

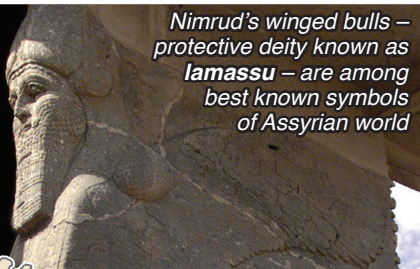
# IS destroying Iraq's archaeological treasures

The Islamic State (IS) group is purging ancient relics they say promote idolatry that violates their fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic law

**1 Nimrud:** Founded in 1250 BC. Known in ancient times as **Kalhu**, it was capital of Neo-Assyrian empire – then world's most powerful state

Many artefacts preserved in museums around world, but many remained on site. **City looted and bulldozed with heavy machinery**

*Nimrud's winged bulls – protective deity known as **lamassu** – are among best known symbols of Assyrian world*



**2 Khorsabad (Dur-Sharrukin):** Built as new capital of Assyria by **King Sargon II**, who ruled from 722 to 705 BC

Renowned as model of Assyrian architecture, site features 24m-thick wall and seven gates.

**Baghdad investigating reports that site is being demolished**

**3 Nineveh:** IS video shows destruction of lamassu on city's **Nergal Gate** (above), dating back to 9th Century BC

**4 Mosul:** Militants have smashed artefacts in **Mosul Museum** and burned hundreds of books from city library and University, including many rare manuscripts

**Temple to Shamash (Mesopotamian sun god) in Hatra**

**5 Hatra:** Fortified city which flourished in 1st and 2nd centuries AD during **Parthian Empire**. Home to many temples and sculptures dedicated to gods, including Apollo and Poseidon. **Militants used explosives to blow up buildings**

