2016



FEMALE BUST Limestone - Inv. n. 9810 | 2nd-3rd century AD  
The bust represents a veiled woman, wearing rich jewels, and originally decorated one of the famous Palmyrenian tombs: the most typical jewels are the embroidered and bejewelled band on her forehead, the necklaces of different kinds of beads, and the brooch pinning the cloak on her shoulder.



MALE BUST Limestone - Inv. n. 1783/6606 | 2nd-3rd century AD  
The bust represents a man, wearing the toga and the large cloak, covering his shoulders; he has a scroll in his hand. On the sides of his head there are the Greek and Palmyrenian inscriptions giving his name.



Rome, restoration of the two busts at ISCR

The two restored busts  
in a art school in Damascus in 2018

## THE ARCHIVE ROOM OF EBLA DELIVERED TO THE SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY OF ROME

# 2.2

DECEMBER 2018

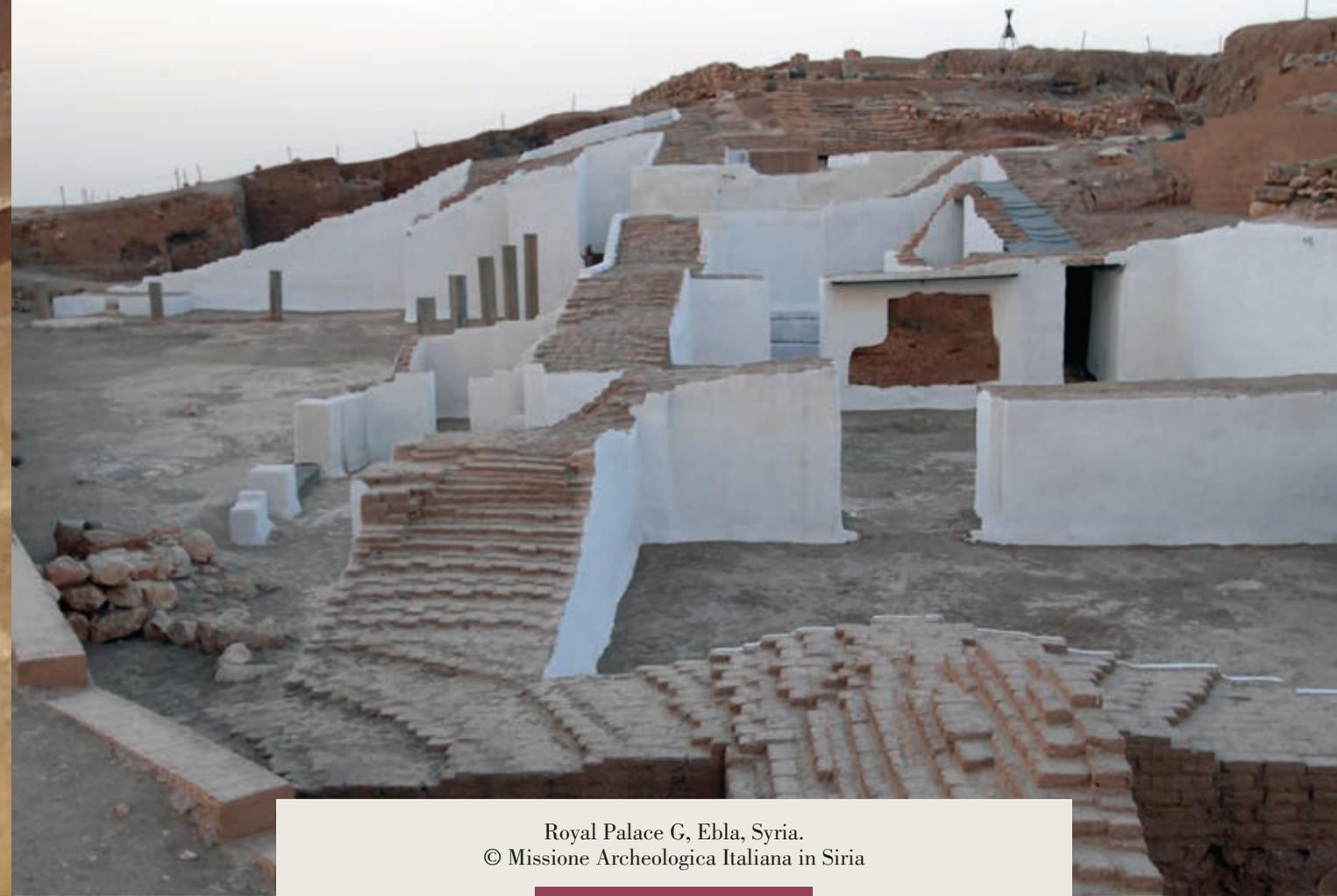
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After being exhibited at the Colosseum and at the headquarters of the European Council in Brussels, the Archive Room of Ebla, reconstructed by the firm Arte Idea, was donated to the University La Sapienza of Rome. The ceremony took place on 13 December 2018 in the presence of the Rector Eugenio Gaudio, the Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy Stefano Asperti, the discoverer of Ebla and Director of the Italian expedition to Ebla, Paolo Matthiae, as well as the teachers and numerous students. The Archive Room of Ebla has been accommodated in a large room open to the entire community of students and teachers at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy (Marco Polo complex).

