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Anterior

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Jorge Otero-Pailos

Introduction to the Special Issue on Preservation and War Freedom from Violence

We are accustomed to seeing these two words, *preservation* and *war*, often invoked as opposites, certainly in the press, but also in the mission statements of heritage organizations.¹ In the context of today's conflagrations in the Middle East, Central Asia, and elsewhere, we read about efforts to deploy preservation in order to repair or even resist the ravages of war. But the very idea that preservation can be a form of resistance to war already casts it as a form of war by other means, a critical part of the logic and logistics of war and not something external to it. With that in mind, this special issue of *Future Anterior* inquires into how war shapes how we practice and understand preservation and, vice versa, how preservation shapes how we practice and think of war.

This issue's interrogation of the degree to which preservation and war might have been mutually constitutive practices distances it from a long line of academic publications and academic conferences, dating back to the late nineteenth century, that have examined the destructive effects of war on monuments and historic buildings. There was a recent point of inflection in this scholarship in the early twenty-first century, when greater attention was given to the role of visual media in the waging of war, mostly as the result of the Taliban's shelling of the Bamiyan Buddhas in March 2001, which was taped then televised internationally, and Al-Qaeda's terrorist attacks of 9/11, which exploited live television to make a worldwide spectacle out of the taking of innocent lives and the destruction of buildings that, at least from the point of view of the perpetrators, were heritage because of their strong cultural associations with American values. In 2002 Columbia University's Historic Preservation program devoted its annual Fitch Colloquium to exploring this theme, under the rubric of "Target Architecture." A number of important conferences followed on the subject, such as the 2011 "Cultural Heritage Protection in Crisis Areas" at the American Academy in Rome. Since then, the nature and consumption of media has undergone a major transformation, and we now view news videos online, mostly through social media channels. That is how most people witnessed ISIL's dynamiting of the ancient Roman city of Palmyra in 2015, and their subsequent public execution of Khaled al Asaad, the eighty-one-year-old Syrian archaeologist who served forty years as the site's head of antiquities. One could

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not avoid the sense that merely watching those videos, which were clearly staged, edited as propaganda for our consumption in our personal phones and intended to be easily forwarded via social networks to countless other private screens, drew one into the war's perverse logic. Every preservationist felt impotent. At Columbia, we examined the new conditions of "Culture and Heritage after Palmyra" in a 2015 symposium that attempted to cast light on the distorting mediations of new media by focusing on the facts that were not being covered.²

Meanwhile, the press turned to the preservation community with questions on what could be done. Couched in such questions is the presupposition that something should be done, that preservation is a moral imperative. These questions are also calls to duty—why aren't you doing anything? As Zainab Bahrani reminds us in her essay, they come with a thinly veiled subtext, familiar to scholars of colonialism, that we have a duty to intervene in "local" wars in defense of "universal" values. When the press called mainstream preservationists they got disappointing answers. There was not much that traditional preservation practice could do, as it required boots on the ground, to use a military expression, and there was little international will or local capacity for mounting such perilous preservation campaigns. There was a lot of caution: we should wait until after the war is over, and let locals decide what they would like to do. Preservationists became wary to highlight destructive heritage practices in the making and stepped away from the discussion seemingly perceived as "anti-heritage." As Trinidad Rico and Rim Lababidi counter in their essay on Saudi Arabia, careful consideration of heritage destruction can challenge national claims about heritage stewardship and provide a better contextualized history of the discipline.

Unexpectedly, from the margins of preservation came a group with an entirely different perspective, and seemingly the only ones that could do something. This was the moment of emergence for digital preservation. In preservation as in militarization, the current wars in the Middle East have brought broad legitimacy to digital practices that were until very recently considered experimental: precision laser scanning, drone-assisted digital photogrammetry, social-media-driven real-time GIS mapping, 3D replication, and others. The new centrality of these digital preservation practices is presented as the tip of a long wedge that will widen its influence on the discipline over time. When the press showed drone footage of Palmyra taken by preservationists right after ISIL retreated, it had a chilling similarity to footage of military drone strikes. Yet the imbrications of the new preservation with developments in

the practice of war remain entirely unexamined—even in this issue, despite our best efforts. For now, scholarship on this aspect of preservation practice remains wanting, save for a few exceptional historical essays, such as Aaron Vinegar's examination of Viollet-Le-Duc's use of military panoramic cameras for heritage documentation.³ It is not unimaginable that future preservation textbooks will have sections of warfare technology, reviving the tradition of Renaissance architectural treatises to include chapters on war machines.⁴

To imagine a future anterior with such preservation textbooks, and what the Renaissance will have looked like then, is really an invitation to broaden our examination of preservation and war beyond the immediacy of current events. While acknowledging the importance of the recent conferences and publications that have dutifully focused on contemporary wars, we also realized that by focusing too narrowly on current events, this recent activity often missed, or didn't leave time to examine, larger historical patterns. So this special issue attempts to take a step back from the immediacy of the present and take a wider view of the relationship between preservation and war. Without losing sight of the present, the authors in this issue look deep into the past, as far back as Sumerian civilization, to explore how the patterns and stakes of this relationship have unfolded over time.

When I first read about the execution of Khaled al Asaad, I immediately thought of Richard Whiting, the Catholic abbot of Glastonbury Abbey, where King Arthur and Guinevere were buried. When in 1536 Henry VIII dissolved the Catholic Church in England and confiscated all their churches and treasure, Abbot Whiting famously refused to vacate Glastonbury Abbey or to surrender its treasure. The King sent the army and had Whiting hung in front of the Church, then had ropes tied between each of his limbs and four horses. The horses were whipped until Whiting's body was quartered and then the pieces were hung in front of the church. The Church was destroyed and left in ruins as a form of intimidation against other insurrections. The Church remains a ruin today, and while its associations may have changed, it still stands in memory of that event. The destruction of heritage, as Andrew Herscher has written, often intends not so much to make heritage disappear but to radically transform its image and meaning, recasting it into a new visual form of coercion and intimidation; it is a way of continuing the conduct of war by other means.⁵ That is why thinking about and designing the future of Palmyra today, as Azra Akšamija does in her essay, is so important and politically charged. Askamija uses digital block-chain technology (used to authenticate financial transactions in the dark web

where arms dealers traffic) to produce her reconstruction of the now destroyed Arch of Palmyra, thus introducing a new idea of authenticity into preservation.

