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Looted Antiquities: Economic Opportunity for Terrorists

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Looted Antiquities: Economic Opportunity for Terrorists

By

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Abstract

Looted Antiquities: Economic Opportunity for Terrorists

In the post 9/11 world countering terrorism has become a top United States foreign policy priority as well as the subject of much scholarly research. To counter terrorism it is important to understand the inner-workings of such groups. How do terrorist groups fund their operations in order to be able to carry them out continuously? It is often assumed that the arms and drug trade on the black market are the main source of income for terrorists groups (Kaplan). Unbeknownst to many, there is an illegal trade in art and historical artifacts that funds terrorist activities. How do terrorists use art and artifacts to fund their activities? According to the literature there is lack of exploration on how the sale of art obtained illegally facilitates terrorist activity. Terrorist groups use the grey market to sell art and historical artifacts obtained illegally from areas of conflict and then use those funds to support their activities all over the world. This study compares how terrorist groups use art illegally (stealing and selling art on the grey and black markets) to explore any current counter measures that exist to combat to the illegal sale of art. The terrorist cells that were studied in this research are the Irish Republican Army, Al-Qaeda, and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Research that looks into the sale of illegal art may provide insight for how future terrorist attacks can be prevented.

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>iii</i>
Introduction	1
Literature Review	5
Funding of Terrorism	5
Areas of Conflict and Art Theft	6
Movement of Illicit Goods to Legal Market	7
Theft of Art by Specific Terrorist Groups	8
Counter Measures	9
Gap in Literature	9
Argument	10
Data Collection and Analysis	13
Al Qaeda	13
Irish Republican Army	16
Islamic State in Iraq and Syria	18
The Grey Market	21
Counter Measures Analysis	23
Conclusion	28
Appendix	31
Bibliography	34

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Introduction

Art has the unique feature of transcending time, delivering to thousands of museum and gallerygoers a brief glimpse of a period long since passed or a surge in creativity that highlights a generation. Throughout history people have been obsessed with studying, obtaining, or even destroying art. With the rise and fall of civilizations, also came periods of great masters of their craft constructing masterpiece after masterpiece, followed by periods of horrid destruction or iconoclasm. From Hitler's obsession with pilfering art from the states he overtook to create his great art gallery to the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan by the Taliban it is easy to understand the perverse way people either covet or destroy art to make political statements. In recent times, art has become a major issue to the national security of the world. The theft and sale of art and artifacts has allowed terrorist cells to continue their campaign of violence against the population of the world. Looting, in the form of grave robbing, is as old as the pyramids themselves as even the Romans took war booty from every culture they conquered (Charney). For the better part of those 2,000 years, looting remained the practice of obtaining war booty and grave robbing.

It is imperative to understand how terrorist groups function and operate in order to implement counter measures to prevent them from growing and committing acts of terror around the world. Adequate funding is important for the survival of a terrorist group and its ability to perpetrate terrorists attacks. How do terrorist groups fund their operations to be able to carry them out continuously? Furthermore, how do terrorist groups use art and artifacts to fund their activities? The aim of this paper is to understand how these terrorists groups use art and artifacts to fund themselves. Terrorists steal art from areas of conflict and then sell the goods on the grey market in order to fund terrorist activity around the world. Areas of conflict see a surge of their art and artifacts pilfered from their unprotected historical sites because all of the focus is on the violence. As a result, these artifacts end up in private collections or in museums around the world. The illegal artifacts are obtained from these areas of violence where there is a supply and then moved to Western countries where there is a demand for them on the grey market.

The arms and drug trade are the main sources of income for terrorists and other criminal groups as they are the highest grossing and most commonly committed trafficking operations in the world (Kaplan). Given the illicit nature of the arms and drug trade it is hard to calculate how much these two generate, however it is estimated that the illegal arms trade is valued at \$60 billion per year while the drug trade is estimated at \$320 billion per year (Freeman). Compared to the arms and drug trade, it is surprising that art is the third most committed and highest grossing good that is trafficked (Wittman). The estimated value of the trafficking of art is about \$6 billion dollars (Wittman). Art can be notoriously difficult to track and find once it is stolen, especially ancient art that is not as well known as modern art (Waxman). If a Vincent van Gogh painting was stolen the entire world would know about it and the thieves would not be able to sell it because of the paintings notoriety, let alone for the full market value of what that painting

is worth. Meanwhile if thieves stole an ancient Mesopotamian vase from an archeological site, it would not be reported to the media and it is entirely possible that the archeologists would not even realize that it is missing from the site. This makes it easier to sell ancient art versus modern art. The key to the ease of the sale is the provenance, which is a record of ownership that is used to prove the quality and authenticity of a piece of art or antique. A person cannot sell art or artifacts without a provenance to prove both ownership and that the piece is legitimate, nor would a person buy one without it as it is a valuable method of authentication.

