

How Satellite Imagery Helps Protect UNESCO World Heritage Sites



European Space Imaging (EUSI) has released a new case study outlining the success of using satellite imagery to help protect UNESCO World Heritage sites. Working together with experts at the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), the study explains what high-quality satellite data reveals about the situation on the ground at the World Heritage sites Hatra and Nimrud in Iraq.

2015 saw a rise in intentional destruction of heritage sites in the Middle East. In the light of international media reports in March 2015 that Nimrud was being methodically destroyed by bulldozers and explosives, DAI contacted EUSI to request a combination of new and archive imagery so they could assess the reports. With the help of DLR's Geo-Risks and Civil Security Department at the German Remote Sensing Data Center (DFD) they

analysed the imagery to understand the scope of the destruction. The WorldView-2 40cm imagery supplied by European Space Imaging revealed singular details that helped experts to assess the situation. Their findings are part of the case study "VHR Imagery Enables Archaeologists to Safely Assess Heritage Site Destruction" which can be found on European Space Imaging's website.

Without the satellite imagery, it would not have been possible to confirm when the major destruction took place, stated Margarete Van Ess, deputy director of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) Orient Department, Germany.

The German Archaeological Institute are forerunners in using space technology and continue to prove the value of using satellite imagery to help protect cultural heritage. They have used remote sensing since the early 2003 for monitoring activity in hard to reach world heritage sites especially those which are located in conflict zones.

[Read the case study here.](#)