

## Rediscovering the Past / The birth of archaeology

The 19th century saw the birth of systematic archaeology. Europeans searched for their cultural roots at home and abroad. New fields of study were created: classical archaeology, Egyptology, Assyriology, and biblical archaeology. Excavations in the Arab and Ottoman world were fundamental. A growing appreciation of pre-classical art broke the monopoly that Greek art had previously held on the public taste. Archaeology and colonialism were inescapably connected. French and Italian soldiers identified with their Roman imperial predecessors. They drew maps, published discoveries in scholarly papers, and used aeroplanes for a new type of archaeological survey. Germany advised the Ottomans on a new railway, opening new areas for archaeology. But were the archaeologists also spying? T. E. Lawrence “of Arabia”, recruited by British military intelligence, encouraged the Arab Revolt.



**Working Number:** DZ 086  
**Name:** Ruins of Cherrhell  
**Holding Museum:** Musée Public National des Antiquités  
**Date:** 1840–1849  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** Scholars systematically made drawings and plans of ancient sites.

---



**Working Number:** SP 049  
**Name:** Egyptian Landscape  
**Holding Museum:** National Museum of Romanticism  
**Date:** 1883  
**Materials:** Oil on canvas  
**Curator Justification:** Published drawings inspired artists to produce paintings blending archaeology with a taste for the exotic.

---



**Working Number:** UK 044  
**Name:** Winged colossus  
**Holding Museum:** The British Museum  
**Date:** 7th century BC  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** Rediscovered cities yielded amazing objects from lost civilisations.

---



**Working Number:** FR 008  
**Name:** Egypt. Mummies found in the kings' tomb in Thebes  
**Holding Museum:** National Library of France  
**Date:** 1870  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** Mummies would become emblematic of Egypt's pharaonic heritage.

---



**Working Number:** JO 003  
**Name:** Petra  
**Holding Museum:** -  
**Date:** Prehistoric-Present; identified in 1812  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** Forgotten Petra became world famous.

---



**Working Number:** IT1 002  
**Name:** An example of Italian colonial propaganda: 'Italy takes up the sword of ancient Rome. To the Italian sailors who are fighting in Tripolitania'  
**Holding Museum:** Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation (ICCD)  
**Date:** 1911–12  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** -  
Archaeology could be put to political as well as scholarly use.

---



**Working Number:** MO 001  
**Name:** Photograph of archaeological excavations at Volubilis  
**Holding Museum:** Conservation of the Archaeological Site of Volubilis  
**Date:** 1915  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** The Arab and Ottoman world is full of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

---



**Working Number:** UA 002  
**Name:** Head of the Great Sphinx, Pyramids of Geezeh July 17th, 1839  
**Holding Museum:** Sharjah Art Museum / Sharjah Museums Authority  
**Date:** Published 1846  
**Materials:** Lithograph  
**Curator Justification:** The pyramids would prove an irresistible attraction for generations of visitors.

---



**Working Number:** TN 091  
**Name:** Amphitheatre at El Jem  
**Holding Museum:** Institut Supérieur d'Histoire Contemporaine de la Tunisie  
**Date:** 19th century  
**Materials:** Paper  
**Curator Justification:** The Arab and Ottoman world is home to some of the best-preserved archaeological sites in the world.

---



**Working Number:** FR 012  
**Name:** Ruins of Troy: general excavation plan by Mr Schliemann  
**Holding Museum:** National Library of France  
**Date:** 1876

**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** Cities known only from stories would reveal their secrets.

---



**Working Number:** DZ 100  
**Name:** Library museum  
**Holding Museum:** Musée Public National des Antiquités  
**Date:** 1863–1896  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** Museums were established across the Arab and Ottoman world.

---



**Working Number:** AT 036  
**Name:** Decoration of the Egyptian collection of Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna  
**Holding Museum:** Kunsthistorisches Museum, Egyptian Collection  
**Date:** 1873  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** The European public flocked to museums in ever-increasing numbers to see the latest discoveries.

---



**Working Number:** UK 097  
**Name:** Showcasing architecture  
**Holding Museum:** Private collection  
**Date:** 1889  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** In an ever-more international world, Europeans were as intrigued by the customs of past cultures as by those of foreign ones.

---



**Working Number:** TR2 003  
**Name:** Pedestal of the Obelisk in the Ancient Byzantine Hippodrome  
**Holding Museum:** Ömer M. Koç Collection  
**Date:** 1854  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** New technologies assisted archaeologists, and brought foreign and ancient cities into the homes of the curious.

---



**Working Number:** DE 003  
**Name:** Façade of the Palace of Mushatta  
**Holding Museum:** Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum, State Museums  
**Date:** AD 743–744; given by the Ottoman sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II to Emperor Wilhelm II in 1903  
**Materials:** -  
**Curator Justification:** -

Encounters with Arab and Ottoman art changed European tastes.

---