Looting the Past to Destroy the Future

PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ARMED CONFLICTS

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Abstract

In 2015 the world’s attention turned to ancient stones in the middle of a desert. The desert was in Syria, and the stones were Palmyra – an ancient city which commonly found itself at the bordering of different civilizations. This time it found itself as the target of extremists in a state experiencing a breakdown of central authority. This paper examines the unique change in armed conflict in the regions of the Middle East and North Africa. These conflicts are not just about war but also a form of cultural war by attacking cultural heritage through iconoclastic destruction and systematic looting. The evidence compiled from government sources, NGOs, academics, and experts in this field agree this illustrates the greatest resurgence of cultural heritage attacks since WWII and the enabling conditions of a breakdown of central authority and the rise and presence of extremist groups who use this interconnected age of the internet as their global audience.
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INTRODUCTION

In May 2015, Khaled al-Asaad who oversaw the archaeological site Palmyra, Syria for over 40 years, lost his life. Not the normal way an 81-year-old might but brutally by the Islamic State. Hours before, he sent staff off with as much as they could save from ISIS which was heading straight for Palmyra – an ancient city dating back before the Romans. He was held for a month before his execution and he did not tell his captors any information on items they could destroy or take. Al-Asaad chose to stay behind and paid the price and other Syrians continue to risk their lives to save their cultural heritage.

Looting and destruction of cultural heritage is nothing new to human history where conquering powers have always made “efforts to exterminate the identity of enemies from memory destroyed significant objects associated with their culture.”¹ This is referred to as iconoclasm which in Greek means the breaking/destroying of images or icons. It is important to note that this destruction of images is a deliberate attack on the symbol of the item, usually because of a religious or cultural difference by those iconoclastically destroying the cultural heritage

Since the 1990s there has been a resurgence of deliberate cultural heritage destruction and systematic looting. This trend can be seen through a growth of UNESCO World Heritage sites being added to a in danger listing. And in the last decade the problem intensified in the Middle East and North Africa region. Which leads to the question at hand – what are the enabling conditions that lead to cultural heritage destruction and looting? The two main variables found in this study are the breakdown of central authority and the rise and presence of extremist groups in areas experiencing conflict. Breakdown of central authority directly influences the instances of systematic looting and the rise and presence of extremist groups is the influence on iconoclastic destruction of cultural heritage – but looting is a form of destruction and current extremist groups are looting salable items and destroying places for a spectacle. This paper will give a glimpse into the current situation of cultural heritage destruction currently happening special emphasis on Iraq and Syria.

This issue of cultural heritage destruction is important not only for the cultures attacked, but it has become a global issue with the illicit antiquities trade. The current situation as “the worse cultural heritage crisis since WWII,”² per one American expert, Micheal Danti. This issue of cultural heritage is prevalent in the

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¹ Kila, 326.
² Hadingham.
Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) where systematic destruction of monuments, illegal looting and smuggling of antiquities abroad to be sold has become a form of normalcy. 3

Something needs to be done to protect cultural heritage. Failed attempts at protection also have a trend of “too little too late” and always reactive instead of proactive. The loss of cultural heritage is not only a loss of history, but of identity and understanding. The intentional and systematic destruction and looting happening in the MENA region is an obstacle to peace. UNESCO and similar societies and NGOs are attempting to construct a new view of cultural heritage but the international community is complicated when there is a need for universal enforcement. In certain circumstances, cultural heritage destruction can further fuel conflict. 4 And in this region which is no stranger to conflict, this total conflict could spell disaster for all sectors of human existence.

Ma’amoun Abdulkarim is the Director of Antiquities and Museums in Damascus. He is attempting to save and hide what cultural heritage he can and has chosen to remain in Syria throughout the conflict. He believes the hybrid identity of Syria unique form of shared inheritance of his people and will one day reunify them. For Abdulkarim, Syria is like a wounded man and it is his “job is to preserve his head. If one day this wounded man recovers his health, he can see what he is. But if we lose the Syrian heritage, we lose the Syrian common memory. And then we lose the Syrian identity.” 5 Iconoclastic destruction and systematic looting will destroy cultural identity. It is more than an art world problem; it is a global humanitarian problem.

WHY CARE?

Even though this issue is currently making headlines with public outcries, the question remains – why should we care when people are dying? This study is not to say a human life is worth less than stones, but to question what will be left for the survivors? This symbolic use of violence is a new type of war, a cultural war which is an attack on identity and becomes an issue of identity politics. It is a symbol of community, symbol of a nation, symbol of humanity – and symbols are very active and influential. We need to care because firstly, cultural heritage destruction is a form of human destruction; secondly, this preservation could lead to positive consequences thus it needs humanitarian effort; and third, conversely setbacks could have long term detrimental issues. Preserving cultural heritage is

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3 Naumkin.
4 Mollick.
5 Harkin, 51.
about human preservation; because to be human is to have a culture and cultural objects are human artifacts. This intense relationship between heritage and identity gives iconoclastic attacks power because of the destructive nature. Experts agree, the activity of violent destruction with widespread civilian casualties can “extinguish the collective life and cultural identity” of a community. It is both cultural genocide and cultural terrorism where intentional destruction with the purpose of “eradicating cultural diversity” inspires terror as a new form of warfare.

Besides this destruction, the second concept of importance is preservation of cultural heritage could be a key condition to resolve “this crisis and ensuring the region’s future prosperity and stability.” Because “respect for human dignity by protecting a community’s cultural identity and sets the groundwork for a return to a sense of normalcy following a disaster.” Humanitarian efforts for the current crisis in Iraq and Syria are naturally not trained to protect heritage even though these activities are kinship to common humanitarian aid projects which is how the international community should address cultural heritage protection – as a humanitarian issue. Nevertheless, the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) found that NGOs operating in and near conflict zone involved in humanitarian efforts were privy to large amounts of cultural heritage information that was voluntarily provided by locals, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and refugees. Because overall, Syrians and Iraqis are concerned about what is happening to their heritage. Therefore community centered approaches to preservation needs to be supported, because those who are invested in the continuation will be the loudest advocates – it is their cultural memory and identity at risk.

And lastly, if there are setbacks to preservation and protection and cultural destruction continues as it is, with no humanitarian efforts cultivated the material cost of looting and destruction will stunt a nations ability to stabilize, with severe symbolic costs. Recovery after a civil war of the magnitude that Syria has experienced will leave deeper and more destructive scarring then just the disappearance of Palmyra. But Palmyra will represent a wound that will create a “lack of collective sense of ownership of what happened.” Each faction will blame

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6 Merryman, 342.
7 Kila, 326; Bevan, 209-10.
8 Danti, 132.
9 Danti, 132.
10 Al Quntar, 154.
11 Danti, 133.
12 Rothfield, 2.
13 Rowland, 2.
the other and a blame game cannot be allowed to fester. Historically issues of cultural heritage can create tense relations in the international scene – even between stable and friendly countries (I.E. The issue of the Elgin Marbles between Greece and the British Museum).