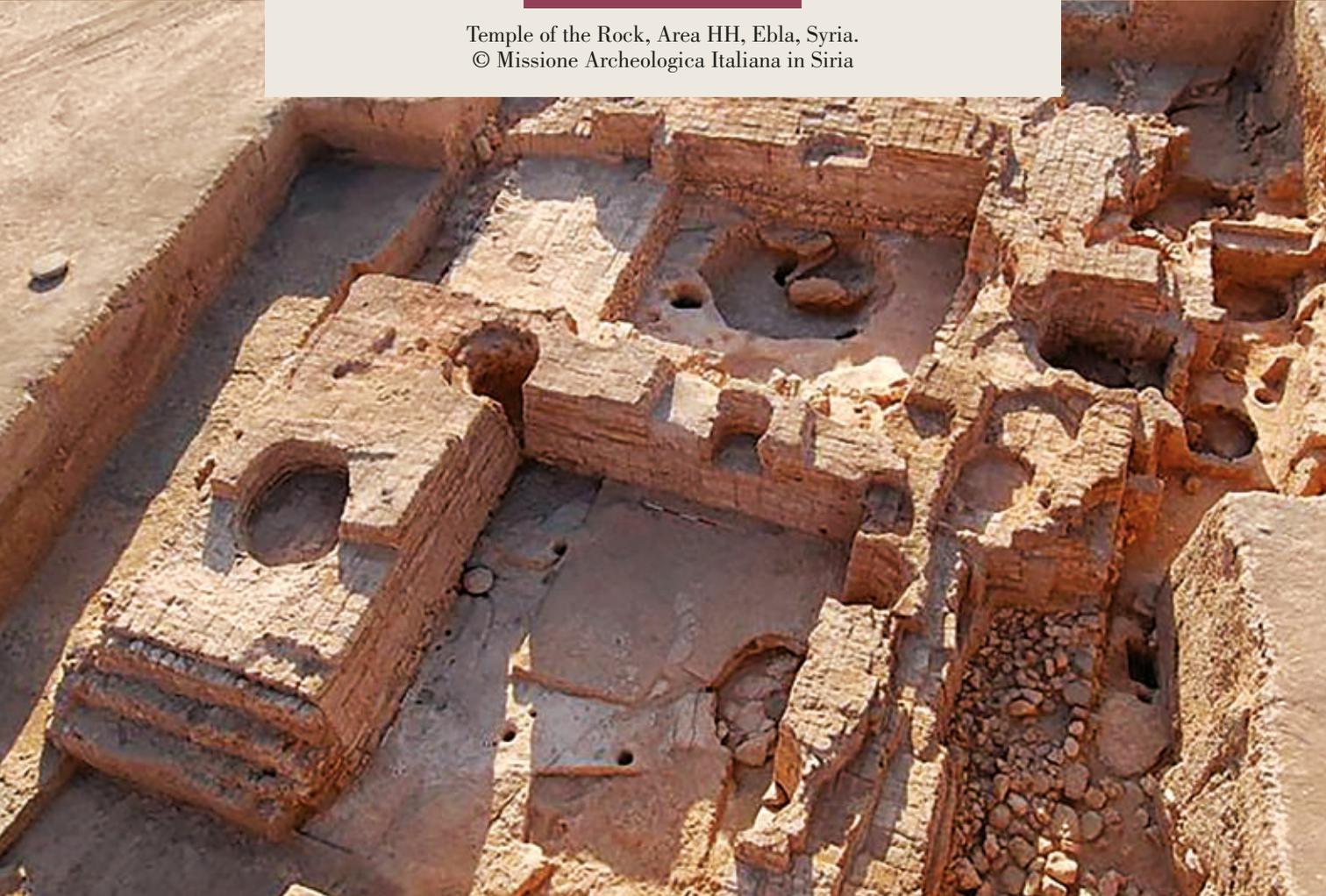
The discovery of the city of Ebla that dates back to the mature Syrian proto period (ca. 2400-2300 B.C.), by the Archaeological Mission led by Paolo Matthiae, was in many respects revolutionary and, certainly, the discovery of the central administration archives is the most important aspect of this find. The Archive Room contained about 17,000 inventory items including whole tablets and fragments of tablet of different sizes. The cuneiform tablets preserve the economic and administrative data of the state of Ebla, texts relating to the international relations of the city, ritual texts on royalty and school texts. The most important documents include: international treaties with other cities; the texts of the Royalty Ritual which has some points of contact with the Sed Festivity of the Egyptian Pharaohs; school texts, the most ancient dictionaries of history, with the translation of Sumerian terms into the local Ebla language.



