ISIS - The Destruction & Looting of Antiquities:
Challenges and Solutions

Matthew Bogdanos

Introduction

As the head of the investigation into one of the greatest art crimes in recent memory—the looting of the Iraq Museum in 2003—I have spent more than a decade attempting to recover and return to the Iraqi people their priceless heritage (Bogdanos, 2005a and 2005b; Cruickshank, 2003).

I have also spent a significant amount of time in three parallel pursuits: 1) attempting to correct the almost universal misconceptions about what happened at the museum, in those fateful days in April 2003; 2) highlighting the need for the concerted and cooperative efforts of the international community to preserve, protect and recover the shared cultural heritage of all humanity; and 3) trying to increase awareness of the continuing cultural catastrophe that is represented by the illegal trade in stolen antiquities, which is indeed funding terrorism. Toward these ends, and in more than one hundred and fifty cities in nineteen countries, in venues ranging from universities, museums and governmental organizations to law-enforcement agencies, from Interpol (the International Criminal Police Organization) to both houses of the British Parliament, I have urged a more active role for governments, international organizations, cultural institutions and the art community.

I have done so, knowing that most governments have few resources to spare for tracking down stolen artifacts; that many international organizations prefer to hit the conference

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1 Parts of this article are adapted from **Thieves of Baghdad: One Marine's Passion to Recover the World's Greatest Stolen Treasures** (Bloomsbury, 2005). Copyright © 2005 by Matthew Bogdanos. Reprinted by permission of Bloomsbury USA.

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center rather than the streets; and that many academics are content to issue a call for papers, rather than a call to action. As for the archaeological community, I have learned that some members wash their hands of unpleasant realities and argue that, while technically illegal, the market in purloined antiquities is benign—victimless—as long as it brings the art to those who can properly protect and appreciate it (namely, themselves).

All the while, the situation in Middle East deteriorated dramatically after 2003, causing the United States to withdraw its forces from Iraq—an action most knowledgeable (read "non-political") observers predicted would lead to a power struggle, such as the one that has played out in vivid color as ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) commits one atrocity after another. Given the bloodshed, it is a pretty tough sell to ask people to care about a bunch of old rocks with funny writing. Finding the political will to divert resources to saving cultural artifacts, no matter how precious, seems like cutting funding for police and fire in order to expand the public library. There might be a case for it one day, but not now. After all, looting has always been a cottage industry in the Middle East, the region that gave birth not just to agriculture, cities, the wheel, and pottery, but to war and conquest, as well.

The argument for protecting artifacts takes on added strength when we recognize that Iraq and Syria have been so bloody, not just because of the failure to provide sufficient security to overcome the long-festering tribal and religious animosities, but also, I submit, because of the continuing failure to appreciate the importance Iraqis and the rest of the Middle East place on the preservation of their history. This failure to protect a rich heritage going back to the dawn of civilization has convinced many that we in the West do not care about any culture other than our own. Even today, more than a decade after the initial looting, and despite having recovered almost two-thirds of the antiquities stolen from the museum,[3] we are hard-pressed to keep pace with the artifacts that are

3 In a very real sense, of course, any insistence on using raw numbers to assess either the scope of the tragedy or the success of the recovery misses the point. It makes it sound as if we are counting ears of corn. In this taxonomy, each bead, pin, pottery shard, piece of shell, and the Sacred Vase of Warka count as one item. But surely the loss of legendary artifacts is an order of magnitude greater than the loss of a pottery shard. Nonetheless, recognizing that—used properly—numbers do have some value in quantifying the loss (and recovery), I offer what we know more than ten years later. Inventories of the museum's holdings were far from perfect or complete, but according to the former director of the museum, the most recent and complete inventory put the loss at slightly more than 14,000 items. Based on my unpublished running tally from law-enforcement contacts throughout the world, more than 9,000 items have been recovered, including more than 4,000 inside Iraq and more than 5,000 internationally: Jordan (2,450 items, see Mcelroy 2008); United States (1046 items); Italy (833 items,

being looted from archaeological sites every day.

