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## FORUM

### **Artifacts Out of Context: Their Curation, Ownership, and Repatriation**

**1** Introduction

Ann E. Killebrew and Sandra A. Scham

## GENERAL TREATMENTS

**6** Museums as Intermediaries in Repatriation

Jack Green

**19** Repatriation and the Legacy of Colonialism in the Middle East

Salam Al Quntar

**27** Trafficked Lebanese Antiquities: Can They Be Repatriated from European Museums?

Lina G. Tahan

## CASE STUDIES

**35** Reconciling National and International Interests: The Rockefeller Museum and Its Collections

Beatrice St. Laurent

**57** A Complicated Legacy: The Original Collections of the Semitic Museum

Joseph A. Greene

**69** Should We Repatriate an On-Campus Archaeological Collection from the Middle East?

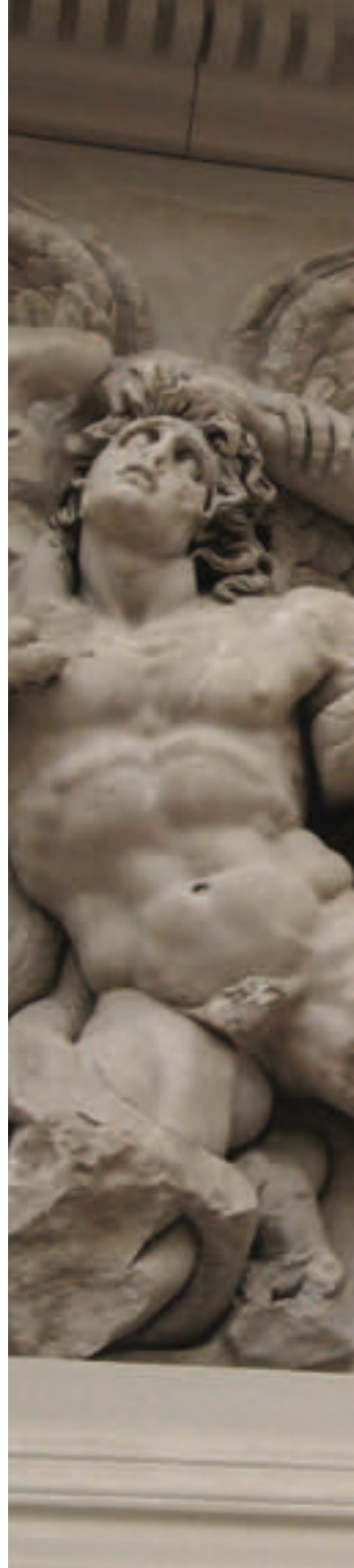
Aaron Brody

**75** The Palestine Exploration Fund: The Collections of an Historic Learned Society in London

Felicity Cobbing

**87** Beyond the UNESCO Convention: The Case of the Troy Gold in the Penn Museum

C. Brian Rose



92 Syrian Heritage in Jeopardy: The Case of the Arslan Tash Ivories  
Annie Caubet

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

101 The Protection of Cultural Heritage Must Be a Collaborative Effort  
Deborah Lehr

106 In Turkey, Museums Need Reciprocity, Not Only Repatriation  
Charles Gates

109 Magical Materialism: On the Hidden Danger of Repatriation Disputes  
Neil Asher Silberman

BOOK REVIEWS

116 *Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos*, by Dimitri Nakassis  
Reviewed by Natalie Abell

118 *Subjects and Narratives in Archaeology*, edited by Ruth M. Van Dyke  
and Reinhard Bernbeck  
Reviewed by Mitchell Allen

123 *Remembering the Dead in the Ancient Near East: Recent Contributions from  
Bioarchaeology and Mortuary Archaeology*, edited by Benjamin W. Porter  
and Alexis T. Boutin  
Reviewed by Jill Baker

127 *Animal Secondary Products: Domestic Animal Exploitation in Prehistoric  
Europe, the Near East and the Far East*, edited by Haskel Greenfield  
Reviewed by Justin Lev-Tov

128 *In Search of Agamemnon: Early Travellers to Mycenae*, by Dudley Moore,  
Edward Rowlands, and Nektarios Karadimas  
Reviewed by Scott Gallimore

130 *In Pursuit of Ancient Cyrenaica: Two Hundred Years of Exploration Set  
against the History of Archaeology in Europe (1706–1911)*, by Monika  
Rekowska. Translated by Anna Kijak  
Reviewed by Susan Kane

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is a peer-reviewed journal published by the Pennsylvania State University Press. *JEMAHS* is devoted to traditional, anthropological, social, and applied archaeologies of the eastern Mediterranean, encompassing both prehistoric and historic periods. The journal's geographic range spans three continents and brings together, as no academic periodical has done before, the archaeologies of Greece and the Aegean, Anatolia, the Levant, Cyprus, Egypt, and North Africa.

