“Cultural Heritage” is a broad and far reaching term that covers a wide range of human history. Other terminology also includes “Cultural Property”, “Common Heritage of mankind”, and so on. The reasons for the diversity of terminology and the loose definition is because these terms are meant to cover a large swath of human history ranging from temples, pyramids, grave sites, aqueducts, walls, statues, sculptures, and even fragments of pots. The underlying theme is these objects of artistic, archaeological, ethnological, religious, anthropological all create a story of human history that when we lose, is lost forever. The truth is cultural heritage is an important and relevant as both moveable things and immovable places that hold special meaning to humanity. This special meaning also influences culture and identity and their destruction could be more than just the destruction of stones.

Only in the last 100 years has there been any idea to actually try and protect these sites. And even early protection resembled looting by imperial powers to fill their collections. It took something as catastrophic as WWII on European soil to instigate policy. The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict also referred to as The Hague Convention in 1954 was the first international treaty focused on cultural heritage and its protection. Then in 1970 the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property also referred to as the UNESCO Convention of 1970 which came about in response to The Hague Convention only focusing on times of conflict. UNESCO has continued to expand their protection of cultural heritage to which they define on their website as “the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.”

The research so far conducted is focused mainly on the Northern African and Middle Eastern areas. With all the sources in this bibliography it is difficult to decide whether to focus on looting and selling of cultural heritage or to focus on the destruction of cultural heritage. Within the looting arena there is possible trends and correlations that could connect the Arab Spring, economic issues, religious factors, and social factors that may lead to a population to allow or participate in the looting of their own cultural heritage. And within the destruction arena there is a wealth of information about iconoclasm and destruction of heritage being both expression, instrumental, and a form of communication as well as ideological and a physical attack to dehumanize a population.

For the research done I have tried to examine all facets of the topics surrounding cultural heritage. For helping with the theories of International Relations I am using both Burchill and Viotti. To understand the legal dilemmas, I have found four legal reference books, Hladik, Tijhuis, Vrdoljak, and Wantuch-Thole. For the exploration of the actual looting and destruction I’ve gathered sources such as Casana, Danti, Ginty, Merryman, Meskell, Parcak, and Rothfield. To understand the importance of cultural heritage and the image they represent I have support
from Bahrani, Flood, Gamboni, Noyes and Reed. And lastly I gathered sources to support how cultural heritage should be protected, Al Quntar, Cunliffe, Kila, King, Lawler, and O’Keefe.

My hope for my Capstone paper is to create a comprehensive view on the issue of at risk cultural heritage both by destruction and by looting. I believe raising relevance and importance of Cultural Heritage in the International Relations scene can only help the international bodies, the individuals on the ground, and the locals who are attempting to save what they can.

Bibliography


Another critique of Joris Kila’s article, is that Al Quntar believes Kila missed the problem of the concept of Cultural Property protection. The problem isn’t in the legal instruments of 1954 Hague Convention or 1970 UNESCO Convention, but in the loopholes that exist. Loopholes such as a favoring of military strategy over the actually protection of sites. Then of course there is the lack of ratification where countries can be held accountable for the byproduct of their wars. Al Quntar also addresses cultural identity and how ancient sites are shared by a multitude of different people which can also be a unifier. But Al Quntar is in the school that neutrality in these situations will solve nothing and he lays out 5 suggestions to help in the Syrian case of CPP efforts.


A comprehensive book explaining the history of war in ancient Mesopotamia and the foundations of Iconoclasm and image breaking with the region. During these times the roles of images were just as strong if not stronger than today. Through rituals and spectacles, the roles of images and their meanings were a foundation for a rich culture which would continue to change via war, conquering, changes of religions, all the way to the tumultuous current era. Mutilations, beheadings, violence all acted upon images and stones are performed both in the actual action of war as well as to send a message to the other side of said war.

“That is representation does not represent ideology, since ideology can exist only in and through representation.” (Bahrani, 68).

“the connection between monument and memory and between commemoration and concepts of time that were clearly articulated when the historical monument was invented.” (Bahrani, 130).

A book focused on teaching International Relations Theory which covers all facets of possible actions and actors upon the international stage. Focusing on Constructivism and Normative theories and the possible hurdles that may be encountered when dealing with the destruction or looting of cultural heritage. Can there be a determination of ethical action among actors (being either states or non-state actors), because idealist and realist versions of International Relations may not be able to cross the ideological divide to discover the root of the issue when it comes to protection of cultural heritage.