In light of such efforts to destroy important historical and archeological sites in this region, the excavations in the City of David stand out as a model of cultural preservation. The excavations shed light on 4,000 years of the history of Jerusalem and the origins of Western civilization at large. The dedicated efforts of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Israel National Parks Authority, working in coordination with the City of David, have ensured that their discovery and preservation of antiquities and sites serve to educate over half a million visitors each year. Their publication of their findings also enriches the understanding of historians, academics, and researchers of ancient Jerusalem from the pre-Biblical period to the present day.

Fig.1.Stolen and recovered: The Sacred Vase of Warka, the world's oldest known carved stone ritual vessel, ca. 3200 b.c. The 1.06-meter alabaster vase was discovered by a German archaeological team in 1940 at Warka, near al-Samawa, in southern Iraq.

Fig.2. After an item was recovered via amnesty or raid, it was placed on this table and photographed. In this shot, from May 2003, are everything from extraordinary fourth millennium b.c. pieces to fakes (made in Damascus) to an item stolen from the gift shop (the black head of Hammurabi).

see Reuters 2008 and Bogdanos 2005b); Syria (701 items, see Associated Press 2008); Dubai (100 items, see McClenaghan 2008), Lebanon (57 items, see Agence France-Presse 2008); Kuwait (38 items); and Saudi Arabia (18 items).

Fig.3. Stolen and recovered: The treasure of Nimrud. The box was opened in an underground vault of the Central Bank of Iraq at 1:43 p.m. local time, June 5, 2003.

Fig.4. Stolen and recovered: One of the finest examples of gold jewelry ever found in the Near East. This crown, ca. 900–800 b.c., was first discovered in one of the royal tombs in Nimrud, the ancient Assyrian capital.

Fig.5. Stolen and recovered: An exquisite gold necklace, ca. 900–800 b.c., originally discovered along with the Nimrud crown and recovered in an underground vault of the Central Bank of Iraq.

Fig. 6. Stolen and recovered: The Akkadian Bassetki Statue. Cast in pure copper and weighing about 150 kilograms, this is one of the earliest known examples of the lost-wax technique of casting. Dating to the Akkadian period, ca. 2250 b.c., it is pictured here after it was recovered in November 2003.

Fig. 7. The Author Conducting a press conference at the Pentagon on September 10, 2003.

Global Criminal Enterprise

As the investigation continues, much has happened to reinforce the core lesson we learned in the back alleys of Baghdad: that the genteel patina covering the world of antiquities rests atop a solid base of criminal and, now, terrorist activity. Witness the events that have taken place since 2003.

In New York, the Metropolitan Museum (the "Met") accepted what amounted to a plea bargain with Italian authorities, agreeing to return twenty-one antiquities the Italian government said were stolen, including one of the Met's most prized items: the Euphronios krater, a 6th century B.C. Greek vase (Kennedy and Eakin, 2006a). In Ohio, the Cleveland Museum of Art agreed to return thirteen antiquities that had been looted from Italy (David, 2008). In California, the director of the J. Paul Getty Museum agreed to return antiquities the Greek government says were stolen, even as the Getty's longtime curator for ancient art resigned, to stand trial in Rome against famed prosecutor Paolo Giorgio Ferri, on charges of conspiracy to receive a different set of stolen artifacts—the details of which are brilliantly documented by Peter Watson and Cecilia Todeschini (Watson and Todeschini, 2006; Reynolds, 2005). Although that trial ended when an Italian court ruled that the statute of limitations had expired, the evidence revealed the Getty's—at best—willful ignorance (Povoledo, 2010).

I am delighted that nations are moving to reclaim their patrimony. I am also delighted to see media attention beginning to illuminate certain well-appointed shadows, where money changes hands and legitimate, but inconvenient, questions of the provenance of the object are too frequently considered outré. Many shadows remain.

