

# SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN BABYLON CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CITY



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## Abbreviations Used Throughout this Report

ATHAR	Architectural-Archaeological Tangible Heritage of the Arab Region
BAP	Babylon Archaeological Project
BCA	Babylon Community Association
BDWG	Babylon Documentation Work Group
BSMP	Babylon Site Management Plan
BTBCC	Babylon Tourism Business Contact Committee
CAD	Computer-Aided Design
CEB	Consulting Engineering Bureau
CHU	Container Housing Units
CPA	The Coalition Provisional Authority
CRAST	Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino
DAI	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut or German Archaeological Institute
DGSMI	Directorate General of Geological and Mineral Surveys, Ministry of Industry
DOG	Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft
DPCA	Date Palm Conservancy Area
FCSDIP	Al-Furat Center for Studies and Designs of Irrigation Projects
GIS	Geographical Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICBS	International Committee of the Blue Shield
ICC	International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of Iraq
ICCRPM	International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
LCCHP	Lawyer's Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation
MTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
PC	Provincial Council
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SBAH	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage
SOAH	State Organization of Antiquities and Heritage
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin
WHS	World Heritage Site
WH+ST	World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme
WMF	World Monuments Fund

SECTION I

# Executive Summary



# Principles of the Babylon Site Management Plan (BSMP)

The Babylon Site Management Plan's goal is to provide a values-based organizational framework for Babylon's administration. Grounded in international standards and the national legal structure, but cognizant of the country's challenging realities, it also seeks to become a model for other archaeological sites in Iraq. To be effective, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MTA) should officially adopt the BSMP through its State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH). The SBAH should implement the proposals in conjunction with the Babil Governorate who, in turn, must recognize it as a directive to encase in its development planning and ordinances for greater al-Hillah.

The guiding principles for the BSMP are:

1. Establish the MTA and SBAH as the principal authorities managing the site, with support from and coordination with other agencies, especially the Babil Governorate.
2. Encourage local, national and international stakeholders to work with the SBAH to protect, and conserve the site and its context.
3. Evaluate, manage, and monitor the site as a cultural landscape, respecting the integrity of all its contributing resources.
4. Protect, conserve, and minimize impacts to archaeological fabric, exposed or subterranean, wherever possible.
5. Regulate and coordinate the site's research and excavation potential in conjunction with sound conservation policies.
6. Recognize the site's economic potential through sustainable tourism development for a wide range of interested stakeholders.
7. Provide visitors with sound interpretation based on a quality presentation of the site.
8. Ensure accessibility by establishing transportation routes and services for the broad spectrum of users.

**Opposite: The Southern Palace, a monumental reconstruction built as part of the Saddam Hussein interventions.**

## Organization and Structure

The BSMP consists of a written report enhanced by photographs and graphics, 15 planning maps and several specialized assessments. The Executive Summary contains the guiding principles of the site management plan, challenges related to its assembly and implementation, and summarizes Babylon's historical and current significance.

The second section offers a detailed description of the site through an analysis of the historical context, existing conditions, and character-defining features. It covers the site's location, its archaeological history, and assessments of the built and natural environments. It also identifies a range of stakeholders and sets forth the existing legal protection framework that governs Babylon. Accompanying maps illustrate many of these topics.

Section III explains priorities and objectives, proposing management solutions through text and master planning-type maps organized for cross-reference. These serve to place the results of specialized assessments, commissioned by the SBAH and its partner World Monuments Fund (WMF), in the context of a site management plan that balances preservation with the economic opportunities that are important to many stakeholders.

Section IV, the Action Plan, presents activities supporting the management of Babylon within a twenty-year implementation timetable, systematized into three phases highlighting Babylon's potential nomination for UNESCO's World Heritage List and reviewing Babylon's case according to World Heritage criteria.

## Site History

An imperial capital, center of commerce, art and learning, Babylon was among the largest, early urban settlements in human history and is today one of the world's most significant archaeological sites. Located on the banks of the Euphrates River, 85 kilometers south of Baghdad, Babylon's material remains include portions of temples, palaces, fortification walls, monumental gateways and the ziggurat Etemenanki, the probable inspiration for the biblical Tower of Babel.



Detail from the Code of Hammurabi stela, (circa 1760 B.C.), Louvre, Paris.



*The Tower of Babel*, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1563.