A bird's-eye view  
of Ebla



Royal Palace G, Ebla, Syria.  
© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria



Temple of the Rock, Area HH, Ebla, Syria.  
© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria

Ebla, cuneiform tablet with lexical text.  
© Missione Archeologica Italiana in Siria





Sapienza University of Rome,  
Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, 13 december 2018  
Delivery Ceremony for the Archive Room of Ebla

## CEILING OF THE TEMPLE OF BEL AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF DAMASCUS

### The Great Archive of Ebla A new culture, a new language, a new history

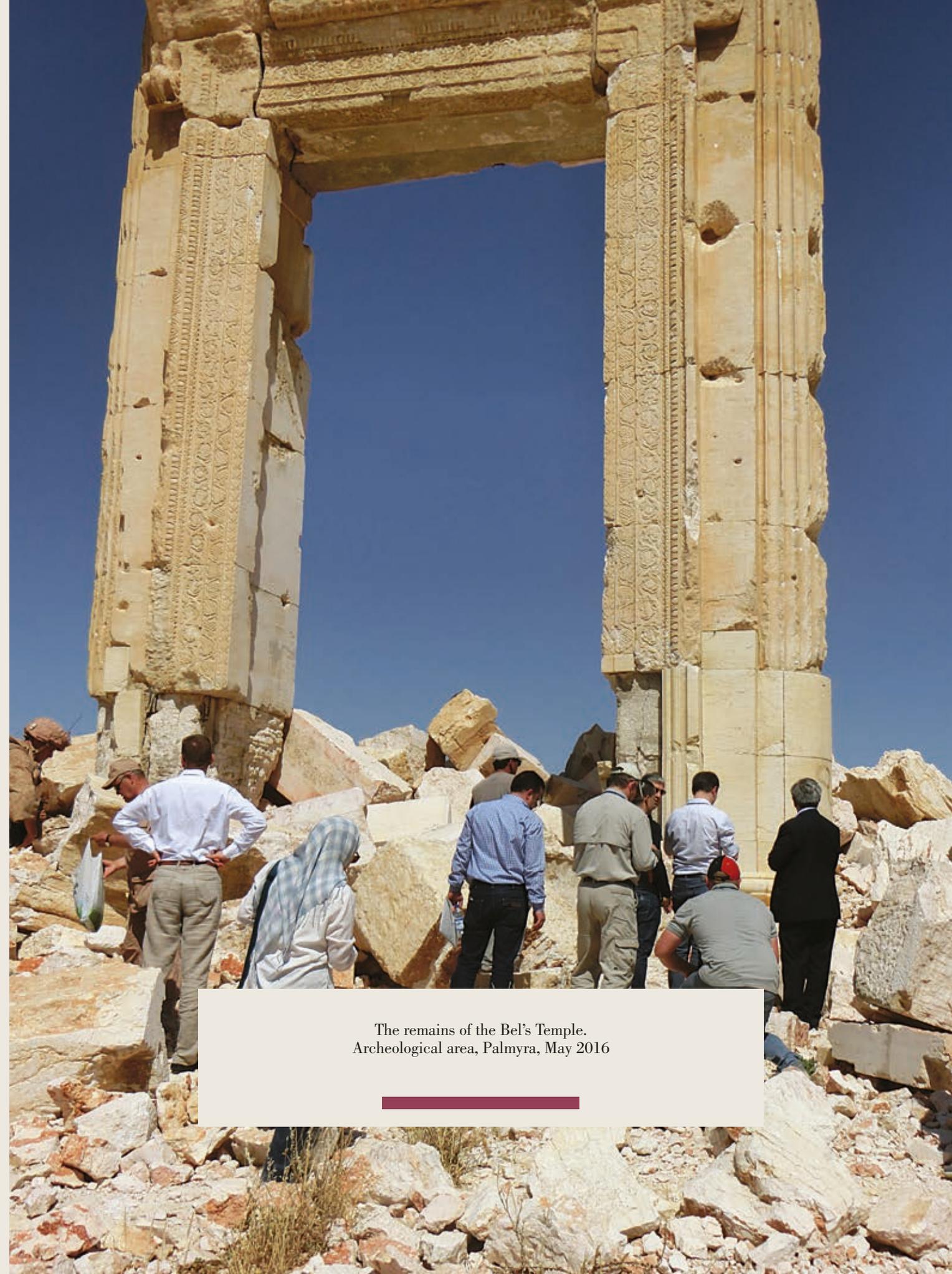
The discovery of the Ebla of the mature Early Syrian period (ca. 2400-2300 BC) by the Sapienza Expedition directed by Paolo Matthiae, was revolutionary in many ways. The archives of the city central administration are certainly the most relevant result of this discovery.