In March 2006, for example, private collector Shelby White donated $200 million to New York University to establish an ancient studies institute, prompting one of the university's professors to resign in protest over what he considered the questionable acquisition practices of the donor (Povoledo, 2006). Ms. White and her late husband Leon Levy have generated considerable debate since at least 1990, when the Met (of which Ms. White was and still is a trustee) presented a major exhibition of 200 of their artifacts from Greece, Rome, and the Near East (*ibid.*). The Met did so, despite the fact that a study, later published in the *American Journal of Archaeology,* determined that more than 90% of those artifacts had no known provenance (Taylor, 2007; Chippindale and Gill, 2000). As with the Euphronios krater, Italian authorities have consistently maintained that they can prove many of the antiquities in the Levy-White collection were illegally

excavated (read as: stolen) and smuggled out of their country (Povoledo, 2006).

Not only did the Met proudly display that collection, dubious origin notwithstanding, but it also (perhaps without coincidence) celebrated the opening of its new Leon Levy and Shelby White Court for Hellenistic and Roman antiquities on April 15, 2007 (Taylor, 2007). Other institutions continue to hold out one hand, while covering their eyes with the other. In 2000, Cornell University accepted a gift, from well-known collector Jonathan Rosen, of 1,679 cuneiform tablets from Ur (Gottlieb and Meier, 2003). They said, "Thank you very much," despite reports of widespread looting at Ur after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and despite the fact that the provenance of 10% of the tablets consisted of the phrase "uncertain sites" (*ibid.*). Harvard University has done equally well in neglecting to ask awkward questions: witness its Shelby White-Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications (Pogrebin, 2006).

But this is nothing new. In 1994, a decade before its current imbroglio, the Getty displayed a major exhibition of classical antiquities owned by Lawrence and Barbara Fleischman (Felch and Frammolino, 2007). Like the Met, the Getty proudly held this exhibit despite the fact that 92% of the objects in the Fleischman collection had no provenance whatsoever, and the remaining 8% had questionable provenance at best (*ibid.*). To put it in starker terms, of 295 catalogued entries, not a single object had a declared archeological find spot, and only three (1%) were even described as coming from a specific location.

Sometimes, however, the questionable practices extend beyond merely willful ignorance. Consider the following. Prior to the exhibition in 1994, the Fleischman collection had never been published. Thus, the first catalogue for, and hence first publication of, the Fleischman exhibit was the Getty's—of which Ms. Fleischman was a trustee. Fewer than two years later, the Getty purchased part of that collection for $20 million (*ibid.*). But the Getty had a stated policy of not purchasing objects unless they have been previously displayed in published collections. How, then, could they have justified the acquisition? Easy: the Getty was quick to point out that the collection had been published just two years earlier, by themselves. Further sweetening the deal, while the collection had been purchased originally at a much lower price, it was valued at $80 million at the time of the sale to the museum (*ibid.*). US tax laws use the Fair Market Value (FMV) at the time of the sale, rather than the original purchase price, in determining the value of a bequest. As a result, the difference between the 1996 valuation of $80 million, and the $20 million

sale price to the Getty, would be deemed a gift of $60 million, affording a $60 million tax deduction for the Fleischmans. Under these terms, the gift to the Getty, therefore, was actually financed by US taxpayers—a shell game of Homeric proportions.

In cases that I have investigated and prosecuted more recently, the pattern continues. As the result of an undercover sting operation at the fabled Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in midtown Manhattan on 3 January 2012, world-renowned surgeon Arnold-Peter Weiss, a former member of the board of the American Numismatic Society, was arrested in possession of what he believed to be millions of dollars' worth of stolen Greek and Italian coins, dating back to the 6th century B.C. Although most of the coins were authentic, after we examined the hoard using a scanning electron microscope, we determined that the three most valuable ones were extraordinary forgeries—highlighting one of the most common risks when buying unprovenanced antiquities. Weiss was convicted of possession of stolen property (Italiano, 2012; Fisher, 2012) and, in August 2014, we returned to Greece those coins in Weiss's possession that were real (McKinley, 2014).