All the essays that follow were born, in one way or another, from current preservation projects in the field, sometimes in the battlefield. They are deeply engaged in the present, but at the same time they all aim to offer historical perspective, a type of detachment from the present that enables us to remain critical of it and of the kind of preservation we are called upon to do in it. They explore the past and the future to compare the present against its alternatives, to postulate other forms of preservation, different relationships to war. Clive van den Berg's artistic intervention asks us to consider the future preservation of very ordinary vernacular apartment buildings in Iraq, from the roofs of which gay men were pushed to their deaths. The past and the future are sites of experimentation for testing the present. They allow the authors to push the limits of disciplinary knowledge, of what is possible to think and do today.

When presented in historical perspective, the relationship between preservation and war appears in an unexpected light. At least since the Enlightenment, preservation has been a legal limit to war. Military jurists like Emmerich de Vattel helped establish the legal notion that governments had a duty to protect heritage during war—including that of their conquered enemies. To kill soldiers was acceptable, but to destroy heritage was considered a threshold beyond which military violence became unjust, even criminal. Military codes of conduct, such as the pioneering 1863 U.S. Lieber Code, became the basis and inspiration for national and international preservation laws such as the Hague Convention, which was recently invoked by the International Criminal Court in its judgment that Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi committed a crime against humanity by destroying the long-revered shrines of Timbuktu.⁶ The regulation of modern warfare in many ways preceded and shaped modern preservation laws. Preservation law, Leila A. Amineddoleh reminds us, would not have emerged in the West without war. In this sense war is a condition of possibility for Western preservation.

Julian Esteban-Chaparría's essay on the Spanish Civil War demonstrates that modern preservation practice matured within army units. Preservation activism also developed within World War I army propaganda units. The German army's razing of Belgian cities like Ypres, and its destruction of the famous Louvain library caused an international uproar.⁷ American preservationists like Warren Whitmore raised money to repair European heritage and used the press to demand that President Woodrow Wilson send troops to stop the German de-

struction of Europe's monuments.⁸ In response, Paul Clemen, Conservator of Rhineland, was put in charge of preserving the heritage of conquered territories in Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine. He devised a program to attach special "art officers" to military units to identify and protect heritage. His programs served as precedents for the Italian Carabinieri's Command for the Protection of Cultural Property, which author Laurie W. Rush studied in developing her own pioneering heritage training program for U.S. soldiers fighting in the Middle East and Afghanistan.⁹ Clemen also published lavish books on heritage meant as propaganda for the German war effort.¹⁰ Tim Winter shows how preservation propaganda, or what is now called preservation communications campaigns, is deployed today in the service of geopolitical ambitions, such as China's claims on the Silk Road, and as an apotropaic gesture against armed resistance to those ambitions.

The experience of destruction during World War II, which is the focus of Lucia Allais's essay, shaped preservation thinking and practice during the postwar years of reconstruction, and is still palpable in the 1964 Venice Charter. The now-famous work of the Roberts Commission, better known for the Monuments Men, was a powerful catalyst for the creation of preservation institutions during peacetime, from the National Trust of Historic Preservation in the United States to UNESCO. The aim of these institutions was not so much to abolish war but rather to fight more just wars in the future, to use preservation as a means to correct the moral transgressions of past wars. Given this shared past, the authors in this issue consider the range of acceptable preservation actions and nonactions in the face of today's wars, when celebratory media spectacles are made of the dynamiting of heritage and the killing of preservationists.

Institutionally, intellectually, and legally speaking, preservation developed in tandem with advances in warfare. Military thinking remains second hand within preservation: we organize and practice as would an army, around notions of readiness for battle, defensibility of assets, propaganda campaigns to win hearts and minds, and management of trauma. This issue asks us to consider difficult questions. For instance: to what degree is preservation thinkable outside of militarization, and its prewar-war-postwar continuum? With this question in mind, this issue is organized under three rubrics: prewar, war and postwar. We are following here the categories of medieval "just war theory," which concerned "the right to go to war" (*jus ad bellum*) and the "right conduct in war" (*jus in bello*). In recent years, just-war theorists have proposed a third category, *Jus post bellum*, concerning justice after war. Each of these sections is punctuated with the transcript of a discussion among the participants of the 2016 Fitch Colloquium, which explored

the same theme as this issue, and at which some, but not all, of the essays that follow were first presented.

This issue brings into focus the many borrowings, debts, and exchanges that exist historically between preservation and war, but by no means to conflate the two. The essays remain attentive to the cross-purposes between the practice of preservation and that of war. By bringing the relationship into sharp relief they also help us measure the distance, and find opportunities to advance new agendas for preservation that might be free from violence.

Notes

¹ From the World Monuments Fund website: "Earthquakes. Floods. Wars and revolutions. Whether natural or man-made, disasters cannot be predicted or foreseen. But once they occur, WMF is prepared to respond quickly and decisively to assess damage, undertake emergency conservation, and help develop plans for recovery." <https://www.wmf.org/what-we-do>.

² Participants included: Dr. Laurie Rush, Cultural Resources Manager for the U.S. Army; Ian Straughn, Joukowsky Family Middle East Studies Librarian, Brown University; Daniel Bertrand Monk, professor of geography and Middle Eastern and Islamic studies, and George R. and Myra T. Cooley Chair in Peace and Conflict studies, Colgate University; Nicolai Ouroussoff, adjunct associate professor of architecture, GSAPP, Columbia University.

³ Aron Vinegar, "Viollet-Le-Duc and Restoration," *Future Anterior* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 54.

⁴ Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (repr., Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

⁵ Andrew Herscher, *Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010). See also Andrew Herscher, "Counter-Heritage and Violence," *Future Anterior* 3, no. 2, (Winter 2006): 25–33.

⁶ Al Mahdi Case, *The Prosecutor v. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi*, ICC-01/12–01/15, Selected Documents, International Criminal Court, 2017.

⁷ "Ypres, 1914," an official account published by order of the German general staff, translation by G.C.W., London, Constable and Co., 1919.

⁸ Ioannis Avramides, *Whitney Warren, Preservationist at War: How the Great War Shaped the Origins of Private International Preservation* (MS Thesis: Columbia University, 2010).