George Stout, one of the WWII Monuments Men said, protecting cultural heritage is about “values, identities and belonging.”\(^{14}\) The global community is attempting to respond but to stay neutral and impartial to the conflict, especially in Syria with the civil war. Neutrality is ineffective in today’s armed conflict when it comes to cultural heritage destruction because control over heritage in Syria has become a political issue.\(^{15}\) As seen in Syria where all three actors, regime, rebels, and extremists have participated in cultural heritage looting and destruction.\(^{16}\) Nevertheless, protection must become a global responsibility, or else it will be no one’s, and then heritage is destroyed or stolen as antiquities disperse from their countries of origin. The global community needs to keep their citizens accountable to halt the market and demand for illicit looting of cultural heritage and understand the horrible effects of iconoclastic destruction.

**HISTORY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

To understand how the current trend has evolved, looking at the history of cultural heritage protection can show the possible issues. In the aftermath of WWII there was a paradigm shift that total war and destruction was not a form of war that humans shouldn’t undertake any more. The United Nations was formed in October 1945 and a month later The United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) was founded. In 1949 UNESCO’s General Conference mandated the need for protection for places of cultural value such as libraries, museums, and archives in the case of conflict.\(^{17}\) The empirical evidence that people care about cultural heritage is overwhelming when we see the whole picture that we take for granted. The existence of thousands of museums, millions of visitors, university departments, historic preservation laws, and legislation to help protection both in market and source countries demonstrate our belief in cultural heritage. It doesn’t end with just the existence but it characterized by different forms of importance like expressive value, political/religious value, as well as utility value.\(^{18}\) Expressive through identity, community, and a desire to remember, political and religious value through

\(^{14}\) Mollick.  
\(^{15}\) Al Quntar, 350.  
\(^{16}\) Al Quntar, 350; Hadingham; Howard.  
\(^{17}\) O’Keefe, 20.  
\(^{18}\) Merryman, 343.
cultural nationalism and religious inspiration, and utility through sources of information and economic industry with tourism.

**Hague Convention of 1954 and First Protocol**

The mandate in 1949 calling for protection cultural places grew international and would amass five years later into UNESCO’s first convention. The Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and it’s First Protocol of 1954 (referred hereinafter as 1954 Hague Convention). This convention was a shift in the paradigm which created a norm and universal rhetoric implying an attack on cultural heritage in an attack on all humankind – UNESCO still use this idea today. Today there are 127 countries party to the convention, 4 have signed and not ratified, and 104 are party to the First Protocol. Built on internationalism, with one concession to nationalism – a loophole that stimulated much controversy – the exception of “military necessity,” effecting cultural heritage. The controversy is the thin line between necessity and convenience.\(^{19}\) But during military occupation the obligation is to safeguard until that necessity arises.

The 1954 Hague Convention was the first to define cultural heritage under three categories as movable or immovable, buildings for cultural heritage, and centers containing large amounts of cultural heritage. The actual convention states:

**Article 1. Definition of cultural property**

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term ‘cultural property’ shall cover, irrespective of origin or ownership:

(a) movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artisitic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above;

(b) buildings whose main and effective purpose is to preserve or exhibit the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a) such as museums, large libraries and depositories of archives, and refuges intended to shelter, in the event of armed conflict, the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a);

(c) centers containing a large amount of cultural property as defined in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), to be known as ‘centers containing monuments’.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{19}\) Merryman, 838.

UNESCO Convention of 1970

The 1954 Hague Convention was focused on cultural internationalism, while the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (referred hereinafter as 1970 UNESCO Convention) was a focus on national cultural heritage and the illicit market of antiquities. There were no specifics on enforcement or restitution in 1954 which instigated an attempt in the 1970 UNESCO Convention.

The 1954 Hague Convention focused on the protection during times of war, this convention was an attempt to protect during peacetimes – which meant a focus on looting and the illicit art market. The 1970 UNESCO Convention is not without problems; the loophole in 1970 is the difficult characteristics of illicit trade where antiquities become decontextualized with each changing of hands that antiquities go thru – by the time these antiquities reach a buyer they may appear to be licit.

The 1970 UNESCO Convention attempted to focus on individual actors instead of states – because at the time states were not a problem. But UNESCO is not self-executing and needs domestic laws to put the convention into actions within nations.21 Only 58 nations signed onto the convention in 1970 (it has risen to 131 as of 2016) but since the focus was for retention of objects and nationally focused it mainly attracted source nations and not the market countries. The 1954 Hague Convention’s attempt was international and protective but the 1954 Hague Convention only addressed the return of antiquities during times of conflict, the UNESCO Convention of 1970 addressed the return of antiquities taken during times of peace. So together the two conventions did offer a moral message over a spectrum of issues facing cultural heritage.

Two years later the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage would create the World Heritage Committee, who oversaw the creation of protected natural and cultural sites with great importance to humankind. Then in the 1990s a new list began to take prominence – a list of Heritage sites that were in danger of being destroyed.

Hague Convention and Second Protocol of 1999

In 1999, with 27 sites on UNESCO’s endangered list, there was a need for new convention or a revisit to the 1954 Hague Convention. The moral message of

21 Wantuch-Thole, 128.
1954 Hague Convention could only go so far without enforcement. So, the choice was made to make a second protocol that would supplement and not supplant\textsuperscript{22} the 1954 Hague Convention (referred hereinafter as Hague Second Protocol). The Hague Second Protocol called on governments to become parties and adhere and follow international laws. The Hague Second Protocol was also an attempt to address both cultural internationalism and nationalism with an elaboration of enhanced protection concept. This enhanced protection had three main conditions where the “cultural property in question must be of the greatest importance for humanity; it must be protected by adequate domestic legal and administrative measures, and it may not be used for military purposes or to shield military sites.”\textsuperscript{23} An attempt to close the loophole of military necessity, but this convention would not go into effect until 2004 (after the Iraq invasion that will be spoken to later).

UNESCO Conventions are attempts to create cultural heritage protection through international “Opinio Juris” or public policy approach.\textsuperscript{24} But public awareness of the issues is also because of the rise of looting and cultural heritage destruction. In 2001 the Taliban blew up the Buddhas of Bamiyan. The Taliban’s attack on the Buddhas of Bamiyan was a “modern phenomenon”\textsuperscript{25} and it was a message to the international community and the internet. It was a political statement more than a theological one – though grounded in iconoclasm especially when payment for saving the Buddhas was offered to the Taliban. It is not because the UNESCO’s Conventions kept looting and destruction at bay, instead it is the nature of the globalized world that has created this issue. Iconoclastic attacks used to be very localized and regional attacks. Now it is mean for the global world. Lynn Meskell, Professor of Anthropology at Stanford and author of many pieces described the destroyed Buddhas as a site of “negative heritage,” serving as a reminder of intolerance and violence but also a symbolized message.\textsuperscript{26} The message not in the iconoclasm but the message that the international community does not know how to prevent these symbolic uses of violence.

