Cultural Heritage, a Tool in Conflict and a Victim of War

Workshop 3rd - 4th May 2018

Sapienza University of Rome and Norwegian Institute in Rome

Alessandro Vanzetti (La Sapienza University of Rome), Christopher Prescott (The Norwegian Institute in Rome) and Carsten Paludan-Müller (The Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research) will host a two-day workshop in Rome 3rd-4th May 2018 that explores *Cultural Heritage, a Tool in Conflict and a Victim of War*. The workshop will explore the politics, ethics, policies and critical assessments of practices concerned with the destruction of cultural heritage, and particularly archaeological heritage, in contemporary conflicts, the use of cultural heritage in recent conflicts as a resource of domination and resistance, and the associated looting, trade and collecting.

We will explore these issues through two sub-sessions:
* *The use and destruction of archaeological heritage in conflict*
* *Looting, export, smuggling and trade of objects from conflict area to markets and collectors*

The conference day on the 3rd of May at the Norwegian Institute is restricted. On the 4th of May at La Sapienza there will be ample room for all interested. The workshop language is English. Queries concerning the event can be directed to:
* Christopher Prescott: christopher.prescott@roma.uio.no or
* Alessandro Vanzetti: alessandro.vanzetti@uniroma1.it

Tentative titles & drafts:

Alessandro Vanzetti, La Sapienza University of Rome,

Introduction to the workshop: Cultural Heritage, a Tool in Conflict and a Victim of War

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SESSION 1:   Looting, export, smuggling and trade of objects from conflict area to markets and collectors

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Christopher Prescott, The Norwegian Institute in Rome

Opening comments: *Converting history to commodities; observations from the last 20 years*

For nearly 20 years I have monitored the unravelling of the case of the Norwegian collector Martin Schøyen. The case is unique in that much is known about his collection practices, strategies to recruit researchers and entangle public academic institutions. The history also demonstrates attempts to whitewash, misinform, gain government money and create

prestigious public images. There are socio-political networks that strive to protect wealthy collectors. While the "Schøyen Saga" reveals the limitations of law-enforcement, legislation and institutional ethical guidelines, it is also a story of successes. Patient research, media exposure and public awareness limited the actions of a collector, inhibited looting by undermining the market, created institutional accountability, hastened the passing of legislation, increased law enforcement and opened a field of inquiry. The Schøyen history is used to identify general structures, actions and reactions in the interplay between looting, market, academic collaboration and resistance.

Lynda Albertson, Association for Research into Crimes against Art

Conflict, Plunder and Provenance: Where cultural wealth, poverty, political violence, and criminality intersect

Sam Hardy, Independent researcher/ American University of Rome

Antiquities trafficking, propaganda and espionage in the New Cold War

There is secure evidence of conflict antiquities trafficking by the Communist Bulgarian state during the Cold War and by the Turkish deep state then and since. Piecing together evidence that is still emerging, it is possible to document conflict antiquities trafficking and cultural heritage propaganda in the New Cold War (or Cold War 2.0). This paper concentrates on the (willing or unwilling) agents of Putinist Russia in the Eastern European crisis.

There, Russia is *spreading* fake news about illicit transfer of cultural assets by Ukraine; spreading propaganda about its policing of antiquities trafficking in the occupied territories of Ukraine; pressganging antiquities smugglers into service as spies in Estonia; and facilitating trafficking as a self-financing mechanism for propagandists in Estonia. Cultural heritage has become both a victim and an integral tool of destabilisation, invasion, occupation and annexation.

Josephine Munch Rasmussen, The Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research /Dept. of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo

Market consumption of conflict antiquities: Dealing with provenance

Market demand for archaeological objects creates incentives for forgery and theft. As a major provider of previously undocumented ancient objects, the market is also a driving force behind looting and pillaging of archaeological sites worldwide. While knowledge production is the *raison d'etre* for any scholarly study of ancient objects, the academic appropriation of unprovenanced text-artifacts is often seen to undermine their *in-situ* preservation or risk the potential corruption of datasets by forgeries and fakes. Taking the recently rising debates on ethics and methodology among scholars studying ancient manuscripts as a point of departure, this presentation addresses how stakeholders involved in trade and consumption of cultural objects deal with issues of provenance.

