

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed: We Do Not Deserve The Artifacts

[Here.](#)

He deplores ISIS, but does not connect ISIS to the general contempt that Islam inculcates for everything that is not Islam, and especially for all that preceded it, that is in what Muslims call the Time of Ignorance, or Jahiliyya. For all of his relative outspokenness, Abdulrahman Al-Rashed cannot bring himself – how could he, really, given where he lives, given his position in the world? – to connect the destruction by ISIS of libraries, the libraries of Aramaic manuscripts and books, the statues in museums in Mosul toppled and smashed, the entire cities razed – Khatra, Khorasabad) to all the other destruction wrought not by ISIS but by the Taliban (the Kabul Museum, the Bamiyan Buddhas), or not by ISIS or the Taliban but by ordinary Muslim Arabs (as those who looted the Baghdad Museum, or burned down the library of Egyptiana just off Tahrir Square), including those who, under the supposedly secular “Western rule” of Jordan, destroyed so many Jewish antiquities, including every synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem, and uprooted ancient tombstones from the cemetery on the Mount of Olives to line the latrines of the Jordanian Army). And then there are the centuries of vandalizism, looting, razing of Hindu temples and temple complexes, the destruction of Buddhist stelae, the continued destruction of Roman ruins in North Africa and Lebanon, and of non-Muslim monuments and libraries and statues all the way from Morocco to the East Indies.,

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed cannot mention the Hadith in which Muhammad says he will not enter a house in which there are statues. Nor does he mention all the other Hadith that inculcate the belief that everything associated with Unbelief, or even if it is associated with Belief (that is, Muslim

Belief) should be destroyed if it might be the object of veneration (think of what the Wahhabis have done, over the last century, in Mecca itself, destroying not only old Ottoman forts, but buildings associated with Muhammad himself) or, still worse, pilgrimage other than that to Mecca and the Ka'aba.

He can't bring himself to comprehend what Islam does to the minds of many of its adherents. He can't say, or believe, that the primitives in any faith far outnumber the advanced, and thus the nature of that faith matters, and they are not all equal, and Islam is the least, as well as the most dangerous, of all of them. It suppresses, it prohibits, many of the normal means of artistic expression. That's why the fabulously rich Gulf Arabs, who would like to admire and have on hand local examples of art, have to construct little Louvres, and rent their art from the West, or buy it for fabulous sums (one way to recycle petrodollars), and hope that it won't be destroyed by local Muslim madmen.

And at the same time as it suppresses artistic expression – save for calligraphy and mosque architecture and an tulip tile or two from Iznik, or Mughal miniatures that violate the strictures of the faith but were allowed, far from the Middle East, because of the protection of local lords– Islam encourages its adherents to destroy the art and artifacts of those of other faiths. What could be worse? What?