**label:** Foreword

Inventories and related surveys are fundamental tools for conserving and managing cultural heritage places. The first step in the conservation process is to identify and understand the places we want to protect. Collecting and maintaining information through inventories and surveys is an intragenerational endeavor. Heritage organizations, professionals, and stakeholders build cumulatively upon the efforts of their predecessors. As time passes, new places become valued by communities and demand study and recognition, so our heritage truly represents our collective histories.

The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) has been working with heritage inventories and surveys for more than two decades, beginning in the early 2000s, with planning for a citywide survey of heritage resources in Los Angeles known as SurveyLA. Work with World Monuments Fund (WMF) followed, to support the creation of national archaeological databases for Iraq, with the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, and for Jordan, with the Department of Antiquities. This work resulted in creation of the Middle Eastern Geodatabase for Antiquities (MEGA). These undertakings led to recognition of widespread need within the heritage field for modern, purpose-built and economical software to manage heritage inventory information.

The GCI and WMF, in 2013, released version 1 of the open-source Arches Heritage Data Management Platform as a system for heritage organizations to deploy to meet their inventory and survey requirements. Over the past decade, the GCI has continued its involvement in the Arches project and its open-source community; numerous new versions of the platform have been released, with progressively improving capabilities, and the community has grown to include software implementers, funders, service providers, and other contributors from across the globe.

Recent work at the GCI recognizes the evolving nature of heritage surveys to ensure inventories fully recognize underrepresented and emerging heritage places. Our renewed efforts with the City of Los Angeles to undertake the Los Angeles African American Historic Places project acknowledge that surveys have not always fully recognized all communities’ heritage equally. Our publication *The* *Twentieth Century Historic Thematic Framework* ({{Marsden and Spearritt 2021}}) provides a tool for those working to gain recognition for more recent heritage; it was undertaken in collaboration with the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth-Century Heritage.

Through the GCI’s involvement over the past two decades in all these endeavors, we have become increasingly aware of the need for comprehensive, up-to-date, and practical guidance concerning all facets of inventory and survey work. The GCI is very pleased to produce this publication in collaboration with the City of Los Angeles’s Office of Historic Resources (OHR), an institution the GCI partnered with upon the OHR’s creation in 2006 to implement SurveyLA. One of the GCI’s primary aims in undertaking SurveyLA with the OHR, beyond meeting the immediate needs of our own community of Los Angeles, was for the project to demonstrate its methodology and share lessons with others in the heritage field undertaking similar efforts. We are delighted that this book helps realize that aspiration.

I am grateful to the lead authors – David Myers and Janet Hansen – who conceived, crafted, and wrote much of the publication, and brought about the participation of its other contributors. I also thank the other contributors, who were so willing to share their practical experience. I hope this publication will help to address the need for improved inventory and survey guidance, and ultimately contribute to the advancement of conservation practice.

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