Dima Chahin, Architect/research consultant Oslo

The Syrian Heritage.A new approach before it is too late

In 2011 soon after the conflict started in Syria, a race against time started to save what is possible of the country's rich heritage. In addition to the devastating war damage, the widespread looting endangered thousands of years to be completely erased from our human history. What has been done, and how effective the international reaction was? Searching for a new approach to protect the Syrian cultural heritage during the ongoing conflict, learning from previous failures especially the Iraq experience. This approach is starting at the other side of the looting chain, which is the Market. Forcing looters to find other financial resources, by making it harder for looted objects to reach the markets, and killing Demand by shading the light on the dark side of this trade.

Håkon Roland, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo

The missing Knowledge Value Chain. Why import and export regulations in Norway doesn't work

The organisation and regulation to prevent illicit trade of cultural objects cannot be effective in its present state. Appropriate heritage acts and custom regulations are important, but more fundamental structural changes are necessary to bring the field forward. Diffusion of knowledge is a key issue, i.e. to establish a functional knowledge value chain involving relevant actors (ministries, police, customs, museums, the public etc.). A major challenge is the transformation from data/single cases/objects, to information, to knowledge, and finally communication to decision making authorities in order to establish best practise and good conduct across the field. The changes must include legislation, but ethical responsibility and informal knowledge must also become embedded in the organisations and institutions involved in these matters.

Hilary Soderland, Attorney at Law, Seattle

Assessing Current United States' Legal Approaches to Control the Global Trafficking of Undocumented Cultural Heritage

Worldwide legal responses vary as to safeguarding cultural heritage at risk and to restricting the global trafficking of undocumented cultural items, yet a unifying touchstone remains the 1970 *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*. The United States implemented the 1970 Convention in 1983 with the *Cultural Property Implementation Act* (CPIA), which is still the principal US legislation utilized to control the import of foreign cultural materials. Under CPIA, import restrictions on cultural materials can be stipulated through bilateral agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs), as well as emergency restrictions. While such MOUs and emergency restrictions have proved effective, their reach is limited. Recent debate centers on whether (and, if so, how) the US could more successfully impose import controls to deter the increased looting of archaeological sites and associated international criminal activity encompassing antiquities. The status quo approach is predicated upon bilateral State-to-State negotiation. Such an approach thus fails to consider the problem as a systemic, increasingly complex, and exigent reality that reflects a changing

global order. This new order includes both State and non-State actors and a rising number of conflicts that target cultural heritage for destruction and/or exploitation. This presentation appraises the ways in which the US currently implements CPIA and other legal processes in order to identify how shifts in practice and policy could better achieve legislative objectives as well as to advance the international effort to protect cultural heritage at risk.

Alfio Gullotta The *Carabinieri*, Rome (Title & abstract to be announced)

Anas Al Khabour, National Museums for World Culture, Sweden
The Swedish initiative to control illicit trafficking in antiquities

Since the fall of Baghdad in 2003 and the outbreak of the Syrian war 2011, clandestine excavations, museums blundering and illicit trafficking in antiquities have increased largely.
The National Museums for World Culture in Sweden shares in the global movement to protect cultural heritage and control illegal trafficking of cultural properties in international market. The campaign attempts to stop destruction and looting as an important source of income for extremist groups and aims to protect heritage today to build peace for the next generations.

Valerie Higgins, American University of Rome

Engaging local communities to help prevent trafficking

This paper will investigate the role of heritage communities in protecting archaeological sites and preventing trafficking of looted objects. Local communities with a direct connection to the site or objects may seem the obvious frontline guardians of their own cultural heritage, but in reality there can be many barriers to their engagement and active participation. This paper will analyze the factors that can get in the way of full community engagement in heritage protection and discuss mitigating strategies.

Suzie Thomas, Department of Cultures, University of Helsinki

Working with Cultural Objects and Manuscripts - building awareness and scholarly accountability in Finland
In 2017, a group of researchers at the University of Helsinki developed a small project intended to kick-start debate in Finland among scholars, policy decision-makers and other stakeholders concerning the global movement of cultural objects, and the steps that can be taken in Finland to ensure that we are not contributing to trafficking of unprovenanced material. Following a two-day symposium at the National Museum of Finland in June 2017, we have been busy with the next steps of this process, including drafting a code of ethics for researchers working with cultural objects and manuscripts, as there is currently little guidance for Finland-based scholars in this regard. In this presentation, I will outline our progress, and our prospects for affecting policy and practice.

SESSION 2: The use and destruction of archaeological heritage in conflict

Carsten Paludan-Müller, **The Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research, Oslo**:
Opening comments, session 2: The Geopolitics of Cultural Heritage in Conflict

When cultural heritage becomes a victim of targeted destruction during war, it is because identity plays an ever more important role in contemporary warfare. However, that identity apparently has become an important conflict factor, if not an outright driver has deeper historical roots.