\textsuperscript{22} O’Keefe, 45.
\textsuperscript{23} Hladik, 460.
\textsuperscript{24} Wantuch-Thole, 352.
\textsuperscript{25} Flood, 651.
\textsuperscript{26} Rowland, 2.
Then two years later the United States led coalition in Iraq would spell out havoc for cultural heritage there. In 2003 UNESCO, would have another Convention, this for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage which became yet another attempt to build a global ethic.27 All of these conventions are meant to foster and build a cultural internationalism and global interest in the protection of cultural heritage. Nevertheless, these conventions are only documents, with little to no repercussion or enforcement apparatus to apply to the international scene where lack of funding and bureaucratic, risk avoiding attitudes of organizations and individuals.28

As an overview, there are two main concepts when it comes to cultural heritage protection. The 1954 Hague Convention leads into the “Cultural Internationalism” where a global cosmopolitan view defines humans as a single entity with shared responsibility. Internationalists focus on the humankind as a unified culture with a shared descendent factor. The other school of thought, as can be seen in 1970 UNESCO Convention is “Cultural Nationalism” where cultural heritage becomes a tool for nation building and uniting people with common ancestry and heritage but also with a focus of retention of antiquities. Nationalists focus on the ownership of culture for those descended from the creators. Both concepts are effective and essential ideas for cultural heritage protection and the resulting Cultural laws embody the two categories where “bans on exporting

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27 Meskell, 485.
28 Kila, 320.
archaeological objects from the country and statues nationalizing all archaeological artifacts within national borders.\textsuperscript{29}

There are also three major issues for progress in UNESCO and the arena of cultural heritage protection are challenges faced by experts within UNESCO, the increasing politicization of cultural heritage as issue, and a fiscal crisis of funding.\textsuperscript{30} Experts and communities have less of a voice now in the conventions where national agendas are more important. This then leads into politicization of the committee where national interests and opinion (and sometimes cultural nationalism) become contentious and incite division instead of unity. An example of this division, recently Israel suspended ties with UNESCO because of wording in a document which only used the Arabic term for the Temple Mount, Haram al-Sharif instead of also the Hebrew name of Har HaBayit.\textsuperscript{31} To further exacerbate the politicization funding and lack of funds become apparent when actors, like the United States have suspended financial support twice because of political decisions.\textsuperscript{32} And lastly UNESCO, has doubled the number of its inscribed sites from 505 to 1032 in 20 years but funding for the World Heritage Fund, which provides funding for World Heritage Sites, has decreased from $3.5 million to $2.9 million.\textsuperscript{33} Everything has grown but the budget, which has shrunk.

Universal heritage goals are frustrated by the interests of nations that cannot be called to account, or required to act without politics in mind.\textsuperscript{34} Unfortunately for all, the paradigm and norm building that UNESCO has accomplished to protect cultural heritage they even admit the world is still witnessing a trend in attacks and destruction of, the cultural heritage and organized looting, illicit trafficking and ransack of world heritage sites in countries affected by conflict.\textsuperscript{35} It is over 60 years of Conventions as legal instruments to prevent damage, destruction, and looting but the fate of cultural heritage in conflict remains unchanged.\textsuperscript{36}

**RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY**

The attempt in this study is to find and examine the enabling conditions that have led to the resurgence of systematic looting and iconoclastic destruction

\textsuperscript{29} Borodkin, 391.
\textsuperscript{30} Meskell, 486.
\textsuperscript{31} Sehran.
\textsuperscript{32} Meskell, 490.
\textsuperscript{33} Strebe.
\textsuperscript{34} Meskell, 490.
\textsuperscript{35} UNODC.
\textsuperscript{36} Mollick.
that began to appear in the 1990s and have peaked in the current conflicts in the MENA region today – and continue to worsen daily. As seen in the graph below the In-Danger Listing of UNESCO’s World Heritage sites has continue to grow, especially after the Buddhas of Bamiyan incident in 2001. The light blue line illustrates how Natural World Heritage sites have improved protection and been removed from the listings, but the danger to cultural sites have only grown and this study is attempting to pinpoint the enabling conditions.

![UNESCO In Danger Listing](image)

**Figure 2. Source UNESCO Website.**

This UNESCO data is not the perfect set of data for this analysis of growing endangerment of cultural heritage because there are thousands of sites that UNESCO does not recognize because of priority of importance and lack of funding so it not classified as a world heritage site. In total, the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO (WHC) recognizes 814 cultural sites out of 1052 (as of November 2016). In Figure 3 the blue dots represent all the cultural sites protected.
Figure 3. Source UNESCO World Heritage Center Website

The World Heritage sites act as a sample size to demonstrate the trend of the growing number of sites in danger of destruction – or in the case studies, already destroyed – but it is vital to remember there is greater destruction happening. In Figure 4 the red dots represent all the current UNESCO sites listed as In-Danger.

Figure 4. Source UNESCO World Heritage Center
Unlike the clustering of heritage sites in Europe, the In-Danger list sites are grouped more in the MENA region with over a third of the sites within or near the region. In the Figure 5 a closer view of the MENA region, the countries of Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Mali have only heritage sites in danger.

![UNESCO Cultural Heritage Sites in Danger](image)

*Figure 5. Source UNESCO World Heritage Center*

So, conflict is of course a negative factor for cultural heritage destruction because the worst time for cultural heritage is time of conflict. The enabling conditions are not “endemic or automatic in conflict situations.” This doesn’t mean to say that in times of peace there is no destruction or looting, but conflict allows for extreme increases to occur because the focus remains on the conflict and not of the bad behavior behind the scenes. Media and thus public attention remained focused on political and security issues while destruction is dismissed as part of war and looting is dismissed as irrational and part of opportunity and not a form of violence with destructive repercussions. The quantitative analysis of conflict is an attempt to determine a specificity within conflict that might trigger cultural heritage destruction on the scale of the current issue. The statement across all the literature is that this resurgence and growing issue of looting and destruction has not been seen since WWII, thus the starting point of this research. To view global conflict as seen in Figure 6 below, conflict is a constant around the world. And conflict in the Middle East isn’t even the most prevalent.