⁹ Laurie Rush and Luisa Benedettini Millington, *The Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Property: Saving the World's Heritage* (Newcastle: The International Centre for Heritage and Cultural Studies, Newcastle University, 2016).

¹⁰ Paul Clemen, *The Protection of Art During War* (Leipzig: E. A. Seeman, 1919).

In This Issue

Fitch Colloquium: Preservation and War Panel Discussions

To what degree, we may ask, is preservation thinkable outside of militarization, and its prewar–war–postwar continuum? What is the range of acceptable preservation actions and non-actions in the face of today's wars, when spectacles are made of dynamiting monuments and killing preservationists? The 2016 Fitch Colloquium brought together some of the world's leading experts in the spirit of dialogue and common pursuit of answers to these urgent questions. The panel discussions from the 2016 Fitch Colloquium focusing on prewar and postwar are included in this issue.

Conflict Heritage, Preservation Diplomacy, and Future Corridors of Smuggling

Tim Winter

War and the cessation of conflict have long been triggers for preservation diplomacy; the desire for heritage protection, peace, and recovery creates a political environment within which collaborations around preservation burst into existence. This essay takes up the political and diplomatic dimensions of such preservation aid in relation to China's strategy for integrating the infrastructures and economies of Eurasia via its One Belt One Road initiative. Responding to the heritage destruction and looting of Silk Road sites in Iraq and Syria by the Islamic State, the article looks to One Belt One Road as an emergent political economy upon which new forms of preservation diplomacy and heritage aid can be built. It also raises the specter of vast new markets for illicitly trafficked antiquities by looking at the surge in museums and likely boom in private collections of Silk Road antiquities in China.

Finding Common Ground: Cultural Property Protection in Modern Conflict

Laurie W. Rush

North Atlantic Treaty Organizations (NATO) Allies and Partner Nations have discovered the common ground where identification, protection, and respect for cultural property is imperative for the success of military missions. Meaningful efforts to protect monuments, collections, heritage sites, sacred structures, and other forms of cultural property must shift to engage with the sphere of performance destruction as a component of

hybrid warfare. The challenges of educating military personnel by developing “no strike” lists and requiring cultural resources impact evaluations for overseas military operations are daunting. Now, in addition, preservationists worldwide must contend with the transformation of these treasures into targets for destruction, used as a method for strategic communication of extreme ideology and demonstration of power. The complexity increases when opportunities for international preservation are sacrificed in favor of perceived political or institutional gain. As conflicts unfold in the Middle East and North Africa, where deliberate destruction appears to be exacerbated by criminal acts of looting, heritage at risk may need military protection now more than ever.

The Legal Tools Used before and during Conflict to Avoid Destruction of Cultural Heritage

Leila A. Amineddoleh

This article traces the history of jurisprudence in heritage protection from its ancient origins to the recent 2016 International Criminal Court’s first prosecution for the destruction of religious structures. The author explains how the law struggles to adequately address means of preserving shared cultural property, particularly in times of war. With the widespread use of social media and proliferation of global connectivity, the current turmoil in the Middle East has drawn attention to destruction and looting. As the relationship between heritage and terrorism is becoming more evident, the article aims to assess the renewed efforts through legal instruments and prosecutions to curb these destructive acts.

Amplified Humanity and the Architectural Criminal

Lucia Allais

If the relationship between heritage and humanity has been reconfigured from an opposition to one of *proximity*, what are the architectural terms of this proximity? What are the operations through which the “expansion” or “widening” of crime and punishment alike are imagined? In this essay the author probes these questions in two parts. First, the accused’s discourse, in court and in abundant video evidence, provides an entry into the logic of sincerity that motivated the design of the destruction of Timbuktu. Second, an analysis of the practices that authenticate Timbuktu as an international treasure—both in court and in ongoing preservation—reveal the techniques of amplification that are embedded into the built environment to hold together an agreement, on both sides of the law, that the target of this new criminality is humanity itself.

The Rights of Monuments

David Gissen

The Rights of Monuments was a ten-day workshop led by David Gissen in Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. The workshop explored acts and charters from the late eighteenth century to the present that attempt to either grant or negotiate protections to historical monuments. This includes charters and laws that protect monuments from wartime destruction; international agreements that govern the movement of monuments and artifacts across national borders, and other agreements that govern things such as copyright and the reproduction of monuments. Within the workshop students were introduced to “post-humanist” critiques of rights as a way to rethink the rights of monuments from both a critical and contemporary perspective. The ultimate goal of the workshop involved a group articulation of the rights of monuments based on this theoretical reconceptualization of the historical literature. The essay is an edited version of a lecture in which the author presented many of the concepts behind the workshop.

The Spanish Civil War and Cultural Heritage

Julián Esteban-Chaparría

The Spanish Civil War lasted from July 1936 to April 1939, during which a group of rebel militarists and radical right-wing groups rose up against the democratic government of the Republic. The damage to the cities and cultural heritage was great.

Soon after the start of the war both sides organized technical structures devoted to preserving the cultural heritage, although the lack of means prevented many important works of preservation and conservation from being carried out. One of the most dramatic episodes of the Spanish Civil War was the bombing by the rebel army of the Prado Museum, which forced the evacuation of its works of art to Valencia, Barcelona, and finally to Switzerland.

An important issue was born among the victors after the war: the need to establish an official history of what had happened. The goal was to legitimize what had been done, hide what was not in their interest, and misrepresent what should not even be ambiguous: the role and performance of the Republic and, in contrast, the actions taken by the nationalist leadership.

Extremism in Contemporary Cultural Heritage Debates about the Muslim World

Trinidad Rico and Rim Lababidi

This article considers the way that heritage preservation perpetuates its own mythologies, affecting public and disciplinary

debates, with regard to popular representations of “Islamic” practices of heritage management and preservation. We suggest that representations of heritage practices in the broader Muslim world have been largely constructed on very few and regionally select reports that present Muslim communities as destructive stewards of heritage resources, including what is perceived to be their own heritage as well as the heritage of other groups within Muslim-dominant territories. We argue that the act of highlighting destructive heritage practices has therefore imagined and encouraged a preconception toward preservation that is not only monolithic, but also overwhelmingly “antiheritage.” In this paper, we first provide an overview of the heritage case studies that are selectively mobilized in order to sustain a view of destructive practices, and then suggest a more careful consideration of case studies from Saudi Arabia that challenge this persistent perception and encourage a better contextualization of the heritage stewardship of Muslim nations and communities. Throughout this discussion, we argue that a more inclusive review of heritage practices across the Muslim world is needed to problematize how heritage practices in this region are presented.