Babylon's legacy was enhanced by Akkadian and Sumerian cultural achievements, which included the cuneiform writing system, a significant tool for today's knowledge of the history and evolution of the region. The earliest known references to the city date to the third millennium B.C.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century B.C. an Amorite leader founded the First Dynasty of Babylon. Its most famous king, Hammurabi (r 1792–1750 B.C.), renowned for his code of laws, made Babylon the capital of an empire stretching from the Arab Gulf to Syria. The Kassite kings who ruled Babylon in the mid-second millennium corresponded with Egypt's pharaoh, their cuneiform letters attesting to the interactions of ancient powers. Astronomy was first elaborated as a science in Babylon, alongside advances in mathematics that would inform all subsequent studies of the stars.

The Assyrians, Babylon's northern neighbors, incorporated the city into their empire but suffered repeated rebellions. Sennacherib sacked the city in 689 B.C.; his son Esarhaddon restored it, but war between his two sons would subject Babylon to another protracted Assyrian siege. In the late seventh century B.C. the Babylonian kings Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II reclaimed Babylon and ruled over much of the Assyrians' former empire. Nebuchadnezzar II rebuilt the city, making it the largest in the world. During his reign, the ziggurat Etemenanki reached over 70 meters high with a temple shrine at its summit.

The historian Herodotus (fifth century B.C.) described and perhaps visited Babylon, as did subsequent Greek scholars who were the first to describe the Hanging Gardens as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Conquered by Cyrus II in 539 B.C., Babylon lost its political supremacy but retained its place as a cultural and commercial capital. In 331 B.C. Alexander the

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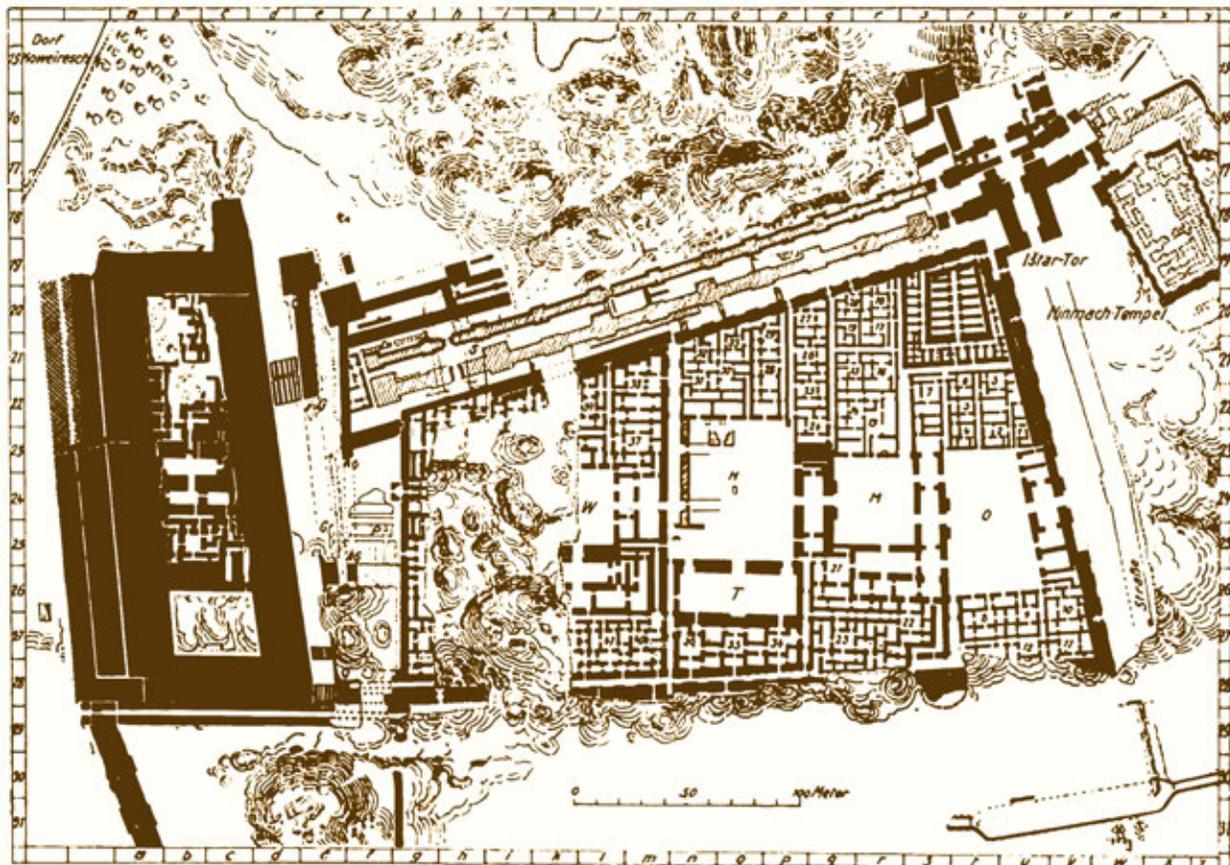
<sup>1</sup> For a general history of the city see J. Oates, *Babylon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986). For a more detailed account covering the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods see John Boardman, et al., eds. *The Cambridge Ancient History* 3 (1), 1982 and 3 (2), 1991.