The Great Archive (of which we propose here a 1:1 reconstruction) included approximately 17,000 inventory numbers with complete tablets large and small fragments. The cuneiform tablets registered the economic and administrative accounts of the city of Ebla, the international relations of the town and school texts. Among the most important documents there are: international treaties with other towns; the texts of the Ritual of the Great Festival of the Egyptian

## EARLY 2019

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On April 23, 2019, at the Damascus National Museum, the official ceremony for the delivery of the replica of the ceiling of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra was held. The replica, produced by the company Tryeco 2.0, had already been exhibited at the Colosseum in 2016 on the occasion of the exhibition “Rising from Destruction. Ebla, Nimrud, Palmyra”, was donated by the Associazione Incontro di Civiltà and by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Syria to the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAM). The event was attended by: Dr. Tawfiq al-Imam, Vice-Minister of Culture of the Arab Republic of Syria, Dr. Massimiliano D’Antuono, Chargé d’affaires for Damascus at the Italian Embassy in Beirut, Dr. Mahmoud Hammoud, Director General of the DGAM, Professor Frances Pinnock, Prof. Davide Nadali and Dr. Marta D’Andrea of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Syria. During the celebrations, the messages sent by Francesco Rutelli and Emmanuele F. M. Emanuele were read in the Damascene Room of the National Museum of Damascus. Then the installation of the ceiling in the entrance hall of the National Museum was inaugurated in the presence of the authorities, of the DGAM officials and a large audience of people who took part in the event. The public showed great appreciation for this manifestation of closeness to the Syrian people in this difficult moment, and the members of the Mission in Ebla expressed their admiration for the attachment that ordinary people showed for their cultural heritage.



The remains of the Bel's Temple.  
Archeological area, Palmyra, May 2016

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Palmyra, Temple of Baalshamin's explosion. August 2015

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Set up of the ceiling of the Bel's Temple at the National Museum of Damascus

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Opening Ceremony for the ceiling of the Bel's Temple  
at the National Museum of Damascus

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The ceiling of the Bel's Temple  
at the National Museum of Damascus

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## THE LAMASSU RETURNS TO IRAQ