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37 Bohlen.
38 Mac Ginty, 861.
39 Mac Ginty, 860.
The next Figures 7 to 9 were also to see an attempt to isolate a factor to conflict in the middle east that could affect the current state. Figure 7 focused on aggregated sum of conflict to see if regions with constant conflict may be more at risk. Figure 8 focused on the intensity of conflict, to analyze if the intensity of a conflict is higher perhaps cultural heritage would be more at risk.
Lastly, the final analysis of conflict was to investigate the type of conflict to see if there was a type of conflict in the MENA region which might dictate the rise in the 90s of cultural heritage attacks. UCDP defines four types of conflicts in their datasets. Extra systemic armed conflict (1) is between a state and non-state actor from outside – many times a conflict over territory. Interstate armed conflict (2) is between two or more states. Internal armed conflict (3) is between a state and internal opposition group. And lastly Internationalized internal armed conflict (4) is between a state and internal opposition group with international intervention.  

The MENA region has experienced all types but none were directly indicative to influencing cultural heritage destruction. Though historically internal conflicts have had a major influence on proliferation of looted antiquities, there are a few countries that has external conflicts and still issues of looting. But in the following qualitative case study analysis soon to come, the conflict in Iraq and Syria took very different forms.

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40 UCDP
41 Tijhuis, 136.
THEORIES BEHIND THE ACTIONS

In academia and social sciences, we look to examine the world through specific lens to explain why trends happen or don’t happen. Political science is no different and there are two main reasons why the analysis of political sciences theories can be enlightening to this topic. The first is to illuminate why cultural heritage destruction is important internationally. The second is to explain that even though Islam is the current perpetrator it not endemic to this faith. Even though social processes with violence are difficult to grasp using social science research method it can illuminate other circumstances and possible interpretations.42 This is important because it can illustrate human nature during conflict and violence including how looting can be a form of political violence even when political meaning/motive from looting is difficult to infer.43 But without studying violence and conflict we may have little chance with dealing with the repercussions, healing from the symbolic wounds, or perhaps even prevention.

42 Mac Ginty, 860.
43 Mac Ginty, 861.
Huntington’s Clash

In Samuel P. Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*, a main point of discourse is the hypothesis that people will look to their religious and cultural identities in the post-Cold War era. As a generalized overview his argument has merit and is becoming the norm in human’s identity politics. Nationalism has taken a back seat in the identity constructs and people are primarily identifying with religious or cultural identities. This has led to conflicts across the world based on ethnicity, cultural, and religion far more than realist wars of interest, fear, and power. The resurgence of religious identities has lead the iconoclastic destruction of cultural heritage and religious symbols. These new types of war have occurred on every continent suggesting it’s a human factor and not a regional anomaly – but in the MENA region the increase of cultural heritage and destruction is unique and Huntington’s belief would be because of Islam. Huntington’s generalizations are too over simplified to be the only reasons for cultural heritage destruction. Huntington explains that these “assumptions, biases, and prejudices […] determine how we perceive reality,” but what he fails to see is he himself isn’t above these assumptions. He proliferates this with his “us and them” theories. Huntington himself is attempting to be iconoclastic in his analysis of the Islam vs West theory. Breaking Islam into a set of signs and symbols thus placing a very diverse population under a rhetoric of fear directed at them. A byproduct of iconoclasm is also an attempt to unify “under a single cultural (and eventually historical) identity,” which is exactly how Huntington conducts his Islam vs West theory.

If Huntington is correct in his assumptions, then ISIS and Al-Qaeda are also correct for their jihad and war upon the “West.” But Muslims are too diverse in population and Islam is too diverse in interpretation to be categorized. Just like this generalized “west” – there is no neat box that these dynamic cultures can be placed in to. It’s an oversimplification that have two main contradictory elements in the Islam vs West model with the issue of cultural heritage. The first is manifested by Iraqis and Syrians who are Muslim, born and raised in their home countries, and struggling to save something that extremist groups claim as “western.” These Muslim academics have also not let contrasting political views stop collaboration and working together. Some are employed by the Regime, some fought with the Rebels, and all wish to save their Syrian identity and history. The other contradictory element is that ISIS is attacking Muslim history and culture as well as ancient or pre-Islam heritage. Western media is focused on the

44 Huntington, 30.
45 Noyes, 83
46 Harkin, 40.
destruction of Pre-Islamic heritage, but Islamic heritage has suffered in a less publicized and orchestrated scene.\textsuperscript{47} It’s Islam on Islam – there is no “West” in this calculation. So at least with the arena of cultural heritage Huntington’s \textit{Clash of Civilization} has little worth if we wish to save anything.

\textbf{Realism}

Realists are one of the original political science theories dating back to the Peloponnesian war and Thucydides. The basis of the realist theory is why humans engage in war. The focus is on states as actors and these actors are focused on maximizing power. The driving forces being fear, interest, and power. If the current conflicts in the MENA region were conducted by realists, the only cultural heritage destruction that would happen would be the places caught in the crossfire – cultural heritage would just be another casualty of war. Realism does not explain the rising trend of attacks on cultural heritage because to a realists, statues, temples, and remnants of societies long past are just stones. Stone with no power or sway over war. This isn’t true, as evident by the UNESCO conventions and public opinion showing we do care about stones; but this interest and power is a social construction – thus constructed power.

\textbf{Constructivism}

Whereas Realism has little sway, Constructivism fits into these connotations that stones create cultural identity. Constructivism as a theory describes that the world as socially and historically constructed. These constructs are created by humans, both for positive and negative values and norms and thus can also be deconstructed. Identity formation is fluid and easily eradicated or deconstructed with destruction. The current proof of this theory is UNESCO as an entity. The why cultural heritage is important is best examined through the lens of a Constructivist. “individually, the past is memory – collectively, it is history. Both are constructs entangled with identity issues. Though history and memory are imagined, the does not mean that they are imaginary.\textsuperscript{48} UNESCO works as a cosmopolitan and international body concerning itself with humanity’s cultural heritage with the emergence of international laws and institutions for protecting human rights.\textsuperscript{49} UNESCO is trying to construct a world where cultural heritage matters because it connects to cultural identity – which is also constructed. Jenkins in \textit{Social Identity} explains identity as the ways in which individuals and

\textsuperscript{47} Danti, 139.
\textsuperscript{48} Meskell, 293; Jenkins, 28.
\textsuperscript{49} Merryman, 853.
collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with others.\textsuperscript{50} It is not a state of nature that just exists, but instead evolves because of the surrounding constructs of society. Culture is an active system of “non-material forces and relationships” and influences individuals and groups.\textsuperscript{51} It’s not a product that stamps an existence upon an individual separate from their world, but instead because of their surroundings the contexts and circumstances of their lives created a multifaceted identity.