Great conquered Babylon and planned extensive reconstruction, but died before completing his work to rebuild the Tower of Babel. Babylon and its environs were inhabited throughout the Hellenistic and Parthian periods. There is evidence that the area was populated, albeit sparsely, for centuries afterwards, as the city's fame receded and its ruins abandoned.

Babylon's imagery and narrative have inspired myth, philosophy, art and literature through time and continue today to be a topic of books, song, popular films, and documentaries. The Old Testament offered Babylon's greatness as a cautionary tale, a warning against hubris, idolatry, and the moral laxity linked to the city's wealth. Babylon figures prominently in the Old Testament and the Qur'an mentions it in reference to a tale of angels.<sup>2</sup> The classical and modern references to Babylon in works of art and scholarship are too numerous to mention; the city's artifacts can be seen in museums around the world.

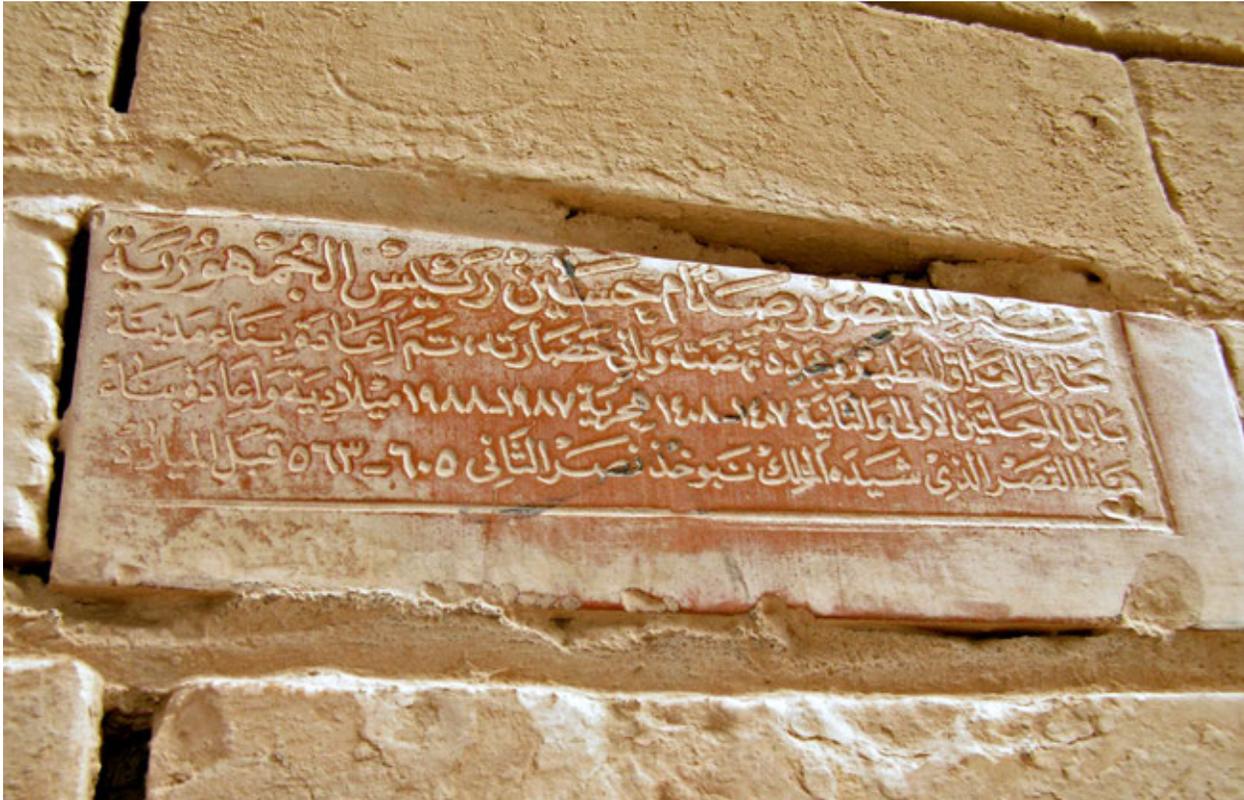
Although travelers explored Babylon over the centuries, Robert Koldewey and the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft from 1899 to 1917 conducted the most extensive systematic excavations that revealed the ancient remains visible today. The German mission's findings and the study of cuneiform texts offer the best indications of the city's size and functions, though Iraqi and foreign excavations since have added much to the archaeological picture.<sup>3</sup> Babylon was the center of an urbanized, agriculture-based state whose rulers diverted the Euphrates River into a network of man-made canals to maximize cultivation of the rich alluvial plain. Farming, using these traditional irrigation techniques, remains a principal occupation of the area.