Similarly illuminating is the case of Shubash Kapoor, whose upper east side Manhattan gallery had, for decades, supplied museums and high-end collectors around the world with exquisite 10th and 11th century A.D. sculptures from temples in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, through a sophisticated network that included Singapore, Hong Kong, Geneva, London, and New York. Since his arrest in Germany in 2011, we have recovered almost $150 million dollars in ancient statues that Indian authorities claim were looted from their temples (Mashberg, 2013). Kapoor is currently in India, awaiting trial there before being extradited to face the charges here in New York. But in the meantime, many museums have decisions to make about how to handle their acquisitions from Kapoor, ranging from Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Met to the Toledo Museum of Art, Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, and Singapore's Asian Civilisations Museum (Halperin, 2012).

This decision-making process seems more tortuous for some than for others. For example, in September 2014, Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott returned to India two looted statues Kapoor had sold to Australia's National Gallery of Art (Hiscock, 2014). On the other hand, as recently as 2008, the Met's policy was to require documentation covering only the last ten years of an object's history prior to acquisition, even though most institutions view 1970—the year of the landmark United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention to regulate the transfer of antiquities

(UNESCO, 1970)—as the cut-off date for requiring proof that an antiquity was not illegally looted (Pogrebin, 2006). This imposition of a firm date is crucial in stopping the trade in illegal antiquities, because as each year passes after 1970, it becomes less likely that a previously unpublished antiquity can appear on the market and be legal, i.e., that it came from a properly sanctioned excavation or collection assembled before the imposition of any requirement of documentation. To put it another way, as each year passes after 1970, it becomes increasingly certain that previously unpublished items are stolen, and the Met's ten-year rule looks increasingly flawed.

As if to flaunt this policy of "see no evil," Philippe de Montebello, the museum's long-standing, but now-retired, director told *The New York Times* in 2006 that the context in which an artifact is found is virtually meaningless; in his opinion, accounting for less than 2% of what we can learn from antiquity (Kennedy and Eakin, 2006b). His position was as unreasonable as the view of some archaeologists at the other extreme: that context is everything. Doubtless recognizing the fallacy of the 10-year rule, the Met recently modified its acquisition policy. Now, the Met "normally" shall not acquire archaeological material unless it was outside its country of probable modern discovery before, or legally exported after, 1970 (Met, 2014). But, the Met will still make exceptions for "some works [that] lack a complete documented ownership history" (*ibid.*).

In some respects, then, we have advanced very little since the imperial nineteenth century, when Lord Elgin could haul away the Parthenon Sculptures (now in the British Museum and commonly referred to as the "Elgin Marbles"), and Henry Layard could haul away the Nineveh reliefs (now in the Met).

But far from this world of museum receptions and limos waiting at the curb, however, there has been an even more troubling development. In June 2005, US Marines in northwest Iraq arrested five insurgents holed up in underground bunkers filled with automatic weapons, ammunition stockpiles, black uniforms, ski masks and night-vision goggles. Along with these tools of their trade, were thirty vases, cylinder seals, and statuettes that had been stolen from the Iraq Museum. Since then, the scenario has been repeated many times. It did not take a counterterrorism expert to detect the sinister adjustment that had taken place. In 2003, when pursuing leads to recover antiquities, we usually came across weapons and links to violent groups. But after 2005, the tail began wagging the dog: as security forces pursued leads for weapons and terrorists, they discovered antiquities. More recently, according to multiple intelligence sources, ISIS has begun to profit. Citing the Quran's provision that one-fifth of war booty shall be paid to Allah, ISIS requires

locals to fork over one-fifth of the proceeds of archaeological looting in Iraq and Syria.

In a modern-day version of the old "molasses to rum to slaves" triangle trade of pious New England ship captains and owners, who sang hymns and offered prayers while getting rich off human misery, the cozy cabal of academics, dealers, and collectors who turn a blind eye to the illicit side of the trade is supporting the terrorists who are murdering innocent civilians in the Middle East.