UNESCO’s task in the wake of WWII was to change the minds of men through education and promotion of cultural diversity and understanding – a form of constructivism put into an international body.\textsuperscript{52} UNESCO also attracts countries with different values, religions, and both developed and developing countries. It is a globally constructed community attempting to function with a common goal – to save common heritage of mankind. And the original goal and theme with the establishment of UNESCO was because of “the ruins of war” and to act as a cure for “war trauma.”\textsuperscript{53} Though UNESCO has issues and dilemmas because many state actors are realists and worry about power, interest, and fear the fact that UNESCO even exists is a sign Constructivism is valid in this sector and must be used to analyze cultural heritage destruction and looting.

**CASE STUDY: IRAQ**

In 2003 Coalition forces led by the United States military invaded Iraq. There was the expectation of a quick operation to overthrow Saddam Hussein and establish a new Iraqi state. The invasion didn’t go as planned – it became years of occupation. Experts in the cultural heritage field warned the military and government of sites to avoid and places to protect but there was a lack of dissemination of information, and the directions never got to military commanders on the ground.\textsuperscript{54} They were without expert advice and units received little information about cultural protection beyond the directive to avoid damage.

From the international scene, multiple individuals and organizations were expressing their dismay at the events they saw occurring but were helpless to aid or assist the military forces in this unforeseen event. American cultural societies and experts were weak, scattered, divided, and accustomed to peacetime issues.

\textsuperscript{50} Jenkins, 4.
\textsuperscript{51} Abbas, 49.
\textsuperscript{52} Meskell, 484.
\textsuperscript{53} Rowlands, 1.
\textsuperscript{54} Wegener.
Not dealing armed conflict situations. They also did not seek to embed themselves with the military where they needed to be because academics and military tend not to not see eye to eye. The culminating mistake was the looting of the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad – which found itself in the crossfire of multiple forces. And the loophole in the 1954 Hague Convention became front and center – military necessity supplanted all other needs. The American military saw the archaeological sites as targeting issues (i.e. don’t drop bombs) not security issues once the boots were on the ground. They expected looting to occur, but looting of normal commodities and not of cultural heritage. Protection of the museum was not a priority. The Iraq coalition forces failed to prevent destruction and looting in the power vacuum that was created after the 2003 invasion and the damage or allowed damage to ancient sites and have yet to be addressed the problem.

Looting of this nature is not unheard of during war and at the time it didn’t spell out the disaster to cultural heritage that it would become. But when one cultural center, that should be protected under The Hague Convention of 1954 is emptied of 13,315 and looting estimates from 2003-2005 range from 400,000 to 600,000. In the absence of any mechanism to prevent looting has allowed for iconoclastic themes to grow. The American military forces needed Civil Affair Military officers within its ranks. Like the Monuments Men in WWII, they could be an expert for field commanders, helping with possible issues that may arise. This didn’t exist nor was there a plan for an international police force.

The Iraq National Museum was looted from April 8-16 2003. Though around 4000 pieces have been recovered the majority disappeared into smuggling routes spreading out through the middle east and into market countries and warehouses where will stay, sometimes up to a decade. Neighboring countries do confiscate antiquities crossing the borders or sometimes they would be found in rare and unique circumstances where experts see the item someplace they should.

Iraq is an example of poor planning in cultural protection and lack of comprehension of the destructive force looted antiquities can damage the national and cultural identity. It also demonstrates the ineffectiveness of UNESCO as an

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55 Rothfield, 29.
56 Rothfield, 82.
57 Lawler, 28.
58 Wantuch-Thole, 73.
59 Stone, Rothfield, 137.
60 Rothfield, 127.
61 Wantuch-Thole, 73.
international actor. Even when the situation in Iraq stabilized briefly there was no slowing in the antiquities market.\textsuperscript{62} Iraq’s main issue before the Arab Spring was looting mainly because of porous borders without security from central authority first allowed for Iraqi artifacts to disperse, but not with a larger and greater regional issues, smugglers have more porous borders to traverse.\textsuperscript{63} Add the fact that the profits of smuggling antiquities it greater while the penalties are less than other illicit trafficking.\textsuperscript{64} And the loss of the item isn’t the only detrimental effect, but it also erases the archaeological record. The context and information is destroyed even if the item is recovered. Traffickers are known to purposely alter the items to make them less recognizable or identifiable – thus distorting history.

UNESCO sites were placed on the in-danger list, but it was not a total danger that would be coming. Though events were not improving in Iraq, looting of sites known and unknown were catalogued via satellite and those on the ground still reports looting and smuggling because there was no central authority with the power to enforce and protect. Looting can be economic, symbolic, strategic, and selective and worse still when it adopts a routine quality.\textsuperscript{65} Because of the combinations of a presence of an organized militant group, both state or nonstate, an availability of goods to be looted, a prevailing political or security situation, and a sociocultural/societal construction of permissive behavior Iraq found itself at the center of cultural heritage destruction and looting never scene.\textsuperscript{66}

**CASE STUDY: SYRIA**

Then the Arab Spring hit, and country after country in the MENA region attempted to demonstrate their unhappiness with their central authority as well as an attempt to establish a new relationship of state and their people. It did not end well for many participating countries. Debatably, Syria was the most disastrous. Their springtime demonstrations led to the only reaction an authoritarian knows – with complete and total force. Civil war broke out between Bashar al Assad’s forces (referred to hereinafter as the regime) and other actors such as the Free Syrian Army and their affiliates (referred to hereinafter as the rebel forces) around areas of cultural heritage and once again that loop hole of military necessity became blaringly apparent. Sites in Syria are not roped off like in Europe but are scattered – part of the living of everyday life.\textsuperscript{67} So when war, and such total war as

\textsuperscript{62} Howard.
\textsuperscript{63} Lawler, 30.
\textsuperscript{64} Borodkin, 378.
\textsuperscript{65} Mac Ginty, 867.
\textsuperscript{66} Mac Ginty, 864-65.
\textsuperscript{67} Harkin, 40.
the Syrian conflict quickly escalated into, ancient cities such as Homs and Aleppo are reduced to rubble,\textsuperscript{68} one because they are caught in the crossfire and two because some factions do not care about protecting their cultural heritage.

The civil war continued while another threat grew in the bordering region of Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State grew in the power vacuum of two neighboring countries where no central authority existed. ISIS began to destroy and loot in deliberate attacks on heritage determined to destroy what they cannot make a profit on and sell where there is a profit to be made.\textsuperscript{69} Compound this growth of an extremist group with the breakdown of central authority allowed for looting and destruction to grow systematic. And this only allowed for organized destruction to flourish because if no one was there to stop looting, there was nothing to impede destruction.

Notoriety came to ISIS for iconoclasm when images of members took chisels, hammer, and drills to the Mosul museum in February 2015.