Robert Koldewey's plan of the Southern Palace with adjoining fortifications, including Ishtar Gate.



2 Sura al-Baqarah (The Cow) 102. The story of Harut and Marut as explained in the Qur'an.

3 Foreign excavation findings are footnoted throughout Chapter 2.



Brick stamped with the following Hussein-era inscription: In the reign of victorious Saddam Hussein—the President of the Republic, the protector of great Iraq, renewer of its renaissance and establisher of its civilization—the reconstruction completed for Babylon in two stages 1407–1408 A-H/1987–1988/A.D. and for this palace, which was originally built by the King Nebuchadnezzar II in 605–563 B.C.

Just as Babylon's ancient kings aligned themselves with the city's vaunted heritage by restoring or erecting monuments, so modern leaders have sought to leave their mark and bask in Babylon's reflected glory. In the late 1950s the 'Abd al-Karim Qasim-led Iraqi government (1958–1963) began redeveloping the site, but it was Saddam Hussein (1979–2003) who commissioned the most wide-ranging interventions.

Inspired by Nebuchadnezzar II, Saddam rebuilt Babylon's ruins as a means of promoting national pride and his self-image, reconstructing Nebuchadnezzar's Southern Palace and creating a hill (Mt. Saddam) topped with a palace of his own. Like Nebuchadnezzar and other ancient kings, Saddam cut canals and lakes and embossed the bricks for his new buildings with his name. Uninformed by conservation techniques these reconstructions have fallen into disrepair, at times bringing parts of the original structures down with them.

Before and after Saddam's interventions Babylon's fabric was drastically altered in modern times, from construction of a railway in the 1920s to digging oil pipelines in the latter half of the twentieth century, incursions through the site were many and often irreversible. The damage continued yet again when Babylon became a military base ('Camp Alpha') for portions of the Coalition Forces in April 2003. The site was handed back to the SBAH on December 2004, still bearing the scars of the occupation.

Like few places on Earth, Babylon has stood at the crossroads of millennia of unfolding history. Its visible remains stand as signposts on the path of humanity's creative imagination, marking its achievements and its follies. Together with a landscape shaped by the Euphrates River, Babylon's legacy is that of a civilization interacting closely with its natural environment, a center of government, religion, and scholarship.



Installing crack monitors at the Ishtar Gate

## The Future of Babylon Project

In 2005 the United States Department of State, Cultural Heritage Centre funded a project to develop a site management plan for Babylon. This initiative, known as The Future of Babylon Project, is a collaborative and values-based program spearheaded by the SBAH in partnership with WMF and in consultation with a variety of stakeholders within Babylon, the Babil Province, and the country as a whole.

The project's goal is to produce a site management plan for Babylon as a cultural landscape and archaeological city founded on international charters that the SBAH can efficiently implement and maintain. While taking Iraq's political context into account the plan reflects global heritage management trends, including the expanded concept and scope of heritage, and the participation of new groups in heritage-related decisions.<sup>4</sup>

At WMF's request, the SBAH established an oversight committee and work group to support the BSMP's production. The Future of Babylon Committee's members, appointed by SBAH's then Acting Chairman Mr. Qais Rashed, include archaeologists and engineers from the Babil Inspectorate and the SBAH central office in Baghdad. The Committee is responsible for dealing with authorities and entities related to the project, including the Babil Governorate.

In 2009, the Future of Babylon Committee prioritized six areas in the site's core for intervention: the renowned Ishtar Gate, Nabu-sha-Hare, Ishtar and Ninmah temples, the Babylonian houses, and the Inner City Walls (sections to the north and northeast). Identifying these areas involved a thorough examination of the site alongside documentation and data collection, including a building inventory. During the process, the SBAH showed an interest in approaching Babylon not just as an archaeological site but also as an evolving cultural landscape embracing the entire span of its history, including aspects of the 20th-century reconstructions.

In 2011 the Future of Babylon project entered a new phase of intervention developing and implementing stabilization and conservation strategies targeting the priority sites and in support of the BSMP. Thanks to additional funding from the United States Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, conservation of several priority areas has begun and will continue through 2014.

<sup>4</sup> For further information see Marta De la Torre et al., *Heritage Values in Site Management: Four Case Studies*. (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2005), 3-6.