A geopolitical perspective makes it possible to link many of today's conflicts to the major reorganization from the beginning of the 20th century of vast territories, previously under imperial rule. With the gradual establishment of nation states modelled after the Western European concept on the territories of former empires, a new logic of identity politics was required to underpin the legitimacy of the state.   However, that logic was not necessarily easy to reconcile with the demographics inherited from the empires.

This has rendered the new states vulnerable to the combined effects of old ethnic and religious differences on the one hand, and a number of mundane challenges of more socioeconomic character on the other. In that context identities, and differences between them has been exploited as important markers and rallying points to fuel different parties in their struggle for power. It is in that context that cultural heritage, its destruction, reconstruction and the rhetoric attached becomes important.

The breakdown during recent decades of a number of the post-imperial nation states has reopened the unresolved question of how to politically organize those vast territories that empires could and should no longer rule. History and heritage has an important role to play in this.

Dacia Viejo-Rose, Cambridge, Department of Archaeology, Cambridge

Cultural violence and the destruction of cultural heritage: Assessing the harm done

The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage during wartime has grabbed headlines worldwide in recent years. Spurred by the highly mediatized targeting of Dubrovnik and the Mostar Bridge, the Bamiyan Buddhas and the Baghdad Museum, Aleppo and Palmyra, to name but a few, the rhetoric used to denounce such acts has become increasingly fiery.

UNESCO's Director General, traditionally temperate in tone, has made accusations of 'barbarism', of attempts to 'delete' civilizations, of 'cultural cleansing', and of heritage as 'extremism's new target' (Bokova 2014 and 2015). This linguistic hyperbole belies a complex underbelly, for the motivations, immediate consequences, and medium-term impacts of these dramatic acts are far from straightforward.

Understanding what underlies the destruction is further complicated by the insistence on applying moral values to heritage, good, and its destruction, bad, that has resulted in an inadequate appreciation of the violent political uses and abuses that heritage is subject to in

the buildup, evolution, dénouement, and aftermath of armed conflict. Drawing on the work of Galtung (1990) and Zizek (2009) as well as critical heritage studies, this paper will propose an analytic lens for examining cultural violence in the context of war. It will do so by exploring a number of cases of destruction and reconstruction of cultural heritage.

The paper will end with a consideration of how the resulting understanding might inform the formulation of reparations, in particular symbolic reparations, as recently recommended by the International Criminal Court in the case against Al Mahdi.

Nour Munawar, University of Amsterdam

Whose Heritage? Destruction and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in Times of War.

The World Heritage Site of Palmyra, or as it is known in Syria "the bride of the desert" has been in danger ever since the crisis in Syria turned into an armed conflict at the end of 2011. In September 2015, the United Nations confirmed that jihadists of *Daesh* had blown up the Bel-Temple of Palmyra, which dates back to 32 CE. Shortly after this the official Syrian army confirmed that Palmyra had, after weeks of intense combat, been recaptured - and that the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria had begun preparing plans to restore and reconstruct what had been destroyed. Later on, a replica of Palmyra's Arch of Triumph of Palmyra has been erected in Trafalgar Square in London, and has garnered mixed reviews in the media and academia.

In this paper, I seek to answer the questions opened by these reactions, and the symbolic character of this specific monument. Some have asked why Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque minaret – which was destroyed in April 2012 – or the ancient gates of Nimrud and Nineveh in Iraq, which suffered at the hands of *Daesh*, have not been reconstructed? This question triggers larger questions regarding the parameters of heritage reconstruction as practice; is it not through the process of decay and loss that monuments are incorporated into the archaeological record? Furthermore, is not damage and/or destruction just another phase in the life-history of a monument, albeit a less than positive one in terms of long-term preservation?

Ghattas Sayej, Vest-Agder Regional County, Norway

The cultural heritage of Palestine between political instability and national ignorance

Since the breakout of the first uprising, "*intifada*", against the Israeli occupation in 1987, looting has flourished in the Palestinian territories. The looting has resulted in the destruction of a large amount of archaeological sites, and in the removal of thousands of smaller sized objects, which has ended up in the illicit antiquities market.

After the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, many of those who were advocates for cultural heritage were optimistic and had hopes that the looting would diminish. Unfortunately, it did not happen and the situation actually worsened. Why is it that these activities did not stop - or were at least reduced? Is it due to political instability and the division of the territories to areas A, B and C? Alternatively, is it more to do with the economic challenges and poverty in the territories? Or could it be the international demand for such objects, or just a general lack of awareness?