\textbf{Figure 10. ISIS attacks Mosul Museum, 2015.}

Then a month later they marched on Palmyra. Khaled al-Asaad was Palmyra’s 82-year-old head of antiquities for more than 40 years. ISIS beheaded him condemning him as “director of idolatry.”\textsuperscript{70} After a month of captivity, interrogation, and torture, al-Asaad refused to reveal locations of the hidden antiquities that other staff could hide away. Al-Asaad is not the only one risking everything to combat ISIS’s iconoclasm. Detailed narrative reports from individuals on the ground, in bordering areas represent the best form/source of information and will be the most effective in the fight against looting and destruction.\textsuperscript{71} A group of Syrian academics on the border of Turkey and Syria devise plans to save places and antiquities from profiteers, desperate civilians, and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Parkinson
\item \textsuperscript{69} Danti, 133.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Harkin, 47.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Danti, 134.
\end{itemize}
fundamentalists who have plundered Syria’s rich artistic heritage to fund their war effort.\textsuperscript{72}

Extremists in every age of history are known for some version of iconoclasm. The attack on symbols important to a people is also an attack on those people because it is dehumanizing and undermining cultural, religious, and national/historical identities. Showcasing this eradication of cultural heritage is also a promotion radical ideologies.\textsuperscript{73} Once used as a regional message now reaches the global audience and a target of significant will express to the world a message of intolerance and instrumental in establishing fear. The cultural heritage of Syria, both ancient and Islamic art, are impacted through military activity, looting, and ideologically motivated destruction.\textsuperscript{74} The only comparison to the amount of issues is from Iraq during the mid-2000s. But this is the same story in a different country and each neighboring situation worsens the situation.\textsuperscript{75}

Iraq and Syria are not the only nations experiencing looting and issues. Currently over a third of the endangered World Heritage cultural sites are in the Middle East and North Africa region. And it is exacerbated by the breakdown of central authority post Arab Spring and the growth of ISIS within their borders. Christopher Marinello, founder and director of the Art Recovery Group in London agrees that conflict “is the worst time for cultural heritage, particularly in a part of the world that was a cradle of civilization.”\textsuperscript{76} Conflict with the additional factors of breakdown of central authority and local extremist groups are the reasons this region is experiencing unprecedented looting and destruction. Local efforts remain the most reliable method for protection. International cooperation and assistance need to empower MENA regional experts, institutions, and locals, helping with facilitation of their active role in protection of their cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{77}

Cultural heritage destruction and looting is not just occurring in Iraq and Syria. All the UNESCO sites in Yemen, Libya, and Mali (though sub-Saharan), are on the UNESCO in-danger list. Yemen has also lost a Museum in Damara, the Great Dam of Marib (some considered an 8th wonder of the world), and the domed mausoleum of al-Habib bin Sheik Abu Bakr bin Salem was destroyed.\textsuperscript{78} In Libya, post Arab Spring and post Muammar Gaddafi dictatorship, there is no presence of

\textsuperscript{72} Parkinson.
\textsuperscript{73} Danti, 133.
\textsuperscript{74} Casana, 142.
\textsuperscript{75} Stone; Casana
\textsuperscript{76} Bohlen.
\textsuperscript{77} Danti, 135.
\textsuperscript{78} Naumkin.
a central authority. A shaky coalition and constant shifting powers of the militias has allowed ISIS forces to grow within its borders. Libyan factions of ISIS have begun to attack coastal Greco-Roman cities like Cyrene, Leptis, and Magna. And to the southwest, Mali has experienced problems since the 90s there have been endangered sites within its borders and the post Arab Spring world has allowed for greater instability. Under the occupation of Timbuktu in 2012 occupiers demolished Sufi shrines with a bulldozer. And out of 24,000 ancient manuscripts in Timbuktu’s Ahmed Baba Institute, 4203 disappears or were damaged during the conflict. The long-standing smuggling routes used for drugs and arms trafficking have quickly almost molded to become illicit antiquities trafficking within their borders.

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<td>Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls</td>
<td>Archaeological Site of Cyrene</td>
<td>Old Towns of Djenne</td>
<td>Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity</td>
<td>Ancient City of Damascus</td>
<td>Old Walled City of Shibam</td>
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<td>Ashur (Qa’at Sherqat)</td>
<td>Archaelogical Site of Leptis Magna</td>
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<td>Ancient Villages of Northern Syria</td>
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**Figure 11. Source UNESCO**

In Egypt, the situation is different but not ideal. Because of relative stability only one of Egypt’s UNESCO sites is on the in-danger list – and it’s not even in danger because of armed conflict. Egypt has a history of strong and important cultural ministries are in the country’s governing bodies. In other countries, cultural experts are left out of policy, in Egypt cultural ministries are closely linked with economy so they have more relative strength. Egypt is not immune to current problems, most recently, the archaeological museum in Mallawi lost 1050 of 1089 artifacts. And satellite imagery used by experts like Parcak, Casanas, and Contreras have proven that looting is on an exponential rise (some places with a

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79 Hadingham.
80 Mollick.
81 Mollick.
82 Mollick.
50% increase) and “security at ancient sites is unraveling.” In another area the satellite imagery shows 50 pits in May 2011 then a year later the number is at 988 pits. And though Egypt has not had the destruction issues seen in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Mali based on conservative estimates, about $2 billion dollars of antiquities have been looted from Egypt since the January 2011 Revolution.

These countries are experiencing similar conditions in varying degrees. A breakdown of central authority which links to instances of looting and cultural heritage destruction linked to extremist groups who wish to attack cultural identity. If a legitimate central authority cannot be established or trusted by the population the looting situation will only worsen. Even in Egypt with more comparable stability than Iraq and Syria the issue of looting in growing exponentially.

**DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Because the world is only getting smaller the international community must resolve differences and work together in this matter of cultural heritage protection. In this arena past failures stimulate the current recommendations. The first broad recommendation is that experts of varying sectors (military, diplomatic, and academic) need to work together without aversion to each other. The second broad recommendation is groups, ranging from UNESCO, to NGOs like Global Heritage Fund, to the so called “monuments men” in Syria need to work together and support each other instead of being naturally competitive or letting politics hold them back. And lastly, countries as international bodies need to uphold the conventions and requests to stop illegal export, trade, and purchase from at risk countries experiencing conflict, looting, and destruction of cultural heritage.

**Combat Looting**

The Archaeological Institute of America estimates the revenue in looted antiquities is $10 to 20 million annually. It is an international logistical nightmare but there are a few focusing points upon the stages of looting. These stages include at the site of the looting, the attempt to keep items within the borders of the source countries, and the how to deal with the market once the item is outside of the source borders.