This exploitation of archaeological looting is hardly surprising. As the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (The 9/11 Commission) noted, international law enforcement has aggressively attacked traditional means of terrorist financing by freezing assets and neutralizing charities that had previously served as fronts for jihadists (Bogdanos, 2005c). But terrorists are nothing if not adaptive. In late 2005, the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* reported that 9/11 conspirator Mohammed Atta had approached a professor at the University of Goettingen, trying to sell Afghan antiquities to raise money to buy an airplane (*Der Spiegel,* 2005). While nothing came of that inquiry, times have changed. Like the Taliban in Afghanistan, who learned to finance their activities through opium, terrorists in Iraq and Syria have discovered a new source of income: antiquities.

We do not have hard numbers—the traffic in art for arms is too recent and shadowy a phenomenon—and some of the investigations remain classified, because of the connection to terrorists.[4] But this illicit trade soon became a growing source of revenue for violent organizations in Iraq, ranking just below kidnappings for ransom and "protection" money from local residents and merchants.[5] Among the most prized items are cylinder seals, intricately carved pieces of stone about the size of a piece of chalk that can sell for $250,000, enabling anyone to smuggle millions of dollars in his pocket.

4 In late 2005, my team prepared a report setting forth in detail that insurgent and terrorist groups had begun using antiquities to fund their activities. The report is still classified, and I do not have the authority to declassify it, but we were authorized to share portions of it with various law-enforcement organizations around the world.

5 In the summer of 2004, as a result of a dramatic spike in the number of kidnappings in Iraq, my team was tasked with assisting in the establishment of the U.S. Department of State's Hostage Working Group to monitor foreign hostages in Iraq. This working group began to compile data on kidnappings and extortion of Iraqis as well—and the numbers were shocking in both human cost and dollar amount. Again, although I am not authorized to declassify any of the daily briefings, I am able to say that throughout our time in Iraq these activities were the main source of income for terrorist and insurgent groups.

Given this almost limitless supply of antiquities, (the terrorist appears to have found an income stream sufficiently secure to make any chief financial officer sleep well at night.[6] As a result, the desert night is filled with the roar of bulldozers ripping into the ancient mounds of clay that were once thriving cities.

Protect the Archaeological Sites

Based on my experience in both counterterrorism and law enforcement, and as a result of the years I have spent throughout the world in tracking down stolen antiquities, I submit that the first order of business in addressing this catastrophe must be to protect the source: as the cradle of civilization, Iraq alone has more than 12,000 poorly-guarded archaeological sites (Bogdanos, 2005c). Some of these, such as Babylon and Nimrud, require several hundred guards and support staff, for protection around the clock. The math is daunting: country-wide, more than 50,000 personnel are required, along with the necessary vehicles, radios, weapons and logistical needs. Syria requires similar numbers. But there is an immediate solution.

In other contexts, the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) have acted to address catastrophic situations. In Bosnia, Cyprus, and Afghanistan, for example, countries have provided contingents for specific missions under UN or NATO auspices—but not in Iraq or Syria. The reasons are much-argued, and I do not address them here. Recalling Voltaire's observation that everyone is guilty of the good he didn't do,[7] I focus instead on what we can do now.

So, who might act? In the past, most archaeological digs in the Middle East have had foreign sponsorship: the Germans at Babylon and Uruk, the British at Ur and Nimrud, the French at Kish and Lagash, the Italians at Hatra and Nimrud, the Americans at Nippur and Ur (Bogdanos, 2007). Leveraging this history, I have proposed that these and other countries provide forces to protect archaeological sites until a professional host-nation

6 At the risk of stating the obvious in a land that has seen continuous human occupation for almost 10,000 years, virtually every area in Iraq covers a potential historical treasure. This includes not only the more-than-12,000 registered archaeological sites, but those that are discovered on a regular basis during construction. For example, the Bassetki Statue, cast in pure copper (one of the earliest known examples of the lost-wax technique of casting) and dating to the Akkadian period, ca. 2250 B.C., was discovered by a road construction crew in the 1960s near the town of Bassetki in northern Iraq.

