Pagan antiquities had various afterlives. Statues could be viewed as “idols” with apotropaic properties, shunned for this very reason, or broken open to get at the treasure they surely contained. Any antiquities could become popular if they were thought to be medically efficacious – and this without distinction of religion. The characters on inscriptions (which could not be read) were sometimes seen as offering directions to the location of buried treasure. It was foreigners, generally conceived to have built the same antiquities, who held the key, and had returned to reclaim their wealth. Treasure-hunting and the destruction of antiquities thought to contain them was therefore rife, probably in all centuries. Nevertheless, more antiquities were probably defaced and destroyed by visiting Western tourists than by such local superstitions.

Antiquities as Powerful Talismans

Until well into the 19th century, most locals in our Crescent remained uninterested in antiquities per se, and could not conceive that Europeans wished to collect them simply for their beauty, or antique associations, or lettering.¹ This is not by any means to say that they ignored them, for one theme which runs throughout our Crescent is the belief that antiquities possess various kinds of power, sometimes to heal, sometimes to bring wealth, sometimes to destroy,¹ and it connects with a broad literature on marvels,² in which there is much commonality between Christian and Moslem beliefs (cf. the Chansons de Geste). Frequently this power is bound up with the search for, and discovery of treasure which, so the story

¹ Frankfurter 2008, 135–6 for late antique Egypt: “I am less interested in documentation of particular historical figures than in the range of iconoclastic acts remembered as meaningful in Egyptian Christian tradition.” 137–8 for a list of caveats in the use of hagiography.
² Ducène 2006 is useful for its introduction on mediaeval Islamic marvels-literature, and for the notes on the places al-Gharnati (1080–1168) visited in Egypt – Alexandria, Cairo, Abusir, Heliopolis.
goes, had been buried in olden times \textsuperscript{ii} and the discovery of which was a common explanation when people got unaccountably rich, perhaps from discovering a hoard of the Fatimid Caliphs. \textsuperscript{iii} Myths abound about rich and mysterious cities, such as the City of Bronze, perhaps relaying reports about distant ancient cities and fabulous remains. \textsuperscript{v} What is certain is that many antiquities must have been destroyed in such searches, as Maqrizi recounts for Cairo, and the destruction of an idol. \textsuperscript{iv} While there was naturally more rhetoric than reality in early disquisitions on pagan statues, \textsuperscript{iv} such tales were still current in late 19th century Constantinople. \textsuperscript{v} For the Egyptians, Norden reported that they could not conceive that Europeans visited Egypt to dig for scholarly purposes: treasure and magic must be involved \textsuperscript{vi} – perhaps an idea derived from ancient Egyptian folklore. \textsuperscript{v} For such perverse reasons, Hester Stanhope outrageously had a colossal statue at Ascalon broken to pieces. \textsuperscript{vii} Such beliefs continued into the 20th century, not least because digging did indeed reveal treasures. \textsuperscript{v}

\textit{Antiquities and Treasure}

Casual destruction of antiquities often occurred because of long-standing traditions that they marked the location of treasure. Nor was the general opinion necessarily wrong, because temples and churches did indeed often contain treasuries and treasures. \textsuperscript{vii} This supposedly lost the world the Lion of Chaeronea in the mid-19th century, \textsuperscript{viii} and probably a large number of funerary antiquities. \textsuperscript{ix} Similarly, casual discoveries of treasure indicated the possible rewards of knocking down old walls, \textsuperscript{x} even if only squared blocks were unearthed. \textsuperscript{xi} There must have been many more discoveries than recent fortuitous finds suggest. \textsuperscript{v} For degradation is a constant, as people plunder ruins for building materials, and search dili-

\textsuperscript{ii} Genequand 1992: supposedly in the Sahara, Morocco, or Andalucía.
\textsuperscript{iii} Perry 2008, for more rhetoric than reality. NB Libanius was a pagan.
\textsuperscript{iv} Ghallab 1929, 263–283 for magic in Egyptian folklore; based largely on Maspero and the 1001 Nights.
\textsuperscript{vi} Metzger 1996 on Byzantine treasures, and 35–41 for e.g. the treasure found in Lycia in 1963, now Antalya/Dumbarton Oaks.
\textsuperscript{vii} Gelichi 2004: see especially, 18–45, with maps of find-locations at pp. 44 & 45. Only two are shown in N Africa, two in Egypt, and one in Syria – none in Turkey. Does this reflect archaeological activity, interest, or have so many treasures been abstracted from these lands?