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83 Hadingham.
84 Parcak, 199.
85 Lehr.
86 Rothfield, 143.
87 Rothfield, 138.
The first major difficulty is at the actual site of the looting. Because the scale of looting is alarming as seen via satellite imagery collected\(^88\) there are two challenges with protection from afar – publicizing the information which could lead to knowledge of sites in danger and the difficulties of tracking patterns of looting over time\(^89\) without documentation on the ground. And it is not like Locals are getting rich by looting, but they are getting by.\(^90\) “This makes the stopping of archaeological site looting a critical matter for international security efforts, especially in Egypt where site looting is tied closely with economic instability and a drop-in tourism.”\(^91\) Governments need to establish security and a rule of law to protect these sites. Iraqis have tried to address the problem, but the number of guards, if they are armed, if they have transportation, and if they are paid have all become road blocks to any sort of productive protection.\(^92\) Also in many sources, there was a consensus that more controls on the sources of looting produce more illegal trade, which calls for more controls, and so it escalates.\(^93\) the appetite for cultural objects sustains the problem when there is no central authority and the demand is both substantial and growing.\(^94\) So because of difficulties of making sites secure, of finding and protecting the sites, and where to find the funding to make these sites secure and protected.

The second major difficulty in combating looting is how to prevent antiquities from leaving the borders of their source country. Multiple sources agree that just because a population is impoverished looting rates stay low until antiquities from that region become profitable commodities.\(^95\) In addition, vulnerability of source countries who have the most to lose are frequently hit the hardest. Countries in crisis lead to a break down in law and order are the most likely to be exploited.\(^96\) The United States has information which links the element of extremist groups, which usually run in the same circles as smugglers of antiquities.\(^97\) The United Kingdom have also acknowledged the link of transporting stolen antiquities to funding terrorism.\(^98\) And many times stolen art is used as laundering money in the black market.\(^99\) If security cannot be in place at

\(^{88}\) Parcak, Contreras
\(^{89}\) Contreras
\(^{90}\) Proulx, 121.
\(^{91}\) Parcak, 197.
\(^{92}\) Rothfield, 147.
\(^{93}\) Merryman; Wantuch-Thole; O’Keefe.
\(^{94}\) Merryman, 848.
\(^{95}\) Rothfield, 16.
\(^{96}\) Lehr.
\(^{97}\) Rothfield, 149.
\(^{98}\) Rothfield, 149.
\(^{99}\) Tijhuis, 139.
sites then a concerted effort needs to be keeping items within their borders. The so-called Syrian “Monuments Men” are attempting this by posing at buyers and documenting or hiding as much as they can, but bordering countries need to support local efforts and be aware of the situation. One set of numbers shows 1450 Iraqi antiquities confiscated in Jordan, 360 in Syria, and some in Kuwait but not as many in Iran and Turkey even though Turkey was once a strength in anti-trafficking. In the mid-1990s Turkish police were involved in 17,500 official investigations of stolen antiquities.\textsuperscript{100} It is becoming more difficult to stop the items from leaving the source countries and when it is not a priority when security is threatened by actors like ISIS.

The last major difficulty in combating looting is how to deal with items once they are out of their borders, entering the art market, and being bought by market countries. Illegal trade in art and antiquities (also referred to as cultural racketeering) is one of the top five most profitable illegal global businesses\textsuperscript{101} and it requires a global solution. The first part is that antiquities will pass so many hands by the time it reaches a buyer the items might even seem licit. There is a reduction of criminality at each level because the item’s origins are obscured at each stage from the looters to the smugglers to the intermediaries to the auctioneer, dealers, and purchasers.\textsuperscript{102}

Also common is when conveniently deceased collectors and shady dealers leave incomplete paper trail there is little ground for actual prosecution\textsuperscript{103}– most individuals can go free. Then auction houses entertain “fiduciary relationship” or “gentleman informality” where secrecy and discretion are vital but in the case of looted antiquities can be very damaging because as seen in the exhibitions and catalogues there is an increase in archaeological objects – the problem of private sales remain.\textsuperscript{104} To try and solve this dilemma the international community is focusing on the marketplace; doing what it can to scare off demand in hopes that supply will shrink.\textsuperscript{105} The UN Security Council passes a resolution banning trade of artifacts illegally removed from Syria since 2011 and from Iraq since 1999. And the International Council of Museums has issued “red lists” for objects at risk in Iraq, Syria, and Libya.\textsuperscript{106} And Western Europe and the United States have complied to these agreements but new market countries are not. According to James

\textsuperscript{100} Tijhuis, 137.  
\textsuperscript{101} Lehr.  
\textsuperscript{102} Borodkin, 385.  
\textsuperscript{103} Bohlen.  
\textsuperscript{104} Wantuch-Thole, 89.  
\textsuperscript{105} Bohlen.  
\textsuperscript{106} Bohlen.
McAndrew a former senior special agent responsible for Cultural Property, Art, And Antiquities Program of the Department of Homeland Security, intelligence suggests that pieces leaving Iraq will go to buyers in UAE, Iran, Syria, and other Gulf States.\footnote{Howard.} Looted Syrian antiquities have buyers regionally close and wealthy; mainly as Saudis, Emirates, and Iranians.\footnote{Yoon.} In May 2015, The Antiquities Coalition with partnership with UNESCO hosted a conference of countries (Libya, Sudan, Jordan, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Oman) to discuss looting and issues of cultural heritage management. This was a first for many of these countries involved.\footnote{Parcak, 202.} But the monitoring of private sale is more difficult than the auction houses because of instance, the United Arab Emirates have amassed private collection (both licit and illicit) becoming one of the new market countries.

To combat looting in the future will remain to be difficult even if the international community could unite. The fear is antiquities will remain hidden for a decade before entering the market, when the watchful eyes have relaxed, and the public notoriety is usually gone so countries need to remain vigilant.\footnote{Bohlen; Yoon.} The change that does need to occur is a need for preventative measures during peacetime rather than during conflict when it’s almost always too late.\footnote{Wegener.} Museums need to learn from the National Museum of Baghdad mistake and keep highly detailed index cards documenting its holdings including digital backups.\footnote{Rothfield, 94.}

**Combat Destruction**

Whereas looting does offer potential prevention at different stages of the looting, smuggling, and selling process; to combat destruction is much more complex. There is a relationship between market demand and site destruction both thru the global trend of systematic looting and iconoclastic destruction.\footnote{Proulx, 112.} This growing trend in the MENA region needs to be addressed and regulated via the market.\footnote{Proulx, 113.} Though the motive and reason behind the two actions differ they are both forms of destruction, and in the case of ISIS, what they cannot carry away they often smash, either out of malice or to obtain salable fragments.\footnote{Wegener.} And
because of the market driven nature of the looting collectors who continue to buy illicit antiquities indirectly cause destruction.\textsuperscript{116}

The difficulty in combating cultural heritage destruction is how to deal with iconoclasm because the complexities of iconoclasm are embedded in motivations inseparable from politics and religion.\textsuperscript{117} The cultural destruction of ISIS is always a “carefully orchestrated act.”\textsuperscript{118} ISIS has two main goals destroying cultural heritage sites in Syria: one is to raise fund for its operations and secondly to erase the cultural identity and existence of differing cultures and interpretations of Islam.\textsuperscript{119} To destroy culture is the objective and extremism is one of the greatest threats facing cultural heritage. Thomas Levy of UC San Diego explains when intolerant extremists are coupled with modern weapons of destruction “the potential for destruction of heritage is unparalleled compared with the past.”\textsuperscript{120} So because extremists have the tools, the technology, and the global audience their message and actions have greater reverberations.

