

Archaeological Institute of America

Located at Boston University
656 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
Tel 617.353.9361 • Fax 6550
www.archaeological.org



September 9, 2004

Dear _____

As President of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), I am writing to you to urge that the controlled detonation of ordnance near the ancient and Early Islamic site of Hatra be ceased. Professor John Russell, a member of the AIA's Task Force on Cultural Heritage in Iraq and Afghanistan, has given me your contact information.

Hatra, as you probably know, is one of Iraq's two registered World Heritage Sites and is arguably the most spectacular archaeological site in Iraq. Its well-preserved architectural remains and beautiful sculptural decoration, blending Hellenistic, Roman and Arab styles, make it a prime candidate for development as a major tourist destination when stability returns to Iraq.

Unfortunately, however, these delicate and sensitive remains are vulnerable to permanent and irreparable damage owing to the detonation of recovered ordnance nearby. It would be a real tragedy if these ruins, whose walls have withstood the invasions of Roman and other armies over nearly two millennia, should finally fall victim to modern occupation forces that should be protecting them.

The Archaeological Institute of America is the oldest and largest non-profit archaeological organization in the United States. Founded in 1879 and chartered by act of Congress in 1906, it has almost 9,000 members throughout the U.S. representing not only professional archaeologists and students, but also interested members of the general public coming from all walks of life. Its members are united by a shared passion for archaeology and its role in furthering human knowledge. On behalf of the AIA I urge you to make every effort to ensure the protection and preservation of this supremely important site.

Thank you,

Jane C. Waldbaum
President, Archaeological Institute of America