

Who's minding the store?

2009-04-01 15:25:57 by Southern

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Long ago at Jihad Watch I posted about the destruction, through Islam-inspired vandalism, of statuary both in churches in Northern France and in Rome, in the Piazza del Popolo. Remember: statues are banned in Islam. Why? Because a famous hadith has Muhammad saying that he would not enter a house that has dogs and statutes in it. Why should this be? If you are creating, delineating, the elements of a fighting faith that is cobbled together from elements -- stories, proper names of important personages -- found in the two prior monotheisms your followers first must deal with, you do not want to offer your own faith as the "new, improved" version of what already exists (as someone today, seeking market share, would do), but as the venerable, true version that always was, but was incorrectly received and perceived by the "ungrateful" ones -- the Jews and the Christians.

And then you also want to distinguish your own faith from those corrupted versions of the genuine article. The ban on statuary, and on depictions of living creatures, no doubt owes something to Judaism -- but unlike the case with Jews, the Muslims did not merely not produce such things, but took great delight in vandalizing and destroying the statuary and portraiture of others. See what happened to Constantinople, once as full of frescoes as Ravenna, or the Coptic churches of Cairo, or all the ruined artistic riches of North Africa and the Middle East.

The attempts to destroy the fresco at San Petronio, by the way, have taken place at the site where Muslims in their hysterical rage held demonstrations recently. The serried ranks of organized Islam took over the parvis and the plaza beyond, to prostrate themselves Mecca-wards, in a Nuremberg-rally where the simultaneous prostration of thousands eerily echoes, in its dismal collectivism and non-thought, the Heil-Hitlering of yore.

Meanwhile, it is not just curators and connoisseurs who should be quietly or noisily alarmed by these attempts to destroy this venerable fresco. The whole artistic heritage of the West is potentially -- more than potentially -- is really at risk. Who wants to talk about Muslims and art (the lack thereof)? Who wants to discuss, openly, what will happen to the statues, the pictures, the churches, the cathedrals, the everything of Europe, as Muslim numbers swell, and the non-Muslims are intimidated, and so fearful that all they can think of doing is hushing up those who, like Geert Wilders, refuse to be intimidated themselves?

Go to any great world museum. Look at the Western riches. Look at the Asian art. Look at the pre-Columbian art of the Americas. Look at the rooms full of pre-Islamic artifacts from Egypt. Look at the African masks. Look at what was produced in Polynesia. Look, look, look. And then look at the pitiful room or two of so-called "Islamic art" which consists, usually, of some ceramics with what is Arabic

calligraphy. But if you recognize the motifs, or can read the writing, you can sometimes detect the fact that the stuff was produced in lands where Muslims ruled, but from the Christian or Jewish imagery, not necessarily by Muslims. Aside from Qur'anic calligraphy and mosque architecture (the building itself based on the Byzantine squinch), what is there in the way of Islamic art? This is not to dismiss what there is, but compared to what non-Islamic societies produce, it is undeniably paltry. And this should not be surprising to anyone, keeping in mind the vast destruction of art and monuments that has taken place wherever Islam has gone. Here is a tentative list off the top of my head:

- Bamiyan Buddhas, 1,500 years old, in Afghanistan, destroyed by Taliban with explosives, and technical help from Saudi and Pakistani engineers.
- Tomb of Joseph in Israel, reduced to rubble by the "Palestinians," despite that site supposedly being sacred to Muslims as well as to Jews.
- A Hindu temple in Kuala Lumpur, where Hindus and Chinese both labor under the disguised Jizyah of the Bumiputra system.
- Orthodox churches and monasteries, destroyed in Kosovo and Bosnia, in full view of NATO troops, the U.N., and the world's media.
- And then, of course, the thousands of churches destroyed in Indonesia, as recorded by the Barnabas Fund.
- The remaining Greco-Bactrian artifacts among the tiny holdings in the Kabul Museum.
- The damage done to the Temple Mount structure by the excavations and vandalism to Solomon's Stables from the "Palestinians."
- Statuary vandalized by Muslims -- both Christian statuary in a church in northern France, and pagan statuary in the Piazza del Popolo.

Why should it be any different in Western Europe in the years to come?

North America may now be the center, politically and economically, of the West. But Europe contains the greatest store of art that was formed by, and helped to form, Western man.

Quaere: Who's minding the store?

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