Until recently, iconoclasm is difficult for countries outside the destruction to understand because their identity has no connection to the stones being destroyed. Education both within the country and from outside can clarify the importance of these sites to officials, military, and general populace – though there are possibilities of backlash like in the case of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001. When experts in iconoclasm like Zainab Bahrani provide information and cultural heritage groups brief militaries of the issues occurring, they need to pay attention because the lack of disseminated information was the failure on cultural heritage protection in Iraq.\textsuperscript{121} Officials need to inform those on the ground where sites are or where the museums are located. This includes additional education to explain how “the connection between monument and memory” and that realism inherent in military operations does not apply to this connection between stones and identity.\textsuperscript{122} Because destruction of culture has a severe impact on the identity of the people who survive and could impact stability in the MENA region.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{116} Contreras.
\textsuperscript{117} Cunliffe, 344.
\textsuperscript{118} Hadingham
\textsuperscript{119} Howard; Mollick.
\textsuperscript{120} Murdock.
\textsuperscript{121} Rothfield, 100.
\textsuperscript{122} Bahrani, 130.
\textsuperscript{123} Al Quntar; Bahrani.
CONCLUSION

There is the saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. And some may see UNESCO attempting to protect stones as some of these good intentions. Men like Khaled al-Asaad and Ma’amoun Abdul karim would disagree to these damning good intentions. Protecting cultural heritage is worth fighting for just as much as freedoms of speech and religion. Humans are existential beings who identify themselves more and more with identities that are not state created.

Conflict is inevitable, but all trends of conflicts illuminate a decline in intensity and totality of conflict. But the attack on culture and history created a new cultural war in attempts to dehumanize and destroy identities. These impacts are on a global scale and the global community needs to respond. There needs to be acknowledgement of importance, comprehension of the importance, and most of all help the communities in danger. Just because conflict is inevitably doesn’t mean the destruction of humanity cultural heritage it.

Humans are capable of looting their past and destroying their future, but they are also capable of hope. Hope encapsulated 116 km from Damascus, Syria where the National Museum of Beirut which just reopened after an extended closure of four decades.124 The curator, Anne-Marie Maïla Afeiche stated even when there is destruction and conflict, “there is always hope to be able to recover a whole collection, a whole museum, and to open it to visitors so they can recognize

124 Stoughton.
their history and their cultural heritage.”

We can only speculate why Khaled al-Asaad chose to stay when ISIS approached Palmyra but he would be proud of the continued fight against the destruction and looting of cultural heritage.

APPENDIX OF RESEARCH DEFINITIONS

Conflict

Conflict will be used in the relation to “armed conflict” for this study. Defined by Uppsala Conflict Data (UCDP) as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year.”

The focus placed in this research is concerned about armed conflict when it’s war. In lesser conflict, there are instances of looting and/or destruction, but only in extended conflicts does it become systematic – which is the rising trend of cultural heritage attacks today.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is defined by UNESCO 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.” This definition, like many in international conventions, is left broad to be useful. In this study, cultural heritage is an umbrella term to cover different versions like cultural property and common heritage including aspects of intangible heritage (culture or tradition) or immovable heritage (ancient sites, temples, even cities) all which experience destruction because of conflict. A subset term for cultural heritage is the term antiquities, used in this study to reference the movable cultural heritage that is more often looted and stolen but can also be destroyed. The human elements in heritage, can be tangible or intangible, and remain powerful remnants of the past defining cultural identity.

Iconoclasm

Iconoclasm, in Greek is the breaking/destroying of images. These images can be interpreted as icons or idols with religious or cultural meanings and the point to is to erase or break the symbolic nature or connection to these images. Iconoclasm is a contested term that shifts and shapes differently in context and time. It is important to note that this destruction of images is a deliberate attack on the symbol of the item, usually because of a religious or cultural difference by those iconoclastically destroying the cultural heritage. It is not a direct attack on people, but on places and things that clash with the attacker’s beliefs and represent the attacked. And even though the mob mentality has vandalistic tendencies, the point is destruction – not destruction of the representation behind the image. Iconoclasm can be both expressive and instrumental. Expressive is the area of destruction where it could almost be vandalistic, but the choice of what to destroy is taken into consideration. Whereas instrumental is meant to send a message – defacing and decapitations orchestrated for a global audience.

125 Stoughton.
126 UCDP
127 UNESCO
128 Strebe.
129 Gamboni, 23.
130 Flood, 647.
Iconoclasm is common to extremist groups but not restricted to them. Iconoclasm is also a form of propaganda where "permitting and producing one type of image over another is at the heart of politics of iconoclasm." It is a tool of propaganda and subjugation – meant to attack the identity and history of people.

Extremism

One of the hypothesized enabling condition for the increase in cultural heritage destruction seen today is because of the rise and presence of extremism – usually of a religious nature. This paper will not dissect extremism types, instead leaving that to other scholars. The point of this discussion is not to define groups like the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, or ISIS (all of which may have different subdivisions or names). There will be no dissection of the Islamic State or any of its iterations (also known as ISIS, ISIL, Daesh, or Islamic State). From here on this extremist group will be referred to as ISIS. And extremism and iconoclasm do have a historical relationship that have spanned centuries. These groups use fear and destruction now as a primary “tactic of war” for extremists to intimidate populations and governments.

Breakdown of Central Authority

The other enabling condition hypothesized is the breakdown of central authority. This term is an overall discussion of political and state instability. Where many times in conflict, there is a breakdown of authority including lack or failure of infrastructure. This can take the form of no pay for security personnel, which leads to no security. There can also be a proliferation of arms leading to dangerous situations. These versions all have a common theme of the breakdown of central authority. This breakdown may all for a rise in looting and a rise in destruction.

Market vs. Source Countries

When speaking on looting and the world art market it is important to understand the difference between source and market, also referred to as supply and demand. Source nations are those countries who have a desirable and abundant cultural heritage that exceeds internal demand. Market nations are where the demands exceed the supply of cultural heritage. Source nations are usually developing and have a rich and ancient history. Market nations have the money and the desire to own cultural heritage from around the globe. These differences among states also manifest themselves in UNESCO conventions, where market countries will push internationalist views and where source countries will push nationalist and retentive policies – the fear and division of old imperial lines still.

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