In my opinion, the reason for the escalating looting is mainly due to lack of awareness among Palestinians, not only among the public, but also among the leadership. The focus should be on spreading awareness among the inhabitants and engaging the public and the media in protecting and safeguarding their own cultural heritage. Through long-term awareness campaigns starting in kindergartens, to schools, universities, and finally amongst politicians - can we introduce the topic of cultural heritage into the daily life of the public. If and when we reach this level of awareness, then hopefully looting might diminish.

Tarek Ahmad, Heidelberg University, Heidelberg

The Renaissance of Syrian identity. A new interpretation of cultural Heritage

The Syrian conflict has brought to light historical issue of the formation of identity on the countryside by transforming the revolt against a dictatorial regime into a religious and ethnic conflict, and thereby attention away from an identity conflict. Thus the need to respond to these immediate problems arises, within which society and its cultural heritage become victims since 2011.

This presentation tries to respond the question: how can cultural heritage make a difference in the resolution of cultural or identity conflicts? In addition, it will propose a new concept of the "reconstruction" of damaged Cultural Heritage. The goal is to demonstrate how the Cultural Heritage can contribute in the renaissance of Syrian Identity, and to highlight the fluidity and changeability of identities in the past in order to counter the popular notion that groups or communities are fixed in the past as well as in the present.

Jumana Alasaad, Heidelberg University, Heidelberg

Recent Restoration Work in the Ancient City of Aleppo

The ancient city of Aleppo, a citadel tracing back to the third millennium B.C., many historical monuments, and Al-Madina Souq were added to the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites list in 1986.

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in Syria, the ancient city of Aleppo has been extensively damaged and many historical structures have been demolished. As a result of this destruction, many initiatives and projects have been launched by the UNESCO, the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria, and other foundations to preserve the damaged buildings.

This paper presents the latest restoration work in the old city in Aleppo completed by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria and partner foundations, and discusses how restoring the old city of Aleppo will contribute in establishing for a new epoch of the city's history and enhancing the identity.

Frederik Rosén, Nordic Center for Cultural Heritage and Armed Conflict, Copenhagen

How Cultural Heritage Entered the Military Geography

Cultural heritage has progressively become an object of both the armed attack and intentional destruction of belligerents, and at the same time of the attention of the international community and elaborate protection initiatives. Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's statement that "the large-scale, systematic destruction and looting of cultural sites (…) highlights the strong connection between the cultural, humanitarian and security dimensions of conflicts and terrorism," captures well how concerns about cultural heritage are now migrating from the cultural sector to the security domain. Consequently, defence organizations have also started to establish policy, doctrine and capacities for handling the challenges form the developing role of cultural heritage in armed conflict. This presentation outlines recent developments in NATO on this matter and draws from it a number of reflections on how cultural heritage increasingly moves from being a question of legal protection under the Laws of Armed Conflict to a strategic and tactical instrument.

Avin Osman, Dipartimento di Archititturam, Teorie e Progetto, La Sapienza University of Rome

The destroyed cultural heritage in Aleppo: Visions for the future

As a result of the Syrian Conflict, and the damage to cultural heritage in Syria that has been on-going up to the present, especially in Aleppo, we can conclude that the cultural heritage is one of victims of the war. It is now important to think about, how we can safeguard this rich, but threatened cultural heritage for the future. What plans and strategies are relevant? In response to the massive destruction of archaeological sites, environments, contexts and other cultural heritage in Aleppo there will be a need for a programme of massive restoration, reconstruction and emergency preservation. This work will need to be financed and at the same time meet environmental and preservation standards goals.

Giancarlo Garna, University of Udine

The destruction of cultural memories in Mesopotamia, from looting to the illegal trade in Cultural Heritage

This contribution focuses on the destruction and looting carried out by Isis during the war in the ISIS territories. Destruction and looting were used as instruments of political propaganda, cultural and ethnic cleansing, and as a means of financing the various parties involved. The presentation is also concerned with work denouncing these activities through information and education in schools and among young people. Education is the path towards defending memory and legality, and a tool for social inclusion. The aim is including the communities in the affected territory, and thus viewing them as part of the defence and management of historical memories. The trade in antiquities is also prevalent in Italy, often through organised crime. This, and the fight against it, is outlined.

Alessandro Vanzetti, La Sapienza, Rome

Dscussion & Concluding remarks from the organizers

Cultural Heritage, a Tool in Conflict and a Victim of War - workshop 3 – 4 May 2018