Destruction and Preservation as Aspects of Just War

Zainab Bahrani

The concern with monument destruction in warfare is as old as the world’s earliest historical texts and monuments. This remarkable historical evidence comes from Iraq and Syria, where history is now in the process of being systematically obliterated. What is the aim of such destruction, and what is the role of preservation in these wars? This essay will address destruction and preservation as aspects of war, and will introduce the Columbia University Mapping Mesopotamia Monuments project.

Meet Me at the Plague Column: Monuments and Conservation Planning

Andrew Shanken

Beginning in the 1960s, planners in Klagenfurt, Austria, began using monuments and memorials to frame the pedestrianization of the historic city center. This strategy of urban reinvention shows the convergence of monuments, tourism, and urban planning within the project of heritage conservation, with monuments being visual, spatial, and symbolic pieces with which cities created these larger effects in the postwar period. Relieved of the burden of commemorative practice, these monuments are free to adorn, mark space, and ennoble the old city; in effect, to affirm its historicity in a pivotal moment of transformation. This coincided with the creation of

Minimundus, an architectural theme park in Klagenfurt, which, like Klagenfurt’s historic core, treats miniature monuments as moveable props in a pedestrian zone. Through moving monuments and Minimundus, Klagenfurt staged a graceful setting for tourism using its historical assets as props. Its indifference to historical precision is, in fact, modernist. Under cover of preservation, heritage, and patrimony, planners assimilated some of the ideas birthed in the more radical context of the rise of the Modern movement in architecture.

Memory Matrix

Azra Akšamija

We live at the time when deliberate targeting of cultural heritage has become an instrument of genocidal and territorial conquests. We also live at a time when new technologies can be used to document the erasure of heritage as it takes place and to restore it much faster than has been possible before. Hardly any other historic site has generated more intense public debate about these two issues than Palmyra. The impetus to defy Palmyra’s destruction notwithstanding, the questions of whether, when, and how to restore it remain controversial. These questions provide the conceptual basis for the Memory Matrix project—a public-space intervention referencing Palmyra’s Arch of Triumph—that counters the destruction of monuments with the creation of new ephemeral monuments engaging new fabrication technologies and transcultural collaborations. In the context of preservation and war, the Memory Matrix endorses the use of technology to form educational exchanges and foster solidarity with those who have been stripped of their home, culture, history, and identity. Preservation can be also about growing the positive aspects of human interdependence in the face of global problems that are affecting communities across borders, both today and in the future.

Artist Intervention. Men Loving: New Killings

Clive van den Berg

Men are being thrown off rooftops in Syria and Iraq. Accused of being gay by members of ISIS, they are blindfolded and bound and then pitched to the streets below where crowds of men and boys wait with piles of stones.

The killers photograph these murders from the tops of buildings or from the pavement. The photographs are then published by ISIS and form part of a visualized ideology skillfully disseminated through their own publications and released on other news platforms. Clive van den Berg has been working from these images. They are appalling, difficult to look at, as much for the immediacy of the individual tragedies as for

the fact that these men cannot be mourned. Unnamed and unnameable, they are denied any connection with familial and social fabrics, leaving the photographs taken by the killers as the dominant public record of their deaths. Clive van den Berg discusses his recent sculptural commemorations of these events.

Moderated by Erica Avrami

Panel One: Prewar From the 2016 Fitch Colloquium: Preservation and War

Lucia Allais, Assistant Professor of Architecture, Princeton University
Leila A. Amineddoleh, Founding and Managing Partner at Amineddoleh & Associates
David Gissen, Professor of Architecture, California College of the Arts
Laurie W. Rush, Cultural Resources Manager and Archaeologist, US Department of Defense
Tim Winter, Research Chair of Cultural Heritage, Deakin University

Friday, September 30, 2016

ERICA AVRAMI: Professor Winter, you spoke about issues of national narratives and the way heritage can be exploited as a propagandist tool, and others as well commented on heritage being a victim of propaganda. Professor Gissen reminded us that heritage is in fact propaganda itself. We are trying to identify and protect monuments from trauma, yet they can be inherent contributors to conflict, tension, and injustices.

Young professionals entering this field are faced with a set of tools that have defined the conventional core of preservation: listing, designation, tools bearing the traditional vocabulary of preservation. How can emerging professionals transform the field to effectively respond to the contemporary challenges of preservation that are laid bare in these conflict situations?

LEILA A. AMINEDDOLEH: The recent acknowledgment that the destruction of heritage is linked to the loss of human life is becoming stronger through data coming from terrorist organizations: the destruction of sites is used as a propaganda tool for the growth of terrorist organizations. Law enforcement officials, agents, attorneys, and people working in the field recognize how important it is to stop the destruction, far more than the UN or its member states.

LUCIA ALLAIS: Heritage is propaganda and relies on the propaganda value of objecthood—of things that can be listed. Why is our preservation vocabulary articulated in such old-fashioned language? There's no need to limit the preservation of heritage to objects. For example, today's conversation showed alternate ways of drawing the Silk Road that reflect more accurately what preservationists do when they engage conversations on significance rather than decisions on singular things. Architectural practices that evolve past the designation of objects make

The Spanish Civil War and Cultural Heritage



Figure 1. Destruction of the Alcázar de Toledo, Military Academy, in 1936. *Journal Reconstrucción*, 9 Madrid, 1941.

For the majority of the world, the twentieth century cannot be conceived disassociated from war. This short century begins, as noted by British historian Eric Hobsbawm, in 1914 with World War I, and ends in 1991 with the fall of communism.¹ It has had one or more war conflicts opened at once, always with serious international implications.

The years of greatest intensity were those from 1914 to 1945, with two world wars. In between them, from 1936 to 1939, the Spanish Civil War took place, in which a group of rebel militaries backed by the country's most radical right-wing groups rose against the democratic government of the Republic. Despite its strict location within Spain, it was a phenomenon with deep international roots in which we find foreign influences: Russia and Mexico provided assistance to the Spanish Republic, Germany and Italy to the military rebels against it; France and England adopted neutral position, while International Brigades fighters from different countries, including the United States, fought on the Republican side. These issues would make it a clear prelude to World War II, which would break out within a few months after the end of the Spanish Civil War.