As the journal will not be identified with any particular archaeological discipline, the editors invite articles from all varieties of professionals who work on the past cultures of the modern countries bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, a broad range of topics will be covered including, but by no means limited to:

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In addition to combining traditional and theoretical archaeological data and interpretation, the journal's articles may range from early prehistory to recent historical time periods. It also aims to publish accessible, jargon-free, readable, color-illustrated articles that will be informative for professional and non-professional readers. The journal does not publish unprovenanced artifacts purchased on the antiquities market or objects from private collections.

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The plan to combine pieces from official and non-official excavations in a comprehensive publication confronted the authors with a dilemma. At the time the Diniacopoulos and Borowski collections were assembled, pieces on the market were often considered “orphan antiquities” (to quote a favorite expression of Pierre Amiet, head of the ANE department in the Louvre until 1988), in need of being recorded and attended to with scholarly expertise. Considering that all the pieces concerned are now housed in museums or permanent public institutions, it was hoped that an assessment of the Arslan Tash ivory hoard would be a useful tool for understanding the history of Assyrian expansion in the West and a testimony to the importance of the Syrian heritage.

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interests—was created to develop and help implement practical, viable solutions to cultural heritage preservation on a global basis. We work closely with governments, law enforcement, counter-terrorism experts, international institutions, and, of course, archaeologists, to build the necessary support to create tangible solutions.

The Antiquities Coalition (AC) works with governments around the globe to fight against cultural racketeering—the trade in illicit antiquities by organized crime and terrorists. An important part of this effort has been to repatriate seized items, and, along with our partners, to provide resources and training to the countries of origin to help stop the trafficking of looted and stolen artifacts.

Our first country of focus was Egypt after the 2011 Revolution when I was invited by the government to lead a delegation to discuss how we could help support Egypt during its time of need. Our emphasis was on developing concrete and practical solutions for policy makers that are based on economic, cultural, and political realities. And raising awareness has created real results. Inspired by a story about our work in the New York Times, the AC assisted in the return of a collection of 26th dynasty *ushabtis* to the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities from a private collection. We do believe that repatriations are an important component of a heritage protection plan. Yet at the same time, law enforcement should go beyond a policy to “seize and send” and actively pursue indictments and arrests to create an adequate deterrent to the use of this trafficking to fund crime, conflict and even terrorism (Fig. 1).

In the Middle East, especially since the Arab Spring, culture is increasingly being used as a weapon of war and a fundraising tool for violent extremist organizations and organized criminals in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Millions of archeological, historic, and religious sites in this region are threatened by organized plunder or destruction by terrorist organizations such as Daesh, the Al Nusrat Front, and other Al Qaeda affiliates. The sheer number of sites at risk provides a consistent source of revenue and propaganda for the foreseeable future. Not since the Nazis has the world seen such calculated and widespread attacks on heritage, which are an inseparable part of broader attacks against ethnic and religious minorities.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### The Protection of Cultural Heritage Must Be a Collaborative Effort

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The organization that I founded, The Antiquities Coalition—and we emphasize the Coalition aspect of our name in bringing together a broad range of



**FIG. 1**  
Ambassador Mohammad Tawfik examines artifacts being returned to Egypt at a repatriation ceremony. (Photo courtesy of the Antiquities Coalition.)

Nowhere has heritage suffered more than in Syria and Iraq. The list of destruction is long: Palmyra, Mosul, Nineveh, and hundreds of others from throughout millennia of history, cultures, and religions, including sacred sites meaningful to the foundations of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Priceless treasures from these sites have been stolen, unceremoniously ripped from the ground, losing all sense of history and context, perhaps never to be seen again.

Other countries have been targets of extremists' destruction, however, including Tunisia, where Daesh attacked the Bardo Museum—killing 21 foreign tourists and injuring many more. In Mali, Yemen, and Libya, historic libraries have been raided, artifacts pillaged, and ancient structures razed, along with Shiite and Sufi places of worship. Extremists both inside and outside of Egypt have declared the Great Pyramids in Egypt to be a

primary target, and have made several attempts to attack them, as well as the heritage sites in Luxor.

Given the level of destruction and the massive looting taking place in the Middle East and Northern Africa, these artifacts would inevitably begin to find their way to the United States—the largest art market in the world—as well as to the European Union. This potential influx of illicit heritage has raised questions about the role of the United States and Europe as a “safe harbor” for antiquities. Our view is that the long term solution lies, instead, in blocking access to “demand” country markets, while working with local governments to help strengthen their own laws, protections, as well as raising awareness about the long term importance of protecting heritage. In many instances, these countries are dependent upon these very artifacts for their economic well being, so protecting the past is a way of ensuring economic potential in the future.

