Geography and Heritage:
from Oxford to the Silk Road

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‘Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration.’

World Heritage Centre,
whc.unesco.org/en/about/
World Heritage

‘What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory in which they are located.’

whc.unesco.org/en/about

As of June 2017, **1052** world heritage sites are listed in 165 states (814 cultural, 35 mixed, 203 natural)
World Heritage sites in danger

Animation credit: Alice Goudie
What can geographers contribute?

Creating heritage:

Discovering ‘new’ sites

What can geographers contribute?

Creating heritage: quantifying values

What can geographers contribute?

Conserving heritage: evaluating threats and designing solutions

What can geographers contribute?

Critiquing heritage
Contested heritage: Saharan rock art
Changing air quality and Oxford’s heritage

Image credit: Unknown

1870s
Changing air pollution in Oxford: 1

Smoke and particulate concentrations $\mu$g/m$^3$, 1959-2007
Changing air pollution in Oxford: 2

NO₂, SO₂ and PM₉₉ trends at roadside and urban background sites in Oxford, 1995-2008 in μg/m³
Can nature help conserve Silk Road sites in NW China?

New collaborative project between Dunhuang Academy, Getty Conservation Institute and Oxford Geography
Plants and heritage conservation

**Threats**
- Biodeterioration
- Bio-obscuration

**Opportunities**
- Bioremediation
- Bio-protection

**Bio-**

- Bio-aesthetics
- +Bio-aesthetics
Silk Road Heritage is BIG

Buddha and me,
Bingling Grottoes,
Gansu Province
Silk Road Heritage faces many threats
North Grotto Temple, Gansu province

Image credit: Qinglin Guo
Silk Road sites near Dunhuang, NW China
Suoyang ancient city: deteriorating earthen walls
Using cellular automata modeling to aid conservation of Suoyang

Image credits: Jerome Mayaud and Jenny Richards
Geographers researching heritage