Geneva-based foundation Aliph directs $10m to heritage conservation projects in conflict zones

Sites targeted range from a Yemeni palace in ruins to a shrine destroyed by the Islamic State in Iraq

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The International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (Aliph) today announced $10m in grants for 20 conservation projects, including an effort by the World Monuments Fund (WMF) to reconstruct a shrine destroyed by the Islamic State in northern Iraq.

The Geneva-based foundation said it was directing $263,910 to the WMF initiative at the ruined Mam Rashan shrine in the Sinjar region, pulverised in 2014 in a genocidal campaign...
against the Yazidi ethnic minority there. The foundation will also funnel $830,900 to the rehabilitation of the Mosul Museum in that Iraqi city’s old quarter, a project led by the Smithsonian Institution, the Louvre and the Iraqi State Board of Heritage.

Aliph said it would donate $588,738 to another WMF project in the Yemeni city of Taiz that seeks to recover artefacts buried under Al-Badr Palace and shore up the national museum complex there. The palace was destroyed in a conflict pitting Houthi rebels against Yemeni government forces backed by a coalition of foreign states led by Saudi Arabia. The money will also go toward developing a museography project to revitalise the museum complex.

In Afghanistan, the foundation will donate $868,410 to help conserve a Buddhist stupa, or moundlike monument, in Kabul Province and $79,720 to support traditional Afghan practices like tile-making and carpet weaving.

Aliph, founded in 2017 to protect cultural heritage in war zones, is led by a 16-member board chaired by the American billionaire Thomas Kaplan and has financed $17m in projects to date. Other grants announced today by the foundation include:

- $169,836 for archaeological excavations of sixth-century Christian churches in Eritrea.
- $156,675 to safeguard collections at the Gori Museum in Georgia.
- $144,500 to conserve 13th-century wall paintings and other features of St Anthony’s Church in Deddé, Lebanon.
- $773,075 to stabilise the World Heritage sites Ghadames, Sabratha and Leptis Magna in Libya.
- $850,000 to conserve historic Palestinian buildings in the Gaza Strip.
- $344,152 to foster the preservation of Palestinian heritage in Jerusalem-based libraries.
- $266,164 to shore up 12 churches in the Sondondo Valley in Peru.
- $130,041 to preserve the sacred site of Aw-Barkhadle in Somalia.
- $1.19m to define the boundaries of 70 archaeological sites in Sudan.
- $655,078 to conserve and promote cultural archival material in Sudan.
- $288,893 to preserve and digitise archival material in Denmark related to 4,000 archaeological statues from Palmyra, Syria.
- $262,941 to remove rubble and other debris from the destroyed Dhamar Museum in Yemen.
- $337,600 to document the built heritage of Yemeni historical cities through the use of 3D digitisation.
- $366,400 for architectural assessments that help to document Yemen’s cultural heritage.