## The Need for a Babylon Site Management Plan (BSMP) and Challenges of Implementation

Conserving a site of such value is complicated by many factors, including the lack of extensive original architecture and pertinent archaeological data. Babylon has suffered from relatively little academic attention in recent decades owing to political conditions (Iraq–Iran War, 1980–1988; Gulf War, 1990–1991; UN sanctions, 1990–2003; Coalition Forces Invasion 2003) that likewise contributed to its inaccessibility to cultural tourism. A combination of exploitation and neglect has left the archaeological site in urgent need of documentation and conservation. A rising water table threatens extant monuments and unexcavated remains and unlicensed construction has dramatically and detrimentally altered the landscape. The presence of the Coalition Forces at Babylon drew international attention to the site and indeed led to numerous discussions about the need for improved understanding and protection of cultural sites in times of conflict.

The project's primary goal is to devise a site management plan for Babylon (BSMP) based on the principles mentioned above. The plan's assembly and implementation relies on the involvement of stakeholder groups or their representatives, those ultimately responsible for the site's future. This inclusive approach differs significantly from Babylon's former twentieth-century management strategies.

During Baath Party rule, Babylon was ostensibly the concern of the SOAH (the State Organization of Antiquities and Heritage, now the SBAH) but it was actually Saddam Hussein's direct domain. Babylon was pressed into the service of political propaganda to legitimize and promote his regime. Babylon became a backdrop for patriotic spectacle; Saddam's 'Babylon International Festival' billed as a culture event, was essentially intended to glorify the Iraqi President himself.<sup>5</sup>



An interior courtyard at Nabu-sha-Hare Temple before the project initiated stabilization activities.

5 John Curtis, "The Site of Babylon Today," eds. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Seymour, *Babylon: Myth and Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 213-216.

Saddam's reconstructions were uninformed by archaeological findings or the painstaking exigencies of conservation. His fascination with the era of Nebuchadnezzar II left the bulk of the city's history in the shadows; archaeologists were not encouraged to develop their understanding of other epochs. The work, although extensive, was less an attempt to study and highlight the site's history than to guarantee Saddam's place in a long line of kings.<sup>6</sup> Nor was Saddam overly concerned with his 'subjects'; the building of his luxury palace atop Mount Saddam necessitated the removal of the village of Kweiresh whose generational inhabitants were offered a meager recompense for relocation.

Babylon's management was placed in the hands of a small group of loyalists whose authority was unquestioned since they acted on the president's orders. His agenda determined what was conserved, interpreted, or in many cases, destroyed. In the midst of Saddam-era interventions in 1982, the SOAH nominated Babylon for consideration as a World Heritage Site (WHS); a decision was deferred. This attempt and two subsequent requests in 1985 and 1991 presented Babylon as a static archaeological site whose history and cultural significance derived from materials and structures excavated in the center of the ancient city. Babylon was denied requests for nomination as a WHS based on several issues, including a concern for the site's authenticity and incomplete boundary and buffer descriptions.<sup>7</sup>

Preserving and managing Iraqi heritage sites have become more difficult in the intervening years. The threats to Babylon include rising groundwater (affecting both excavated and unexcavated archaeology) weighty reconstructions that are destroying extant monuments, and communities within proposed site boundaries and buffers that are growing unchecked. Handling these problems is complicated by institutional constraints within the SBAH and conflicts with provincial and central governments.

**Where stood Kweiresh Village, Saddam Hussein erected his palace on an artificial hill overlooking the archaeological remains of Nebuchadnezzar II's Northern Palace.**



6 David Simonowitz, "Head Trips: An Intertextual Analysis of Later Architecture and Sculpture Under Saddam Hussein," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, Vol. 1, no.1 (February 2012), 73-74.

7 ICOMOS, Evaluation of Babylon #278 (June 1983), 1-3; UNESCO, Report of the Rapporteur for the World Heritage Committee, 7th ordinary session, Florence, Italy (December 1983) 11, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1983/sc-83-conf009-8e.pdf>



At Ishtar Gate masonry additions from the 1980s produced lateral forces that cracked a section of brickwork.

Years of professional isolation from international peers alongside decades of war account for the diminished skills and experience of many SBAH staff. Another aspect of Saddam's legacy is a fraught work environment, where decision-making has long been avoided since the wrong choice could mean a lost job or worse and teamwork has not been encouraged.

Cooperation between central and regional Iraqi governments is likewise rare. Conflicts between SBAH staff and Babil Governorate officials are common due to differing opinions regarding authority and intentions toward Babylon. Forging a cooperative agreement among stakeholders in Babylon's best interests poses a considerable challenge to both the assembly and implementation of Babylon's site management plan.

