At once heartbreaking and inspiring, this remarkable art book seeks to document what was lost when 15,000 objects at Baghdad's Iraq Museum were lost in the 2003 war and the ongoing art destruction. Treasures like the beautiful carved-ivory Mona Lisa of Nimrud survived ten centuries, only to fall victim to chaos and looters, some sent by international art dealers. The scholar authors show that the loss isn't local, it's everybody's. Iraq saw the birth of cities, epic verse, and codified religion; the lions guarding the New York Public Library are esthetic descendants of the smashed terracotta masterpieces of Baghdad. The book is a quickie history course, with 190 handsome color illustrations. Editorialy, its a bit rushed and confusing. But look: these aren't ivory-tower scholars, they're heroes putting themselves on the line to save humanity's legacy. One had to be rescued from kidnappers with the help of Muqtada al-Sadr. Part of what you pay for the book goes to reconstruct the museum, and the book itself constitutes a kind of virtual museum preserving some works that are lost, and some that will be relocated, in part because it exists. --Tim Appelo

My Personal Review:
As discontent over the continued American presence and the mounting loss of lives of not only soldiers from this country but also from other supporting countries and certainly for the countless loss of civilian lives in Iraq, artists and writers are responding in kind to the woe of war. One of the saddest tragedies of the Iraq invasion was the decimation of the Iraq Museum of Baghdad. Many of the rarest of antiquities housed there are now reduced to dust while others suffered irreparable damage.

This fine book provides many illustrations of the collection of the Iraq Museum and with that, naturally, comes a timeline of civilization as we
know it. The treasures are/were wondrous and the history as summarized by Milbry and William Polk, Selma Al-Radi, Angela Schuster, Zainab Bahrani, Usam Ghaidan, Anna Paolini, and Donny George in their fine essays should be required reading for all of us.

This fine and beautifully designed book marks a sad moment in our history, but it also provides an invaluable resource guide for those interested in the cradle of civilization that was Mesopotamia - aka Iraq! Highly recommended. Grady Harp, August 05

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