

Trafficking Cultural Materials; Appropriation of Mankind's Property

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Archaeological sites and historical artifacts are property that belongs to all of mankind. Preserving them and keeping them accessible are prerequisites to ensuring people can learn about and from history. Their material existence constitutes an important foundation of our self-awareness as human beings. Ancient history is a collective good which belongs to everyone and requires the protection of local officials. For the most part, they accept the role of protecting the splendor of their ancient heritage against collectors' greed. However, recent political turmoil has led to the ransacking and trafficking of antiquities in the Middle East on an immense scale.

This panel brought new voices into the current discussion. **NYU Washington, DC** welcomed **Douglas Boin, Tess Davis** and **Iris Gerlach**, who discussed trafficking as the irreversible appropriation of cultural properties which contribute to humanity's richness. Their destruction and, to no lesser degree, their trafficking destroy invaluable foundations in the self-awareness of mankind's history and development. How can reproductions replace the fundamental contribution of the originals? How does the growing demand for antique cultural treasures impact preservation and protection? How does private ownership relate to common property in terms of U.N. standards? **Alexander Nagel** moderated the discussion.