Iraq's shifting political grounds and competition between regional and national authorities impacts decisions—or the lack thereof—regarding the site. As ministries change hands, so does the SBAH's structure, which in turn affects the Future of Babylon project, the Future of Babylon Committee currently charged with project oversight and the proposed inter-agency committee and site manager who will be responsible for implementing the BSMP (*see* Volume Two). These inter-institutional difficulties, like all work in Iraq, must be negotiated in an unsafe environment, as the threat of violence continues to hinder progress.

The BSMP seeks to reconcile these challenges and constraints as well as build consensus in an emerging democracy. It provides a foundation for guiding and regulating future interventions, proposing sustainable strategies for conservation management, tourism and risk preparedness. The realities of modern Iraq impose a pointed pragmatism; yet assessing these realities in the field constitutes a major step towards the plan's realization. Interactions with an array of individuals from farmers and high functionaries to entrepreneurs, professionals, academics and concerned citizens of every age reveal an inspiring common ground: pride in Babylon as an indication of Iraq's role in the history of civilization is perhaps more meaningful now than ever.

As the country recovers from a destructive cycle of history, its heritage sites are recognized as assets to the nation's reinvention. It is generally accepted that a revived Babylon will attract tourists, media and academic interest, raising Iraq's cultural profile and reopening it to the world. The BSMP brings these goals into focus and will additionally form the basis of a solid and hopefully successful application for Babylon's nomination as a UNESCO WHS.

## Methodology for Assembling the Babylon Site Management Plan

The BSMP content and character reflect the values of the SBAH and other stakeholders as well as the shared visions of the SBAH and WMF. Determining and formulating these values, as well as coming to consensus on decisions included in the BSMP, has been the focus of fieldwork from 2009 to the present.

Management planning is a collaborative process requiring trust and mutual understanding. In Babylon this means forging alliances between entities that have rarely, if ever, reached agreement on issues involving values-based directives. Beneficially managing Babylon is nonetheless a strong motivation shared by all stakeholders. Given this climate, the methodology employed in assembling the plan encompassed a variety of strategies to better understand and document the site while fostering creative engagement and building capacity.

### Identifying stakeholders and developing partnerships

Babylon's stakeholders are numerous and disparate, ranging from international organizations to provincial governments, from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MTA) to local farmers. The BSMP methodology includes recognizing these individuals and entities and engaging them wherever possible. While preserving Babylon is the principal concern, the potential financial benefits of the site are important to the Iraqi people. A successful BSMP will offer valid means for enhancing the quality of life of local communities; if Babylon contributes to their well being, they in turn will be motivated to safeguard its enduring viability.<sup>8</sup> Such equitable inclusion of stakeholders will ensure the BSMP's sustainability and is therefore the foundation of the values-based approach.

WMF assisted the SBAH with stakeholder identification and outreach beyond local government to include members of communities in, around and/or using the site. In the Middle East communities near archaeological sites are typically viewed in a negative light, as land encroachers and potential thieves. The BSMP instead aimed to identify opportunities to engage

local communities in the site's development and protection in mutually beneficial ways.

SBAH former Acting Chairman Qais Rashed supported the process and encouraged the SBAH to relinquish their traditional top-down approach in favor of greater community participation and cooperation. Despite differing views concerning Babylon's management, stakeholder outreach helped broaden the collective understanding of the site's values.



**Babylon's survival depends on forging improved relations between national and regional government agencies.**

<sup>8</sup> His Highness the Aga Khan for the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme, "Protecting the Past, Inspiring the Future, *Strategies for Urban Regeneration*, ed. Philip Jodidio (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2011), 7-11.

## Site conditions assessment

With WMF's guidance, the SBAH performed condition assessments including inventories and analyses inspired by master-planning strategies used at other historic cities. The process of identifying the site's resources and their condition proved instructive since these issues had been treated superficially, if at all. In cases where data was limited, the WMF commissioned research from outside consultants. Compiling this data deepened the SBAH's understanding of the site in a comprehensive, holistic context while fostering a methodical and analytical approach to decision-making.

## Capacity building

Building capacity within the SBAH is a vital aspect of the Future of Babylon project, to develop, implement and sustain the BSMP. To this end, WMF has organized on-site shadow training with expert consultants, classroom experiences and off-site comparative site management workshops.

Local know-how is preferred when available, not just for the cost advantages but to expand the SBAH's contact network. In the case of the hydrological study, The Future of Babylon Committee chose Consulting Engineering Bureau (CEB), a consortium from the Department of Engineering, Baghdad University, who provided up-to-date studies concerning the impact of and solutions for addressing rising groundwater in the context of archaeological sites. When the need arose for a total station, WMF obtained the equipment and engaged Babil University to offer instruction to SBAH personnel on how to use it.