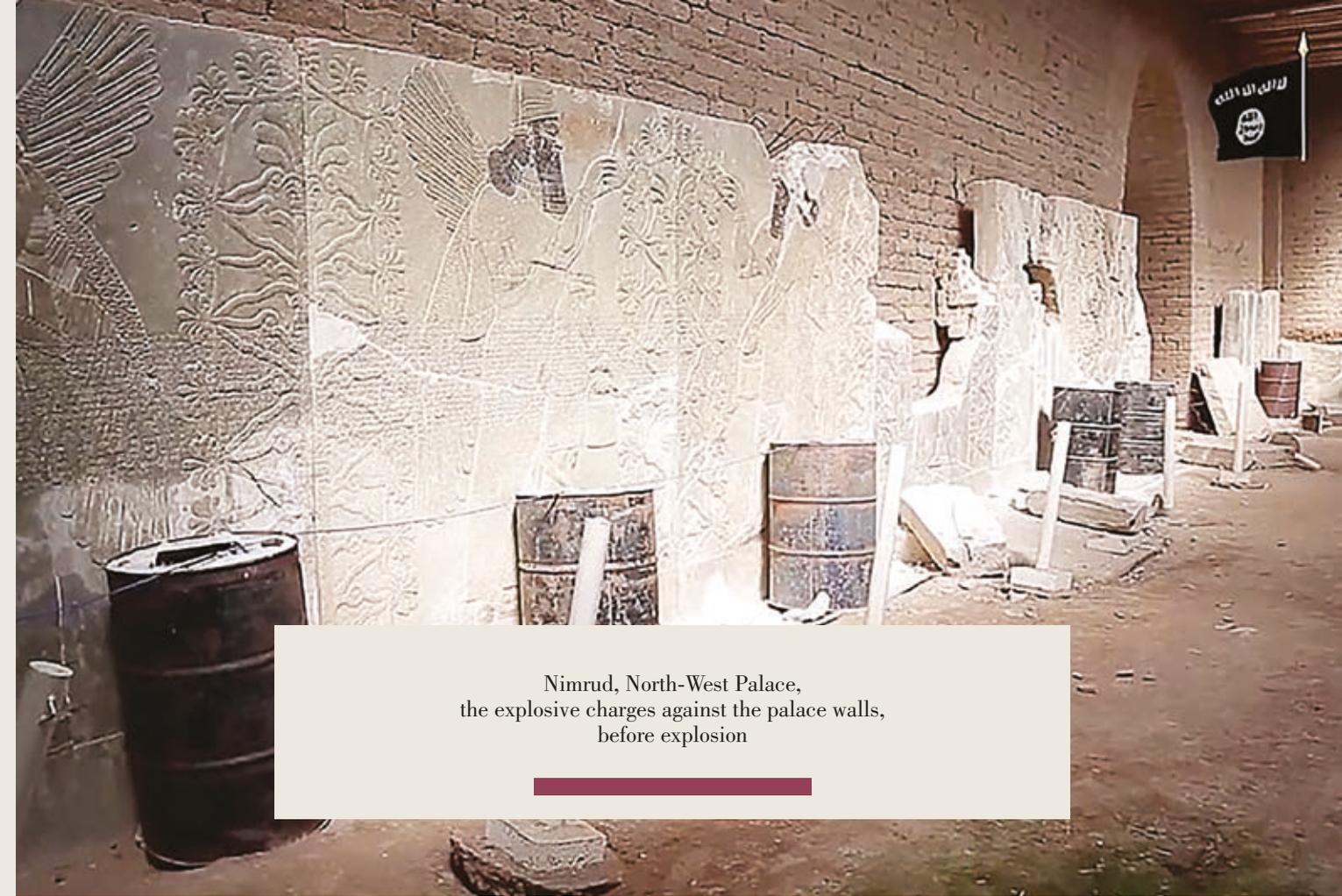
The ceiling of the Bel's Temple  
at the National Museum of Damascus

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## END 2019

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After being exhibited at the Colosseum and at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, the replica of the Lamassu, reproduced by the Nicola Salvioli company, was donated to Iraq in 2018, as per agreements following the meeting between the President of the Associazione Incontro di Civiltà, Francesco Rutelli, and the Iraqi Minister of Culture held in Paris on the occasion of the inauguration of the exhibition NIMRUD: THE HUMAN-HEADED BULL PROTECTING THE KING'S PALACE. The return to Iraq of the replica could not take place in 2018 due to delays in the swearing in of the new Iraqi Minister of Culture, following the elections held on May 12, 2018 and the ensuing internal political debate. The new Minister of Culture, Abdul Amir Ghalib Al Hamdani, appointed at the beginning of 2019, stated that the recently reopened Museum of Basra was to be the final destination of the Lamassu. The city of Basra is in a strategic position from a cultural and geographical point of view, and it was chosen for its historic relations with Italy and for the opportunity of involving the local populations in a process of cultural growth.