7 *The Age of Louis XIV*, ch. V: "France up to the Death of Cardinal Mazarin in 1661" (1752)

security force, dedicated to the sites, can be recruited, equipped and trained. Under this proposal, with the permission of the host government, and under the authority of the UN or NATO, each country would "adopt" a site. After sending an assessment team to the assigned sites, to determine the precise numbers and type of personnel and equipment required, each donor nation would then execute bilateral status of forces agreements, outlining the rules of engagement, funding, billeting, etc.

fig. 2. The Bassetki Statue.

Then, each country would deploy its security forces (military, police, private contractors, or a combination of all three) to the agreed-upon archaeological sites, around the perimeter and around the clock. Upon arrival, each country's contingent would also be assigned a group of recruits to train at their chosen site. Once those security forces were fully-trained (that ordinarily takes months), the donor nation would recall (or reassign) its forces on a site-by-site basis. In half a year, every archaeological site of consequence could be protected from the looters, Mesopotamia's cultural patrimony would be safe, and the terrorists would have to find another income source.

Unfortunately, neither NATO nor the UN has ever shown an inclination to protect the sites. NATO opened a training center in Iraq in 2004, but trained only 5,000 military and 10,000 police personnel, none of whom were assigned to archaeological sites, before shutting down in 2011 (NATO, 2014). The UN has never trained guards for sites. Even the UN's cultural arm, UNESCO, has failed to act, shielded by the claim that it has no such mandate from its member nations, many of which argue that the level of violence does not permit deployment of their forces. The circular nature of this rationalization is underscored by the fact that it is the failure to protect these sites that is partly-funding those who are creating the unsafe environment. "If you were to take account of everything that could go wrong," Herodotus advised long ago, "you would never act."[8] Of course, there is risk. I know this first-hand. But the risks of the failure to act are far worse: more money for the terrorists and the loss of these extraordinary testaments to our common beginnings. It is time for the UN to convince its members to support such a plan, with UNESCO stepping into the vacuum of international leadership, seizing the bully pulpit, and becoming relevant again.

Equally risky are the politics: most elected officials view involvement in Iraq or Syria as political suicide. But an internationally-coordinated contribution of personnel would not

8 *The Histories*, Book 7, Chapter 50. Translation by author.

be a statement about war. It would be a humanitarian effort to protect a cultural heritage rich with a common ancestry that transcends the current violence. Real leaders should have no difficulty convincing their electorate of the distinction between politics and culture. It is, of course, the very definition of leadership: to educate, inform, and motivate into action those who might otherwise be inclined to do nothing.

The Next Steps: A Five-Point Action Plan

The incomparable works of art unearthed in the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers predate the split between Sunni and Shiite. They predate the three competing traditions that have brought so much bloodshed to the Middle East: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Attending to this cultural heritage from the very dawn of civilization reminds us of our common humanity, our common aspiration to make sense of life on this planet. I have seen these pieces of alabaster and limestone with funny writing on them work their magic through a language that is immediate and universal, visceral and transcendent. While protecting the archaeological sites is a vital beginning, much more needs to be done. To stop the rampant looting and the black market that funnels money into terrorist hands, we must adopt a comprehensive global strategy using all of the elements of international power. Toward this end, I propose a five-step plan of action to combat the global traffic in antiquities.

1. Mount a Public Relations Campaign for Mainstream Society

The cornerstone of any comprehensive approach must take into account that real, measurable, and lasting progress in stopping the illegal trade depends on increasing public awareness of the importance of cultural property, and of the magnitude of the current crisis. First, then, we must communicate a message that resonates with mainstream society, not just with academics. We must create a climate of universal condemnation, rather than sophisticated indulgence, for trafficking in undocumented antiquities.