But this war was primarily a confrontation between Spaniards, whose ideological and religious convictions radicalized until fellow citizens became irreconcilable enemies. At its base, issues such as religion, education, freedom, material and moral progress, property, and privileges of class were at stake. In this dynamic, global capitalism and communism were not allies in a determined manner against fascism, as they would be shortly after in the rest of Europe.

In this conflict, as in other European wars of the twentieth century, the destruction of the past, or rather the social mechanisms linking the individual's experience with previous generations, was one of the most characteristic phenomena, and the damage to cultural heritage was particularly serious.

The Spanish Civil War was extraordinary, in part, because during the armed conflict measures were taken in the two Spains to protect and restore heritage in danger of destruction. The institutions established at that time and their functioning should be considered extraordinary. Their study should cover diverse aspects such as destruction, dispersion, conservation measures, damage assessment, recovery and restoration of the



Figure 2. La República Española, bas-relief of Ricardo Boix, 1932. Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia.

affected goods, and, finally, the management of the memory of the events.

After the first days of the military uprising in July 1936, Spain was divided in two: one loyal to the constitutional government of the Republic and one occupied by the military and their supporters. The physical limits dividing both sides would change with the evolution of the conflict until the final victory of the rebels.

In the first area, the Republican one, originated what has been defined as the period of dual power (referring to the situation established between the people and the republican institutions). The reality is that the anarchist and socialist unions became the real masters, with an almost disjointed state apparatus, because the only path the government had left was to support the popular defense initiative with weapons. The occupation of convents and palaces packed with art, along with the burning of churches, as symbols of those who rebelled,



Figure 3. General Franco and others military rebels in Burgos, 1936.

were the immediate reasons behind the creation of the Board of Confiscation and Protection of the Artistic Treasure. The establishment of this board took place thanks to the concern of a group of mostly communist party members organized as the Alliance of Antifascist Intellectuals. The board developed an important task in the conservation of cultural property outside the Ministry of Education, which had no means or capacity for action.

The situation normalized in early 1937 when the restoration phase of the State and liquidation of the revolutionary powers in favor of the government was completed. The Ministry of Education then was able to set the structure that would govern the policy of fine arts and heritage conservation until the end of the war, through the creation of the Central Board of Artistic Treasures.

Indeed, 1937 was marked by two cultural events of great public importance: the Spanish participation in the international exhibition "Arts and Techniques of Modern Life," held in Paris, and the celebration of the International Congress of Antifascist Writers, meeting in Valencia. However, the military setbacks suffered by the Republic from the autumn of 1937, and the bitterness of the political struggle within their field, came to set back the work of communists in the ministry when administrative centralization was almost complete and was beginning to reap the fruits of that work.

Madrid was an exceptional case in the territory that remained in the Republican area, both for the importance of the movable and immovable property that was in the city, as well

as for the significance of the capital itself, which attracted the siege of the rebel army and air bombardments that led to the removal of the government to Valencia in November 1936. The picture that was formed in the long thirty-three months of war had a particular accent on cultural heritage.

The Board of Confiscation and Protection of the Artistic Treasure came to Madrid to protect existing artwork in buildings seized by political and union organizations mobilized in defense of the Republic. Installed in the convent of the Descalzas Reales, the Board was divided into a number of committees and working groups dedicated to visit, seize, and transfer assets at risk, thus establishing a regulation that would last (with slight modifications) until the end of war.²

The government suspended restorations both ongoing and scheduled. Regular inspection of works by conservation architects and other members of the Superior Artistic Treasury Board could not be performed normally. However, the new conditions required performing other jobs of even higher intensity. These included safeguarding measures, photographic archiving, inventorying personal seized property, dissemination and awareness activities such as printing brochures, posters, and signs for monuments, and armed surveillance; the protection of property endangered by the war, mainly museums, libraries, and buildings, the construction of tank refuges for storage of movable goods, and the transfer of the most important collections, uniquely those in Madrid; and the takedown, protection, and transfer of property located on the front lines or affected by bombings.

In the Prado Museum of Madrid, protection measures were carried out starting in October 1936. When fear became reality and the bombing of the museum and the Academy of Fine Arts began, an affidavit was raised documenting the damages. Thus began one of the most unique episodes of the Civil War: the evacuation of the most significant works of the main art gallery in the country. A symbolic and risky transfer was carried out with the limited means that were available, first to Valencia and then to Barcelona, Figueras, and Cartagena, before, finally, Switzerland. This event, known by the League of Nations, would serve as the basis of the evacuation of the treasures of the Louvre Museum toward the south at the beginning of World War II.

The monuments protection work was carried out by various agencies: city halls, the Works and Fortifications Command, and the Reform, Reconstruction, and Sanitation Committee of Madrid, which operated under the Ministry of Public Works. It was a joint, collaborative effort that intervened in the protection of various monuments in Madrid. In Valencia, the capital at the time of the Republic, adaptation work was carried out in

the Torres de Serranos and the Colegio del Patriarca to hold the works that were being moved from Madrid.

As explained in 1937 by Josep Renau, managing director of fine arts to the League of Nations in Paris, two facts were key to the heritage protection in Spain during the war: the popular collaboration and the technical measures adopted for conservation. These two issues that discoursed in parallel, sometimes intermingled with exciting results. It is true, also in his words, that "some intellectuals couldn't find themselves in the democratic turmoil posed by the popular reaction against the military coup," and also added that "almost from one day to the next, the Republican cultural policy had to change sign. It no longer conjoined under modules emerged from liberal and well-meaning brains."³ The personal and political commitment of politicians and technicians would end up dragging them, during the sinking of the Republic, toward exile or assimilation in the new state, although we cannot know for sure, due to the lacerations and internal waivers that occurred during the war.

In nationalist Spain—that is, the region occupied by military rebels—the period of civil war also should be considered an extraordinary situation, with the creation of the Committee of Culture and Education.

In a first stage, running from October 1936 to January 1938, rules with military background and form were established in relation to the artistic heritage. The most important were those issued in December 1936 for the creation of the Boards of Historical Culture and Artistic Treasure in charge in each province, and in January 1937 for the organization of the Vanguard Artistic Service, which was responsible for the rescue of buildings and the collection and custody of works of art in the liberated areas. These boards, installed in the rear lines, were ordered to collect data on heritage damage since the proclamation of the Republic in 1931.