In 2010, CyArk, an Oakland, California-based firm, was engaged to produce laser-scan documentation of two priority monuments slated for restoration, Ishtar Gate and Nabu-sha-Hare Temple.<sup>9</sup> Two engineers from the SBAH Babylon Documentation Work Group (BDWG) subsequently traveled to Oakland for advanced training in how to extract drawing data from the scans. The engineers returned to Iraq and began creating a detailed documentation package of plans, elevations and sections for the priority sites.

The WMF team is meanwhile building its own capacity to comprehend the management challenges facing the SBAH. Over time the WMF team has come to understand the staff's concerns for themselves and their families, jobs and country and to know them as individuals, building the mutual trust essential to the project's progress.

## Comparative planning workshops

Comparative planning workshops held in Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, and Northern Iraq illustrated the challenges and opportunities of other WHS while establishing linkages with professionals in neighboring countries. These workshops inspired enthusiastic dialogue while helping build capacity. Sensitive BSMP topics, such as working with local government and other stakeholders were more easily broached in this context.

Workshops were initially framed around regional archaeological sites with various site



**An Ishtar Gate condition assessment conducted by Babylon Committee members, frequent on-site visits by policymakers brought more informed management decisions.**

<sup>9</sup> Funding for this initiative was provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.



Babylon Committee members at the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük, Turkey shared their concerns with its heritage managers.

management issues. SBAH and WMF were able to interact with site managers on an individual basis to understand the various assets and liabilities found at each site. Many sites were either recognized by UNESCO as a WHS or were in the process of getting WHS listing. At Çatalhöyük, Turkey the processing of identifying site significance was begun. This was continued in Beirut, Lebanon where both the SBAH and WMF worked together to compile a tentative list amendment and statement of significance for UNESCO based on the definition of Babylon as both a cultural landscape and archaeological city. In Northern Iraq efforts focused on transferring content generated during the planning process into GIS-based maps.

### Site planning methodology

Following international practice, the size and complication of Babylon required detailed central area and sub-area planning for clusters of properties and communities sharing common identity and purpose. Methods included site surveys towards defining these areas in order to address their use and needs not to mention operational processes such as budgeting and human resource commitments through implementation in three stages: Phase One, lasting one to five years; Phase Two, six to eleven years; and Phase Three, twelve to twenty years.

### Values-based mapping

Values-based mapping served to illustrate the site's historical layers and character-defining features, while broaching various issues and provoking the responses and decisions necessary to advance the project. This involved generating fifteen GIS-based (Geographic Information Systems) draft maps of the site highlighting different features and presenting the maps to the SBAH for comment and revision. Subsequent drafts incorporated SBAH feedback and WMF suggestions until both partners agreed upon a final version.

GIS software offers a clear, location-based visualization and a strong analytic and modeling framework. For example, by mapping possible visitor routes or excavation sites and overlaying these with other stakeholders' mapped values (for commercial locations, for instance) conflicts and/or matches are identified. Aside from documenting the planning process itself, these maps reveal new datasets to inform future proposals and decisions.

### Defining Babylon's significance

Defining the site's sources of significance was necessary in order to establish appropriate management strategies.<sup>10</sup> Determining how to refer to the site, based on its significance, was a major step. The SBAH approved the official title: 'The Babylon Cultural Landscape and Archaeological City' and its implication that recent layers of history will figure in the conservation, interpretation, education, and management planning. Acknowledging the site's evolving as opposed to static significance represents a profound shift from previous interpretations and an important project accomplishment. The notion of a cultural landscape and the possibilities it embodies has become the topic of fruitful dialogue and debate between the SBAH and other stakeholders.

<sup>10</sup> De la Torre et al., 3-6.