But this call to arms needs to avoid the sky-is-falling quotes so beloved by the media, while steering clear of the debilitating rhetoric of politics. It also has to keep the discussion of the illegal trade separate from broader issues such as the repatriation of objects acquired prior to 1970, and whether there should be any trade in antiquities at all. The Parthenon Sculptures are in the British Museum, but their return is a diplomatic or public-relations issue, not a matter for the criminal courts. Similarly, there is a legal trade in antiquities

that is regulated and above board. It is simply unproven (and unfair) to argue that the legal trade somehow encourages an illegal trade. Most dealers and museums scrupulously avoid trading in antiquities with a murky origin. Repatriation for pre-1970 transfers, and the question of whether all trade in antiquities should be banned, are legitimate issues, but they are not my issues. Every time the discussion about stopping the illegal trade in antiquities veers off into these realms we lose focus, we lose the attention of mainstream society, and it makes my job of recovering stolen antiquities that much harder.

2. Provide Funding to Establish or Upgrade Antiquities Task Forces

Although several countries—including the US, Britain, Italy, and Japan—have provided millions of dollars to upgrade the Iraq Museum, improve its conservation capacity, and enhance the training of the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage's archaeological staff, not a single government, international organization, or private foundation anywhere in the world has provided additional funding for investigative purposes. Read that sentence again: not one. Reluctant to be seen cooperating with police and military forces, many cultural leaders and organizations seem oblivious to the fact that a stolen artifact cannot be restored until it has been recovered. To put it more clearly: money for conservation is pointless without first providing money to track down the missing objects to be conserved.

This ivory-tower distortion of priorities affects investigative efforts worldwide. In 2014, Interpol convened the 11th meeting of its Expert Group on Stolen Cultural Property (formed as a result of the looting of the Iraq Museum in 2003). Its final report in 2014 was two pages long (Interpol, 2014). The US Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Rapid Deployment National Art Crime Team has 14 people total, for the entire country, and the head of that team, Special Agent Robert Whitman, who retired in 2008, has not been replaced (FBI, 2014). Regardless of the dedication and talent of these personnel, no law-enforcement agency can operate effectively at such pitiful levels.

Thus, as a second component, all countries—but especially the countries of origin, transit, and destination—must establish robust, specialized art and antiquities task forces, with particular attention paid to the borders and ports of entry. Where such forces already exist, we must increase their size and scope, with cultural foundations providing art squads with vehicles, computers, communications equipment and training.

3. Create a Coordinated International Law-Enforcement Response

Among the many dirty secrets of the looted antiquities market is that "open" borders are as profitable as they are porous. Many countries, especially those with free trade zones, generate sizeable customs and excise fees from shipping and, despite their public protestations to the contrary, are not eager to impose any increase in inspection rates that might reduce such revenue. Even if willing, the sheer tonnage passing through international ports makes 100% inspection rates impossible. Nor does the improved technology installed, as a result of the September 11 attacks, solve the problem: devices that detect weapons and explosives do not detect alabaster, lapis lazuli and carnelian. Further exacerbating the problem, most high-end smugglers are simply too sophisticated, and the questionable acquisition practices of some dealers, collectors and museums, too entrenched to be defeated by improved border inspections and heightened public consciousness alone.

The *sine qua non* for effective interdiction, then, is an organized, systematized, and seamlessly collaborative law-enforcement effort by the entire international community. We need coordinated simultaneous investigations of smugglers, sellers and buyers in different countries. And, just as important, prosecution and incarceration need to be credible threats. Thus, as a third component, the United Nations, through UNESCO, should establish a standing commission to continue the Iraq Museum investigation, expanding it to include other pillaged countries, as they arise. Interpol must also become more active, enabling each of its 190 member nations to forward to them immediately, along a secure network (that already exists), a digital photograph and the particulars (who, what, when, and where) of all antiquities encountered by law enforcement or military forces anywhere in the world—including those items that were seized, and those that were inspected but not seized, because there was insufficient evidence of criminality at the time of inspection to hold the item.

The global criminal enterprise that is antiquities smuggling must be defeated globally, through international cooperation (promoted by UNESCO) and real-time dissemination of information (enabled by Interpol). The consequent ability to conduct monitored deliveries of illegal shipments to their destinations (a tactic long used against drug smugglers) would enable legal authorities to incriminate, and thereafter prosecute, each culpable party along the trail. It would also serve as a deterrent to collectors or curators, who could never be sure that the next shipment was not being monitored by law-enforcement officials.