Mainly focused on the Looting occurring in Syria, Casana builds off of Parcak’s work in the use of satellite imagery usage. Casana also follows ASOR’s Syrian Heritage Initiative, a U.S. funded project purposely using satellites to follow the looting mainly perpetrated by ISIS/ISIL. And though looting as always occurred in Syria in high frequency, there is a new trend in Syria where there is a paid “army” of looters who systematically loot and destroy sites in a very short period of time. These groups are most likely funded by ISIS with the goal of profits. But it’s not just ISIS doing the looting, Casana has found sites occupied by Syrian forces having a similar fate.


A review and analysis of Kila’s main arguments and remarks, Cunliffe both notes exceptional parts but also dismantles parts of Kila’s argument that are flawed. Cunliffe notes that Kila is entrenched in western centric approaches that may not work in the near future because the West was also the imperialistic powers that as colonial rulers took cultural heritage for themselves (some of which still have yet to be returned). Cunliffe also continues to question classic archaeological approaches because even though there is an attempt at impartiality, neutrality is a political stance and archaeology is about context and politics.


A study and ground based operation empowering locals to preserve their own cultural heritage. Danti sees that the targeting of cultural assets is a central issue to conflicts of today. And using locals who have the desire to protect and the belief of importance of these sites will be a more effective tool to save and create a permanence of protection within their countries. Mainly focusing on Iraq and Syria, Danti saw the use of Social
Media being helpful for both sides, those wanting protection and those wanting to destroy. And one of his main arguments is that fact his observations has shown a greater desire to protect cultural heritage within these conflict filled countries, even when necessities for life are scarce.


Focusing primarily on the Buddhas of Bamiyan, Flood explores Islam’s hostility towards anthropomorphic art. And how these idols and their destruction complicate the “West’s” view and understanding of Islam when it comes to this issue. Medieval Islamic attitudes were much more relaxed even when confronted with the Hadith. But because of the Crusades there was a shift in the relaxation which represented an enemy force. Flood also differentiates between two types of Iconoclasm, instrumental and expressive. One is acted upon to create an outcome, while another wishes to send a message.

“The eventual transport of Western Journalists to the site to record the void left by the Buddha’s destruction suggests that the intended audience for the communique was neither divine nor local but global: for all its recidivist rhetoric, this was a performance designed for the age of the Internet.” (Flood, 652).


This book is mainly focused on the motives and circumstances that lead people to become iconoclasts in the modern era since the French Revolution. But it’s not just about the breaking of images, it’s also about the breaking of people, through ethnic purification, urbicide and an eradication of a person’s perceived history. History and present state of identity can be broken and reinterpreted – can be by force and/or by coercion. Gamboni also explores the mob mentality in humanity and that the mob is a strong actor when it comes to identity and destruction. It is both a tool of expression and communication, both for positive or negative ends.

“The primary role of identities- as opposed to territories – in recent conflicts is precisely a reason for the rampant destruction of ‘cultural objects’,” (Gamboni, 49).

“The mob is always vandalistic.” (Gamboni, 23)


Hladik analyzes the 2003 UNESCO Declaration Concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage, the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and 1972 World Heritage Convention. Hladik pragmatically understand the difficulty of having all states ratify all recommendations, but he believes the conventions still work for a partial functionality without the legally binding factor. Hladik, being in the employment of UNESCO, is of course very supportive of their efforts and moral message. There isn’t a huge amount of criticism of UNESCO but it is a very thorough discussion of the pros and cons of each convention.


A very different perspective and view on how to combat destruction of cultural heritage. Kila addresses many issues and setbacks that archaeologists face when confronted with destruction or looting of cultural heritage. First giving a comprehensive background of cultural property protection Kila then offers different directions and tactics, but always comes back to the lack of funding.

“two overarching issues that present basic work on CPP in the event of conflict. One is lack of funding and e other is the bureaucratic, risk-avoiding attitudes of organizations and individuals that can block simple solutions.” (Kila, 320).


King’s book is more focused on places of interest in the United States.


Though dated, Merryman compared The Hague Convention of 1954 and the UNESCO Convention of 1970 and how the international law has evolved between the two. He also uses theory to analyze each Convention as a different form of looking at culture. 1954 is intrinsically about protection from damage while 1970 is a support of retention of source countries and their cultural property. So some of the differences are protective vs retentive and cosmopolitan vs nationalist. Each have virtues and each have setbacks. Retentive policies can become neglect and destructive while protection can lead to a stealing of heritage from source countries in the name of “protection”.