Nimrud, North-West Palace,  
the explosive charges against the palace walls,  
before explosion

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Iraq, november 2017. The remains of the Bull of Nimrud  
and of the archeological area after the explosions.  
Photos by Riccardo Bicicchi

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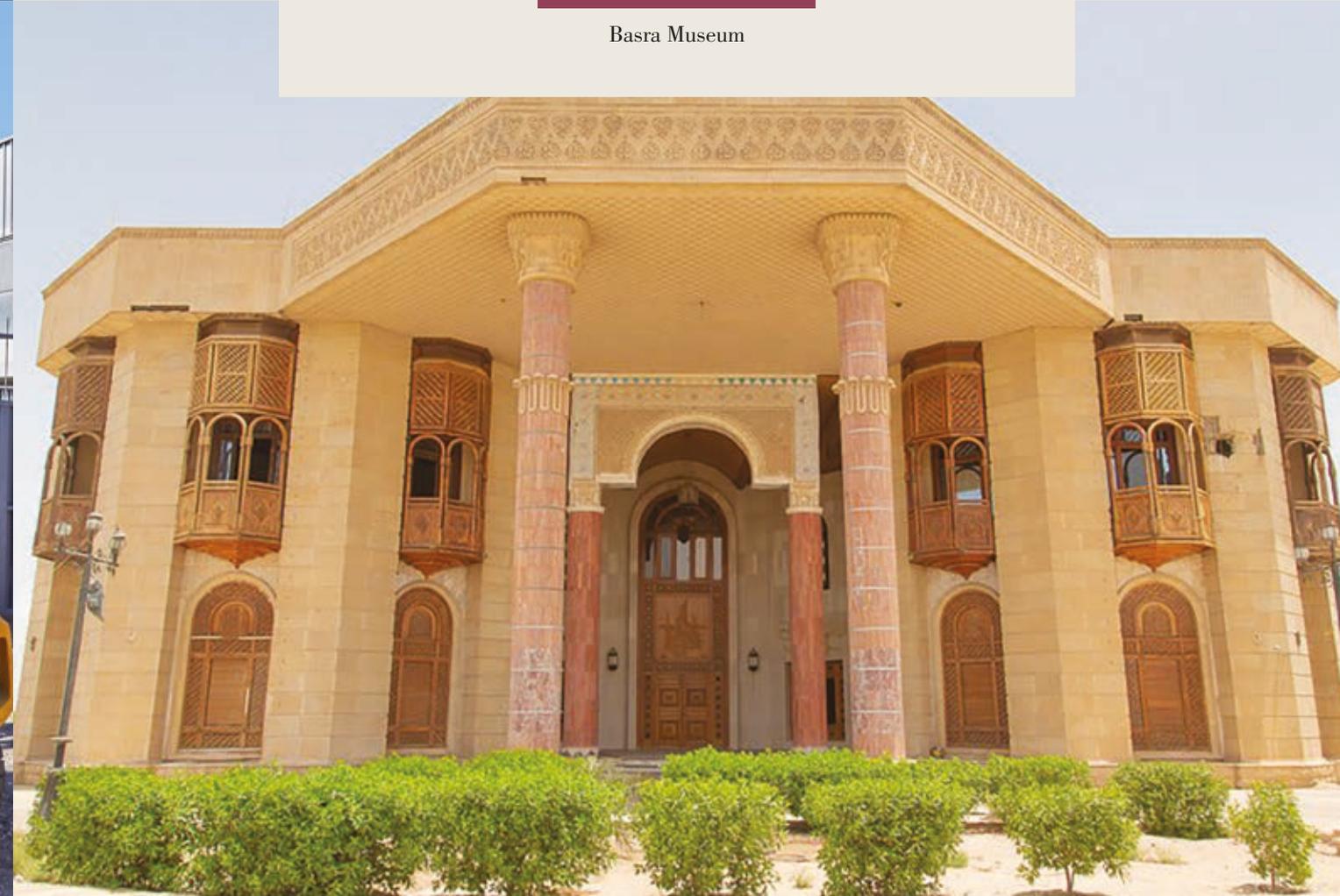


Bull of Nimrud's departure from Apice's warehouse to the port of Neaples. The Bull left Neaples by sea to Iraq. Now the Bull is at the port of Umm Qasr, ready to be transferred to the Basra Museum



Port of Umm Qasr, Iraq, where the reconstruction of the Bull of Nimrud arrived in september 2019

Basra Museum



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