The Vanguard Artistic Service counted a total of forty-four agents by June 1937. They were teachers, architects, archivists, painters, and collectors, all of whom had limited means. The remaining agents were placed on reserve and waited for the takedown of Madrid. The following was said of these agents:

Agents were as close to the villages to be conquered as the military commanders allowed them, and used as comprehensive data as were provided by the Directorate concerning existing works of art, found private collections, etc.

Once the villages were conquered, they collected the scattered art that had been stored or delivered for safeguarding, using receipts for each of them. The architects organized the rescue of endangered buildings, staying behind when their services were needed, which led to the

high proportion of architect agents in Toledo. When necessary they sealed notable buildings.⁴

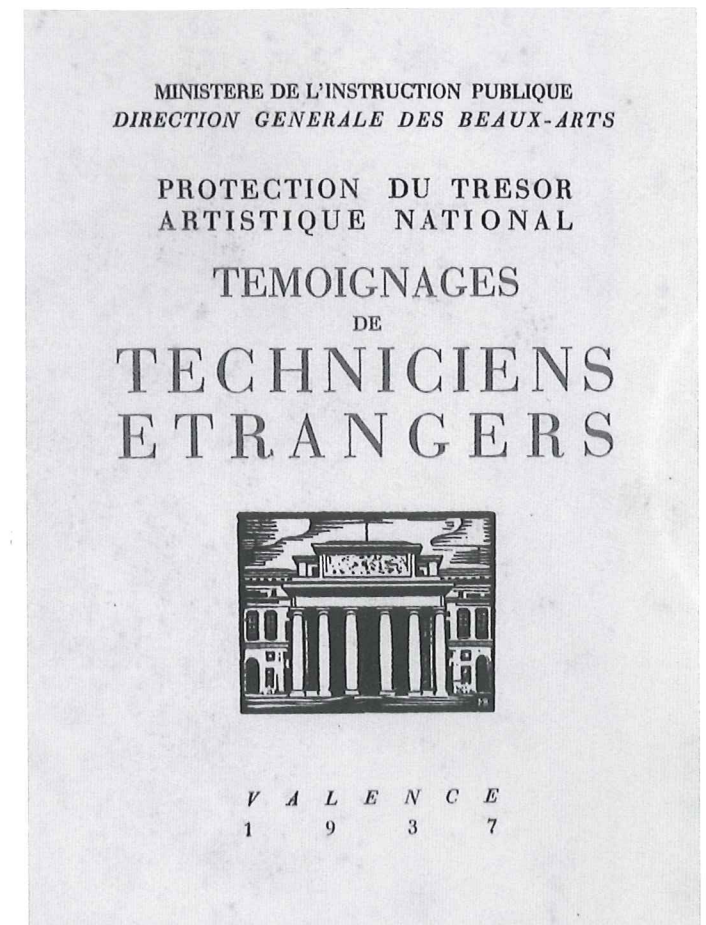
The criterion used by the Vanguard Artistic Service was to not undertake any full protection of monuments or to remove from its place elements whose destruction was possible. Therefore they covered only the smaller and most important areas, such as doorways or glass windows. They, however, only acted in places of utmost importance. Regarding the movable heritage, it was decided, in view of the experience of the deposits found in the Republican zone, that only the essentials would be moved, and such a move would be done in order of danger and importance, first to temporary shelters and then to their final storage facilities.

In a second stage, which ran from April 1938 to January 1940, the administration of the new state was organized into a series of ministries. The fine arts fell under the purview of the Ministry of National Education, which had an appellation similar to the one used at the time by countries such as Germany, Italy, Portugal, and France. A number of provisions during this period addressed the protection of heritage, since the confidence in victory, based on the progress of rebel troops, forced them to take measures that had the dual purpose of regulating an extraordinary situation caused by the Civil War and move on the future of the new state. For this reason was created the Service of Defense of the National Artistic Heritage, with the goal of organizing the recovery tasks of artistic heritage and ensuring the state protection of monuments.

The work and dedication during the sixteen months that Pedro Muguruza was in charge of the service were of great intensity, although had poor results. Most of the efforts by those responsible were consumed in the organization of the service and with finding ways to provide resources to the zone commissariats into which the service was divided. They also put great effort into foreign propaganda through visits of foreign guests to counteract Republican propaganda and domestic war routes; small urgent conservation actions on damaged monuments during the fights, including to the Cathedral of Sigüenza; and the recovery of heritage dispersed by the war. However, time was still found to prepare a draft bill of the defense of National Artistic Heritage, although it was never approved.

In August 1938 rules were dictated on how zone commissioners should govern. Months later alternate commissioners were added to the service, as were the so-called Agents of Artistic Recovery in the Vanguard Artistic Service and the Assistant Advisors of Artistic Recovery. None of the commissariats were provided with the means necessary to carry out work of any substance, an issue that contrasted with the attention

Figure 4. Board of Confiscation and Protection of Artistic Treasure, Madrid, 1937. Documento de archivo. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Signatura.



received by the Devastated Regions Service, which was created following the Belgian example after World War I and that perhaps best represented the scope and objectives of the National Movement.

Regarding interventions on monuments, it should be emphasized the almost total absence of financial means to address repairs. Private donations, however, allowed the restoration of the Cathedral of Sigüenza by the architect Leopoldo Torres Balbás, which had been seriously damaged by the nationalists when Republican forces had taken refuge in it. The damage was explained by stating that "it had fallen like one more man."⁵

In other cases, agents were able only to avoid imminent ruins by tackling them with the available means. During 1938, works in the Torre del Salvador and the Cathedral of Teruel were addressed, while at the Cathedral of Huesca the apse was repaired, the collapse of which was threatening the cathedral's important altarpiece. Economic investments were almost always symbolic, but propagandists spun it a different way. For instance, the choice of Teruel as emblematic city, even for monument interventions, was brought to light in a radio talk broadcasted by Radio Zaragoza in late 1938.