4. Establish a Code of Conduct for Trading in Antiquities

Museums, archaeologists and dealers should establish a stricter and more uniform code of conduct. Similar to ethics rules for lawyers and doctors, this code of conduct would clarify the documentation and diligence required for an artifact to change hands legally. Although many argue that the interests of dealers, collectors, museums and archaeologists differ from each other so dramatically that any single code of conduct acceptable to all is impossible, I point out that the differences within the art world are no greater than those existing between prosecutors and criminal defense attorneys. Yet, the American Bar Association has adopted, and actively enforces, a single Code of Ethics applicable to every attorney admitted to the bar (ABA, 1983). Until the art community follows suit, I continue to urge academics, curators and dealers to abandon their self-serving complacency about, if not complicity in, irregularities of documentation.

5. Increase Cooperation between the Art Community and Law Enforcement

Finally, the art community must break down barriers, and assist investigators by serving as law enforcement's eyes and ears. We need scholars and knowledgeable dealers as on-call experts, to identify and authenticate intercepted shipments, and to provide crucial in-court expert testimony. They should also request appropriate law-enforcement personnel (depending on country and focus) to provide detailed, factual briefings at every conference purporting to address art or antiquities smuggling. The call for up-to-date investigative facts should become as standard as the call for papers.

But the education and information exchange should run in both directions. In 2004, polymath C. Brian Rose, former President of the Archaeological Institute of America, developed and began conducting cultural-awareness training in half-a-dozen pilot locations around the US, for military personnel scheduled to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan. Laurie Rush, a gifted archaeologist with the US Department of Defense's Legacy Heritage Management program (who has also written an essay for this volume), has also made significant strides in training military personnel, including creating the media-darling archaeological playing cards (Kaylan, 2007), establishing websites for Iraq and Afghanistan and disseminating pocket cards on the "Dos" and "Don'ts" for Military Operations concerning archaeological sites. A similar program has been offered on a limited basis to the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security within the US, and to similar law-enforcement agencies worldwide. It must be expanded and institutionalized

Conclusion

Diverting resources to save cultural artifacts during a time of war or civil unrest may seem trivial, considering the human cost of armed struggles. But some of our best soldiers have seen the wisdom. "Inevitably, in the path of our advance will be found historical monuments and cultural centers which symbolize to the world all that we are fighting to preserve," said General Dwight D. Eisenhower, just before D-Day during the deadliest war of the last hundred years. "It is the responsibility of every commander to protect and respect these symbols whenever possible."[9]

Antiquities trafficking will never merit the same attention or resources as terrorism, drugs, human trafficking or violent street crime. But it deserves to be on the same list. And now that it is funding terrorism, it should be high on the list. From government corridors, precinct headquarters and media newsrooms to faculty lounges, museum boardrooms and Madison Avenue galleries, this cultural catastrophe must be confronted and debated. We must expose those who engage in the illegal trade for what they are: criminals.

On my first tour in Iraq, our mission was to track down illegal arms and terrorist networks. My decision to expand our mission to include investigating the looting of the Iraq Museum and tracking down the stolen artifacts was characterized by some as a distraction. I regret that I did not pursue that distraction even more.

9 Memorandum, Dwight D. Eisenhower, General, U.S. Army to G.O.C. in Chief, 21 Army Group; Commanding General, 1st U.S. Army Group; Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force; and Air C-in-C, Allied Expeditionary Force, Subject: Preservation of Historical Monuments, May 26, 1944, File: 751,Numeric File Aug 1943-July 1945, Records of the Secretariat, Records of the G-5 Division, General Staff, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, RG 331.

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Sources of Illustrations:

Fig.1. Scala/Art Resource ,NY.

Fig.2. Matthew Bogdanos

Fig.3. Roberto Pineiro.

Fig.4. D. G. Youkhana.

Fig.5. Bill Lyons,www.billlyons.com.

Fig.6. Matthew Bogdanos.

Fig.7. Helene C. Stikkel.