Meskell analyzes the potential of applying universal human rights in such a way to claim heritage rights. She asks the question, can the mantle of human rights and human rights violations create an urgency for cultural heritage protection. Unfortunately the case study is about South Africa and the dynamics between the white and black populations and their continuing reconciliation of post-apartheid.


A collection of pieces which both portray the vast cultural richness found within the Mediterranean and Middle East regions, but also how instabilities within these regions greatly impact the cultural heritage. Covering the areas Cyprus, Greece, the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Israel, the Gulf and Egypt. There is also a continuing theme of globalism and post colonialism amongst these countries. Basically this is a sociopolitical look and how that framing affects archaeology in the modern context.

“literature has arisen devoted specifically to ethnicity, nationalism, cultural identity and politics, as they impact on our own field of archaeology.” (Meskell. 1).


Tracing the history of Iconoclasm, Noyes begins with Calvinism for Western iconoclasm, and Wahhabism for Middle Eastern iconoclasm. He then focuses on case studies of French Revolution, Venice and the Bourgeois, World War II, the Balkans wars, then Islamic Iconoclasm. Slightly western heavy, Noyes does present an image is also an icon and can also be an idol, which is at the root of both types of iconoclasm. Focusing on the psychology and cognitive miser nature of humans relating images to an idea or representation, especially in the religious context.

“Rejecting these terms of senselessness and ignorance, they seek the ‘larger political program’ within which image-breaking operates: whether the iconoclast’s target is the Rokeby Venus, the Buddha’s of Bamiyan, or the Manhattan skyline, the same dynamics of vulnerability, resentment, and antagonism apply and may be used to both contextualize the violence and rationalize the motives,” (Noyes, 181)


O’Keefe’s book is an attempt to encapsulate the idea of how cultural property constitute a universal human heritage. He finds three main conclusions: firstly, that states and other parties in armed conflict have placed more value on cultural property in the modern era than most would assume. This goes along with the factor that the modern era is the most peaceful time (even if our perception is that it isn’t). Secondly, that international law
being used as a form of protection has no real power – but in reality though hard to enforce they have created precedent and standards. And the last conclusion being that focusing on cultural property is also being callous to the actual people affected by the conflict, but actually one interest does not disregard the other.


Parcak is a professor of Archaeology and Egyptology at University of Alabama. She is quoted in multiple other sources especially for her work of using satellite imagery to follow destruction and looting in the middle east. She wrote a main piece in National Geographic and has done multiple TED talks. This article is an in-depth focus on Egypt and how the situation there is progressing by following four different sites.


Focusing on Syria well before the Arab Spring, this book is a personal account of the evolution of Syria as a nation, both secular and Islamic. Because of doctrines of Islam, i.e. lack of anthropomorphic images, no images of Muhammed, there is a long history of iconoclasm in Middle Eastern countries. Reed both explains the current state of Syria’s relationship with images and representations but also illustrates the historical background of the roots which have grown differently in Syria.

“Terrorism […] seemed increasingly to be conflated with the struggle to define, the overturn idols, the ‘war’ against it, to restoring, reinstalling and protecting them.” (Reed, 19)


When Saddam Hussein’s statue was pulled down the mob continued to the Iraq National Museum. In one way this state run building did represent the dictatorship, but it also represented a rich and fascinating history that the regime didn’t necessarily promote. Iraq lost a dictator, thousands of citizens, and possibly near half a million artifacts into the market of illicit antiquities. Finished in 2009 Rothfield is optimistic that inadvertent cultural destruction can be avoided and lessons can be learned from Iraq. But unfortunately, as time has shown, the same things keep happening.

Tijhuis, A.J.G. *Transnational Crime and the Interface between Legal and Illegal Actors: The case of the illicit art and antiquities trade*. (……..Dutch translate…….)

(No synopsis at this time)


(no synopsis at this time)


Focusing on the public law and civil law and how these laws both help and hinder antiquities when they illegally cross borders. Wantuch-Thole approached the issue of cultural property and how claims work in the legal system. Also addressing how the governments, museums, lawyers, art historians, archaeologists, art dealers and academics all assist in the issue of Cultural Property crossing borders. This book mainly focuses on the ‘demand-reduction-approach’. If the legal repercussions are existent than it will act as a deterrent from stealing cultural heritage.

“Another reason for the illegal trade in cultural objects is rooted within the traditions of the art market. It is steeped in secrecy and what passes for ‘gentleman informality’, provides ideal opportunities for introducing illegally acquired antiquities into the legal art market.” (Wantuch-Thole, 4).

NEED TO ADD

Hague Convention 1954

UNESCO Convention 1970

UNESCO Convention 2003

UNESCO WEBSITE