Another activity to which notable efforts were dedicated was the programming of areas to occupy. In Catalonia, from December 1938, following reports of people with affinity for the new regime in Republican areas, the so-called fifth column, or from those that escaped to areas held by the Nationalists, a detailed plan of occupation was prepared with maps in which the objectives were designed in coordination with the so-called Column of Order and Police. Attention was first placed on heritage museums, archives, and libraries; second, on churches and religious buildings; third, on public buildings; fourth, on collections of a major importance; fifth, on occupied dwellings; sixth, on antique dealers, booksellers, and traders who worked with artistic treasure, and, finally, on storehouses built by the Republic, political parties, and other associations.

The procedure began with the sealing and taking custody of the premises to ensure their safety. It was followed by the transfer of objects to safety and the organization of large storage spaces for the general transfer of recovered artifacts, prior to their inventory and classification for subsequent return. Special concern was required for the large deposits created by the government of the Republic, some of which were the most recent and largest storage spaces.

Between April and November 1939 (that is, from the fall of Madrid to the departure of Muguruza from the Commissariat) the work began of returning to Spain the artistic works that had been removed to Geneva and Paris. The efforts of the new and internationally recognized government were highly effective, especially given the delicate situation in Europe during that time, and found all the support that months earlier the Central Board of Artistic Treasury of the Republic had been denied. To this overseas effort was added the endeavor within Spain for the protection of heritage dispersed throughout the entire Mediterranean corridor, from Girona to Cartagena, and the deposits found in Madrid, which required the planning of a rational system of return that was announced in June 1939.

Aragon was perhaps the region that suffered the most during the civil war. The Aragonese territory saw some of the bloodiest episodes of the three-year conflict, which included the battles of the Ebro and Teruel. After the uprising, the region was divided by the war front that crossed it from north to south, creating an unstable strip that advanced and receded, causing continuous reprisals in towns and cities. This meant that in this region hostilities did not cease throughout the war, to which a harsh repression right after its end would be added.

British historian Anthony Beevor wrote:

Teruel's taking is one of the most horrific episodes of the Spanish Civil War. You have to fight in the streets, filled

Figure 5. Tower of Salvador, Teruel. 1937. *Journal Reconstrucción*, 4 Madrid, 1940.



with rubble, and clear every house with hand grenades and bayonets. Large holes in walls and house floors are opened, through which machine guns are shot and hand grenades are thrown. Stalingrad will not be much worse.⁶

After the war, Aragon appeared first in the statistics for most damaged regions, followed by Catalonia and Madrid, with a volume of destruction similar to that experienced by German capitals after 1945.

These developments partly explain the subsequent relationship of General Franco and the regime of Aragon. If in this region some of the most important and bloody wartime events had developed, the new State made it one of its favorite territories, highlighting it with the appointment of numerous localities adopted by Franco, the first of which being Belchite and afterward Teruel. Indeed, with Belchite a decision was made so that along with the reconstruction of a new town under the guidelines of the General Directorate of Devastated Regions, the ruins of the ancient village destroyed by the battle would be left as a permanent reminder of the war, and at the same time a tribute to the heroes of the pro-Franco side. These

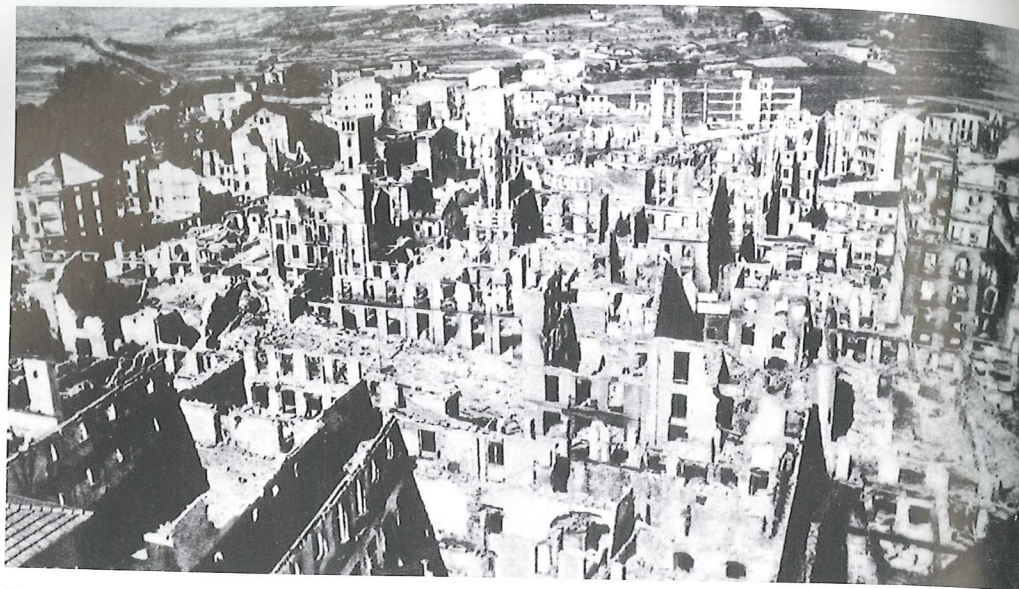


Figure 6. Air raid of German aviation over the city of Guernica, April 1937. *Journal Reconstrucción*, 1 Madrid, 1940.

ruins would carry a symbolic value as portrayed in the journal *Reconstrucción* as a clear example of ideological manipulation that contained the theory behind the value of such ruins.

The propaganda carried out by both sides, using the destruction of heritage as a weapon, was uninterrupted throughout the war, using all available means at their disposal: press, radio, photographic reports, brochures. Numerous were the trips of artists, art critics, and foreign technicians to see what was happening with the Spanish heritage. These trips were used for propagandistic purposes by each side, both to endorse the actions taken by their side and to attest to the destruction by the other. Of all the visits, perhaps the most prominent were the ones made to Catalonia, Valencia, and Madrid by Frederic Kenyon, former director of the British Museum, and by James G. Mann, curator of the Wallace Collection in London, in mid-1937. Both supported the actions that the Republican government was carrying out with articles published in the *Times* and in the journal *Mouseion*, which was dependent on the International Museums Office of the League of Nations.

Underlying these visits, and in the interest of the Spanish cultural authorities, was the verification of the need and results obtained in the transfer of artworks from Madrid to Valencia, which Nationalists had criticized, emphasizing both economic and pillaging dark interests. The Executive Board of Madrid published a brochure that systematically explained the reasons that led to the adoption of the evacuation of artworks from the capital, and Josep Renau presented them to the International Museums Office.