Art theft does not draw the same amount of scholarly focus as the arms and drug trade experiences. The literature lacks significant exploration into how terrorist groups attain and attempt to use the stolen art to fund themselves and their cause. In addition, the literature that exists is not always conducted by experts in art or economics and thus does not focus on key issues like how the art is used and what preventative measures might be implemented. The theft and trafficking of cultural property are crimes particularly complex in nature and have international ramifications and significant economic consequences.

This topic is relevant today because it pertains to the prevention of terrorist acts. Through the understanding of how terrorist groups use and sell contraband art it is possible to increase clarity of how these groups operate. This can then lead to better regulation and prosecution of the sale of illegal art. However the main goal would be to develop preventative measures in order to protect antiquities from being stolen and used for terrorist funding and to preserve the culture behind the artifacts.

Current scholarship has addressed the various methods in which a terrorist cell can fund itself, ranging from the arms trade, drug trade, ransoms, state sponsoring, and private funding. In addition, the literature has covered the methods in which a government or institution can counter

against these specific funding measures and the methods already in place to counter terrorist funding. However the literature has not adequately assessed the theft of art and antiquities, which presents a unique opportunity for terrorists to finance themselves.

The method employed in this research is a multi-case study of three terrorist groups; the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and Al Qaeda. These three groups were chosen for the types of art they stole, how they tried to use the art to finance themselves, and whether or not they were successful in their endeavors. In addition, this paper analyzes the grey market and any current counter measures that may exist to the sale of art and artifacts. It is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the grey market to ascertain how these groups use the art and how the art changes hands. It is also important to take current counter measures into account so that scholars and law enforcement officials may thoroughly assess what policies need to be implemented to protect these cultural and historical objects.

The layout of this paper first addresses current scholarship on the subject and relevant information that enhances a persons understanding of the problems related to stolen art. These subjects pertain to current funding methods of terrorists, areas of conflict experience an influx of stolen art, the grey market, the theft of art by specific terrorist groups, and counter measures. It is important to address all of these issues because they are relevant for understanding the successful methods of art theft and how terrorist groups employ them. It is also relevant for highlighting how scholars focus on these issues singularly and together cohesively. Through covering the current scholarship related to the subject, the gaps in the literature and the need for this study becomes apparent as they are all interrelated to art theft and sale. After addressing the gap in the literature this paper goes into deeper detail of the over arching argument. The next section after that is the analysis of the multi-case study of Al-Qaeda, the IRA, and ISIS. Included in this

section in a review of the grey market and an evaluation of current counter measures. The final section in the conclusion which draws from the research questions, hypothesis, and data collected to attempt to draw conclusions for future scholarship.

Literature Review

Funding of Terrorism

A review of current literature on how terrorism is financed reveals that the focus is primarily on the arms and drug trade as the main source of income for terrorist cells (Elu) (Freeman). The gap is the lack of scholarly review on how art theft contributes to terrorist funding, which is the focus of this study. However, it is also important to address other methods of funding for terrorists as they provide insight into how and why these groups use art. The arms and drug trade are the top two grossing enterprises that operate outside of the formal economy and are billion dollar markets with many finical opportunities (Freeman). Surprisingly, stolen/falsified art and artifacts is the third highest grossing enterprise that exists outside of the formal market (Wittman).

In addition to arms and drug trade there are other ways in which a terrorist group can finance itself. Money laundering, state sponsored funding, ransoms, and private funds are all different ways that a group can receive funding (Abuza). Terrorist attacks and day to day operations require large quantities of money in order to acquire weapons, maintain a stateless army, move around, and carry out terrorist attacks (Acharya). It is estimated that it costs at least \$30,000 just to carry out a small-scale attack so it is necessary to have enough adequate funding (Acharya). As authorities crack down on countering other funding methods, these groups are turning towards art theft.