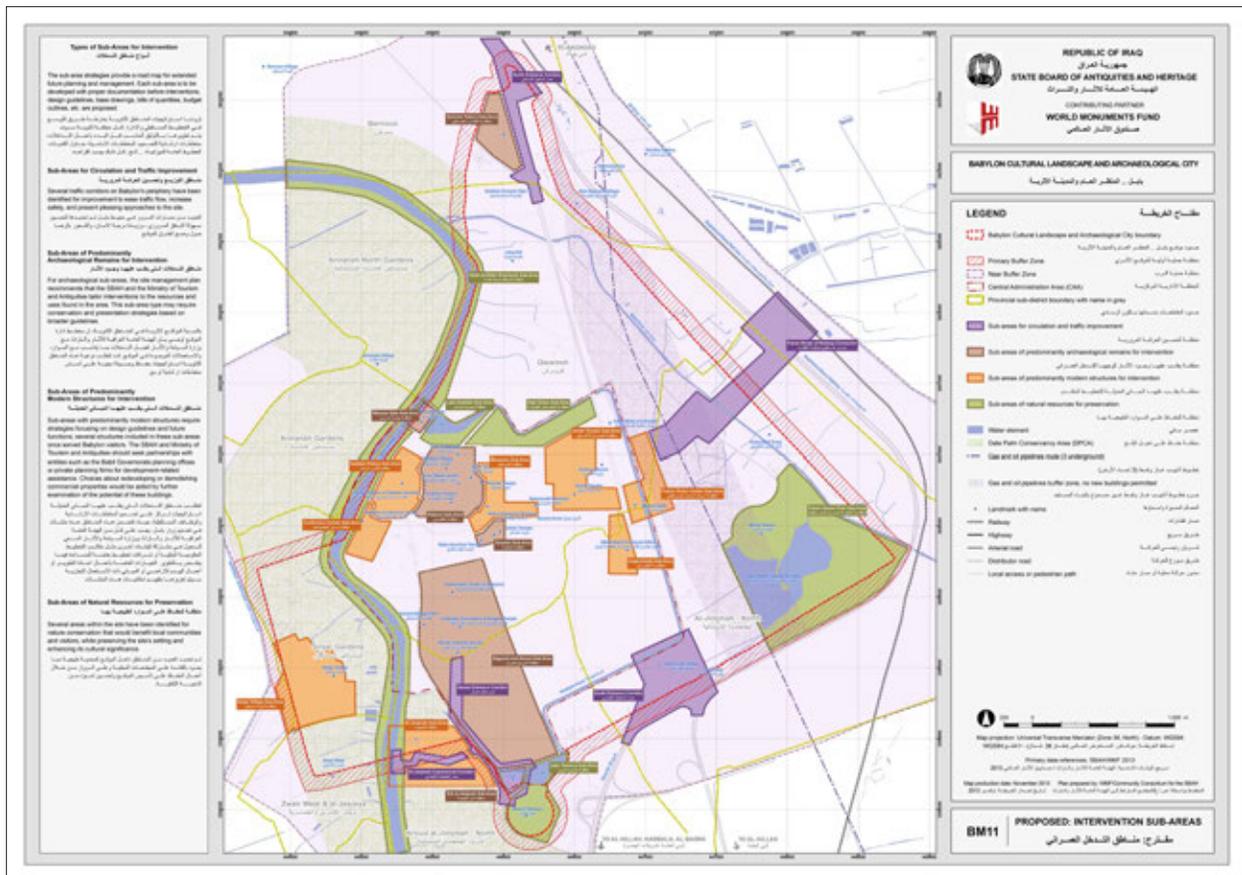
# Importance of 'Babylon Cultural Landscape and Archaeological City'

In the recent past, Babylon was defined by narrow historical periods that glorified political agendas rather than expanding scholarly knowledge regarding the site's function and significance over time. Management strategies focused on a few well-known monuments dating to the Neo-Babylonian period.

Babylon's value is up for review, both in the context of today's Iraq, a nation attempting to rebuild itself, and for the purposes of the site management plan, a means of reviving a national heritage. The process of formulating an expanded definition encompassing the earliest archaeological remains up to the most recent activities, led to renaming the site the 'Babylon Cultural Landscape and Archaeological City'. This acknowledges Babylon as an evolving landscape, whose modern features figure in the management plan alongside ancient ones.

A re-envisioned Babylon fulfills UNESCO criteria for heritage significance (see Action Plan) while emphasizing contemporary Babylon's value both as a national icon in a time of recovery and as a much-needed source of livelihoods, particularly for local communities. Iraq incorporated the resolutions of 1992 World Heritage Convention into its national law (along with the 1954 Hague Convention and 1979 UNESCO convention resolutions) as the legal basis for Babylon's protection as an eventual WHS. By joining the World Heritage Convention, Iraq agreed to ensure the 'protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage' within their territory through 'effective and active measures.'<sup>11</sup> The BSMP offers a comprehensive program encompassing the measures required to advance that purpose.

The management plan also comprises 15 detailed maps that became the foundation and complement for assembly of this written report.



11 UNESCO, *World Heritage Convention* (November, 1972) articles 4, 5, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>.

This document is a summary overview of “Site Management Plan: Babylon Cultural Landscape and Archaeological City.” To request access to full PDFs of the 236-page report, its 360-page appendices, and 16 accompanying maps, contact World Monuments Fund at [wmf@wmf.org](mailto:wmf@wmf.org).