Such reasons included Franco's army's airstrikes, the harsh winter that changed the environmental conditions of

museums, and the lack of premises in Madrid with the proper dimensions and conditions. But beyond technical considerations, as openly admitted, the evacuation was based on political and military reasons by the Republican government. Priority was given to the view that all works of art and objects of value to artistic heritage should be deposited in the site where the government resided. Thus serving as a sign of identity that legitimized the displaced government, on which rested the superior responsibility of safeguarding such objects.

The Central Artistic Treasury Board also agreed to start publishing brochures on its work, opening a front in the propaganda war against the nationalists. Its purpose was to counter the information disseminated abroad by the pro-Franco side but had other important internal purposes, namely to keep the Republican masses up to date with their cultural work and to instill respect for the works of art.

An important issue was born among the victors—that is, the nationalist side—after the war: the need to establish an official history of what had happened in order to legitimize what had been done, hide what was not in their interests, and misrepresent what should not even be ambiguous, which included the destruction, spoliation, and dispersal of assets, the role and performance of the Republic in relation to heritage, and in contrast, the actions taken by the nationalist leadership. So they devoted themselves to the task both within and from outside the Defense Service of National Artistic Heritage.

The nationalist texts written in this regard tried to establish various theses and antitheses in Republican treatment of heritage from each of the two sides, which indicated that the destruction of heritage was an essential phenomenon of the Republic starting from its proclamation. The losses that took place in 1931, 1934, 1936, and throughout the period of the Civil War were said to demonstrate this tendency. Conversely, the new regime was credited with being concerned with the protection and conservation of heritage from the very beginning of the war.

Nationalists pushed the idea that the only interest the Republic showed on heritage was of a material and economic nature. This claim was supposedly supported by pointing out the heritage diaspora and its exit from the national territory, which was said to be done with no intention of protecting but only appropriating heritage, placing it at risk. Furthermore, they argued that the symbolic value and its consideration as a hallmark of defining values were unique to the nationalist camp, which was said to have carried out restorations in different monuments even during the war, while Republicans were accused to have destroyed or endangered them.

Figure 7. Geneva exhibition of masterpieces from the Prado Museum, June–August 1939. Documento de archivo. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Signatura.



Retrato de Maria-Ana de Austria, segunda mujer de Felipe IV, por Velázquez.

EXPOSICION
de las obras maestras del
MUSEO DEL PRADO

bajo los auspicios del Gobierno español, del Consejo federal suizo, del Consejo de Estado de la República y Cantón de Ginebra, y del Consejo administrativo de la Ciudad de Ginebra.

Museo de Arte y de Historia

GINEBRA

JUNIO, JULIO, AGOSTO DE 1939

The winners also stated that the inability to exercise responsible protection by the Republican government bodies and the uncontrolled actions that political parties and unions held on cultural goods were opposite to the interests of the nationalist army and those responsible for heritage. All explanations

against this reality were considered propaganda aimed to arouse international sympathy in those who shared the deplorable democratic reason of the Republic.

Regarding the protection operations carried out by the Republican government, nationalist authorities in rear areas tried to create an illusory sense of normality by giving orders to continue interventions on heritage that the Republic had already started prior to July 1936, all in addition to the interventions on monuments affected by the war.

According to the nationalists, if in the Republican zone some safeguard work was performed, especially in Madrid, it was due to the decisive action of their infiltrators in the structures of the Art Treasury Board, which contradicted the orders of the Republican government and put their lives in grave danger.

Destruction provoked by the nationalist army during the conflict were either silenced or justified as heroic situations or, in the case of Guernica, transferred directly and cynically to Republicans, who were blamed for destroying it on their escape.⁷

The establishment of the previous conclusions by the victors marked the end of an extraordinary period and the start of normality and, paradoxically, more difficulty. The only thing missing, along with fabricating the official history, was to silence the memory of the previous phase, including its protagonists.

The efforts of the Republic in terms of heritage, with the exception of the Artistic Treasure Act of 1933, were buried in the tightest of silences, which have survived to this day, demonstrating its effectiveness. When in 1958 the exhibition “Twenty Years of Monumental Restoration” was held, all conservation interventions made in the period of 1929 to 1936 were inventoried, and this short material was left in a documentation file without receiving any diffusion, perhaps because results were not as impoverishing as had been desired.

To understand the end of the war, a number of situations still have to occur between 1939 and 1942. The intense dispersion during the war of movable heritage required the establishment of criteria and appropriate return procedures, which consumed considerable efforts by the Commissariat. Efforts to recover the assets that had left Spain were completed in several steps. For instance, the second of the two expeditions from Geneva to Madrid occurred a few days after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, and in February 1941, the result of an agreement with France saw the return to Spain of thousands of documents belonging to the Archives of Simancas.

The historical understanding of the Spanish Civil War’s effect on heritage is difficult to achieve because of how records of the time were destroyed by the victors. Although the Spanish Civil War lasted from July 1936 to April 1939, its effects, as is the case with all wars, lasted for a much longer period. For

Spain, the postwar, or the Franco regime, would last until the death of the dictator in 1975 and, to some extent, the problems caused by the historical memory of the conflict persist today.

Biography

Julián Esteban-Chaparría was manager of the Historical Archives of the Architects Institute of Valencian Community until 1981, when he undertook management of the building heritage of the Valencian Government. From 1992 to 2011 he managed the Architecture Service. He is associate professor in the architectonic projects division in Polytechnic University of Valencia. As an architect he has overseen numerous restorations and has also designed new buildings.

Notes

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¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1995).

² José Álvarez Lopera, *La política de bienes culturales del gobierno republicano durante la guerra civil española*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1982).

³ Josep Renau, *Arte en peligro, 1936-39* (Valencia: Ayuntamiento de Valencia, 1980), 16-18.

⁴ Iphe. Archivo de Guerra. 6. Comisión de Cultura y Enseñanza, legajo 43 n° 2. "Nota sobre la actuación de la Comisión de Cultura y Enseñanza, de 10 de junio de 1937," page 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶ Anthony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War 1936-39* (London: Orbis, 1982).

⁷ José Ignacio Casar Pinazo and Julián Esteban Chaparría, coords., *Bajo el signo de la victoria: la conservación del patrimonio durante el primer franquismo (1936-1958)*. (Valencia: Pentagraf, 2008).