In the spring of 2015 the Antiquities Coalition brought together ten governments in the Middle East and North Africa region, including both Foreign and Antiquities Ministries, to issue the Cairo Declaration. This declaration is an action plan for the signatories designed to help protect the region's heritage. Egypt has played a leading role in organizing this Coalition, and has adopted the halt of antiquities trafficking as a pillar in its fight against extremism and terrorism (Fig. 2).

A key outcome of the Cairo Declaration is the Antiquities Coalition's partnership with the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) and the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities on the development of a museum registrar training program. Egyptians working to save the country's patrimony need to have this kind of support. This project is but one step, albeit a very important one, toward increased security and capacity-building for people working all over Egypt. We hope to replicate it in other countries as well (Fig. 3).

The second annual #CultureUnderThreat Conference was held in Amman, Jordan in 2016, which Ministers from seventeen MENA countries plus the Arab League attended. The meeting was the first of the MENA task force on Antiquities Trafficking, comprised of representatives from member governments. The task force approved a five-point plan of action, since it is essential that these countries take action as well to halt illicit trade as the burden cannot fall solely on the market countries if it is to be successful (Figs. 4 and 5).



FIG. 2  
Attendees at the Antiquities Coalition's Cairo Conference in spring of 2015. (Photo courtesy of the Antiquities Coalition.)



FIG. 3  
Ten governments in the Middle East and North Africa sent representatives to the Antiquities Coalition's Cairo Conference. (Photo courtesy of the Antiquities Coalition.)





FIG. 4 and FIG. 5  
Attendees at the #CultureUnderThreat Conference in Amman, Jordan, in 2016. (Both photos courtesy of the Antiquities Coalition.)

During the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) meetings in New York in 2015, the Antiquities Coalition with our partner, the Asia Society, convened foreign ministers, including Iraq, Jordan, Australia, and Egypt, Director General Irina Bokova of UNESCO, as well as ambassadors, and leaders in the archeological, law enforcement, and museum communities to identify areas of common concern and explore solutions to better protect heritage sites and to halt the illicit trade. The #CultureUnderThreat Task Force was created as a result of these discussions. This high-level group met again in New York during the UNGA meetings to maintain the momentum.

In April of 2016, the task force released #CultureUnderThreat: Recommendations for the U.S. Government, to promote solutions to the growing crisis of cultural heritage destruction and serve as an ongoing resource for policy makers. The task force is concentrating on implementation of the proposed recommendations, where it has seen initial success through its call for the rapid approval of legislation to halt the import of Syrian antiquities. The AC is also launching an Art Market Task force to bring together dealers, museums, law enforcement and others to explore potential areas of collaboration. The development of innovative technologies and access to crowdsourcing solutions create interesting potential opportunities for new ways of tracking illicit antiquities and to raise awareness.

A few of the recommendations from the report include:

- Designation of an overall coordinator for the U.S. government: locating this position in the National Security Council will help ensure coordination across government agencies, including Defense, State, Treasury and the intelligence agencies to bring about action.
- Negotiate Cultural Memoranda of Understanding: expand the number of bilateral agreements with MENA countries under the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act to prevent the U.S. being a major market for illicit antiquities.
- Refocus law enforcement towards criminal prosecutions: shift the focus of U.S. law

enforcement from seizure and repatriation of antiquities to the dismantling of criminal networks through criminal prosecution.

- Creation of specialized prosecutors: appoint designated prosecutors at the Department of Justice with an expertise in heritage.
- Bring additional ICC cases for crimes against heritage: request that the International Criminal Court open an investigation into cultural heritage crimes in Iraq and Syria. The intentional targeting of heritage is a crime of war under the Hague Convention.
- Development of no-strike lists: should support the United States Committee of the Blue Shield's continuing work of protecting cultural heritage sites that should not be targeted during armed conflict.

Finally, the Antiquities Coalition launched a Cultural Heritage Think Tank in November to explore innovative solutions to pressing challenges in cultural heritage. It will publish a new series of policy briefs by distinguished specialists from the public and private sectors. Attorney Ricardo A. St. Hilaire wrote the inaugural paper, which explores how the Department of Justice (DOJ) can take a leadership role in the global fight against cultural racketeering—the illicit antiquities trade—by appointing designated prosecutors to pursue criminal cases against smugglers, corrupt dealers, and their accomplices. Additional papers by leading and innovative experts will follow.

To fight the illegal trade in antiquities requires a comprehensive approach and action—as well as collaboration—by many different players. The actions proposed by the Antiquities Coalition are important not only to combat terrorist financing from antiquities looting and trafficking but also financing to armed insurgents and organized criminals operating in countries in crisis. They will also help establish the building blocks to help develop long-term solutions with these countries. Those who care about preserving our history must work together to create a framework for combating the illicit trade in antiquities globally. In order to safeguard cultural heritage in the Middle East and North Africa, we need to work together on creating the necessary political will for action.