Areas of Conflict and Art Theft

Throughout history areas experiencing armed conflict suffer from not only civil unrest, but theft of their culture as works of art are pilfered from museums/archeological sites/private collections (Waxman). An examination of art in conflict areas will demonstrate that terrorist groups take advantage of such areas to reap the economic benefits. These stolen objects are then illegally moved out of the country, where the provenance is falsified and the art can be sold in developed countries where there is a market for the goods (Waxman). An example of this in recent history was the theft of three statues from Cambodia during its bloody civil war in the 1970's. While experiencing violence within the region, Cambodia's cultural sites were also attacked by looters. In recent times, these three statues have turned up in major auction houses and museum collections in London, which lead to a legal battle to get the statues back to Cambodia (Davis). Cambodia was fortunate enough to have their statues returned to them after it was proven they were stolen (Davis).

This outcome in Cambodia is not always the norm, as thousands of other artifacts remain hidden away in private collections or the truth of their origins are unknown because the piece is unknown to be missing by the home country. Many factors can sway if the art will be recovered and how. For reputable auction houses or museums, it can be damaging to their reputation when an art piece that the house has been proven to have been stolen from its country of origin (Waxman).

Cambodia is not unique because in times of crisis other countries also experience art theft by criminal organizations. It is not uncommon for crime syndicates like drug gangs or the mafia to attempt to benefit from the violence (Waxman). In Latin America, ancient Incan and Mayan sites have also had their treasures looted in an attempt to gain some quick cash (Wittman). The market potential for illicit antiquities is staggering with a large number of sites across a broad

range of states. The accessibility and vulnerability of those sites range depending on the state and their methods of protection. However it is clear that developing states and those experiencing political turmoil cannot properly protect their sites from looters. Given the number of potential sites that can be looted it comes as no surprise. According to experts in the archeological field in Latin America the number of sites within a country can range from 1,000 to more than 10,000 (Lane). Archeologists may not have excavated majority of these sites, as the estimates do not even include the number of undiscovered sites (Lane).

Movement of Illicit Goods to Legal Market (Grey Market)

It is necessary to have an accurate conceptualization of the grey and black markets literature, as they are different in terms of legality (Dobovšek). Black Market is for illicit goods that are outlawed internationally such as illicit arms and drugs. The movement of black market goods from supply to demand chain differs depending on the type good and the ease of which it can be hidden during transfer (Dobovšek). The Grey Market differs from Black Market in terms of the legal stand-point and thus why it is in a “grey area” (Atwood). Art is illegally obtained, but moves into a legal market (Western). This is due to the major difference between trying to sell modern and ancient art. The illegal market in art and antiquities has become transnational organization that is massive and growing exponentially. There are a number of major markets in illegal goods from drug, weapons, sex slaves, illegal immigrants, movies, and precious metals and gems. Estimates of the size and magnitude of these illegal markets tend to be unreliable, and the market in illegal antiquities is no exception (Lane).

Theft of Art by Specific Terrorist Groups

A review is needed of the specific terrorist groups due to the fact that they stole different kinds of art to benefit their operations. The IRA was not successful in its attempt to use stolen

art because it was modern art (“The Robberies”). Modern art is too well known, making it harder to sell and can only be sold for 10% of estimated price. Example, a \$100 million dollar painting will only be able to be sold for \$10 million on the Black Market (Wittman). Stolen modern art can only be used for trade and collateral because it cannot be sold. But if the stolen modern art is sold then it will be at a fraction of the original price of the piece (Wittman). This is because the more famous a piece is the harder it is to sell as everyone from art dealers, law enforcement, to the general public knows that it is missing. It would be incredibly difficult for anyone to sell a famous piece of art without the authorities finding out and setting up a sting operation.

Meanwhile on the opposite side Al-Qaeda successfully sold stolen art because the pieces were unknown to experts to have been stolen, let alone exist in the first place (Charney). An offshoot of Al Qaeda, ISIS, has learned from Al Qaeda’s funding methods and has been incredibly successful in looting and selling art in the territories that it has captured. ISIS has plundered the archeological sites in both Syria and Iraq (Cotter). ISIS and Al Qaeda have both benefitted greatly through the sale of the plundered art because it cannot be traced due to the fact that the art looted is ancient and had yet to be recorded by the proper experts before they were stolen (D’Arcy).

Counter Measures to Theft and Sale of Art

In a review of the literature, it becomes evident that law enforcement devotion to art crime is virtually non-existent in the United States, which makes reviewing any current counter measures to the sale of stolen art very valuable. Only in the last decade has the United States has established an art crime team in the FBI (Wittman). European countries like England and Italy have a dedicated task force for the investigation, recovery, and prosecution of stolen art (Grupico). Interpol is an international world police organization that aids in collaborative efforts

spanning other countries in an attempt to recover works of art (“Works of Art”). Art theft is a threat to national security in providing terrorist cells with the means of making money and a threat to the culture and history of a region through the destruction of archeological sites and loss of art in its historical context (Grupico). It is important to understand the current methods of protection of art and attempt to establish more effective ways of protecting art, museums, and archeological sites during times of duress.

Gap in Literature

Scholars and other professionals in the field have analyzed and discussed how terrorist groups fund themselves through other illegal means. They have extensively studied the arms and drug trade, money laundering, ransoms, personal funding, and state funding of terrorism and methods by which to counter them. This research has provided insight into how terrorist groups work from recruitment to strategic attack plans. Through their research they have also suggested how U.S. foreign policy makers should counter these various funding methods. While terrorism finance has been studied in various ways, the literature falls short in studying how terrorists use art and antiquities to fund their operations. Although the literature features analysis of how terrorist groups are financing themselves through other means and prevention methods. However, the literature does not explicitly cover how these groups steal, sell, profit from art, and the success factors that contribute to the terrorist cell’s success.

Media reports have covered what has happened in these countries and the level of destruction but the literature does not address the question as to why this happens. Additionally, the connection between the use of conflict areas to steal art and then selling them on the grey market with terrorist activity has not effectively been made. Any attempts made to make this connection have fallen short due to either a general lack of knowledge or misconception of the

how the grey market works in terms of art theft and sales. As a result from the lack of extensive research on the theft of art for the purposes of funding terrorist, the literature also lacks suggestions as to how to counter this type of funding. This paper aims to address these gaps in order to draw scholarly attention to the subject matter.

Argument

To restate, the research questions that this paper is asking, how do terrorists groups use and sell art in order to fund themselves and their operations? The main argument that this paper is asserting is that terrorist groups use the grey market to sell art and historical artifacts obtained illegally from areas of conflict and then use those funds to support their activities all over the world. Areas of conflict present economic opportunity for terrorists and are taken advantage of in order to fund their operations around the world. The literature, both in and out of academia, reflects this assumption. Areas experiencing violent conflicts such as civil war are easy targets for these groups to steal and sell the art with little to no media attention because the focus is on the conflict itself, not the side effects. Within the country itself military personnel is concentrated in the area of violence, not on the protection of cultural property. It is even easier if the group controls the territory in which it is plundering from, such as regions of Iraq and Syria that are controlled by ISIS.

It is impossible to fully comprehend the amount of art and artifacts that is stolen as the information available does not reflect the accurately reflect what may be missing. The number of reported art crimes represent only a minor fraction of the total number of art that has gone missing (Interpol). Antiquities looted from archeological sites, shipwrecks, ancient cities and temples can only be discovered in the off chance that an archeologist or law enforcement happen upon the looted site. However, even if the looted site is discovered there is no way of knowing

what the site contained, let alone what was stolen. Aside from antiquities, the theft of fine art is alone not reported for reasons ranging to museums not wanting to highlight their faulty security, art collectors who try to avoid taxes by not declaring the entirety of their collection, and churches or libraries that may be unaware of any thefts of their art.

Even smaller is the amount of stolen art that is recovered, around 5-10% at best (Interpol). Scholars and law enforcement are aware of the fact that art crime is the third-highest-grossing criminal trade, behind only the arms and drug trade, and have studied the links of antiquities looting to organized crime. Organized crime is a broad definition that includes not only mafia, gangs, and terrorist groups but “any group of three or more individuals working together in a diverse array of criminal enterprises for long-term collective goals” (Interpol). Often the groups, especially the mafia or gangs, hire local mercenaries and burglars to steal the art and then these groups have a web of connections to help them smuggle the works to a different country, falsify records, and ensure they are sold in secret (Charney). Through this, a criminal syndicate can use their funds obtained from the art to fund other activities from the arms and drug trade to terrorism.

Additionally, the nature of art (ancient versus modern) makes it hard for law enforcement to track, even more so when it moves onto the grey market and into the hands of Westerners. First off, it is possible that it is unknown what has been taken. Secondly, it is hard to regulate art, especially in private collections and when the provenance has been falsified. In only rare cases is it possible for the country of origin to make a successful recovery case. For instance, in 2008 The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York was forced to return one of its most prized pieces, the Euphronios Krater, to Italy (Denton). This famous Etruscan bowl was looted in Rome and had been in the possession of The Met since 1972. It, along with twenty other

artifacts, was repatriated to Rome in order for the museum to avoid both international embarrassment and prosecution in an Italian court for knowingly acquiring looted artifacts (Waxman). It is a major success factor for terrorist groups who commit art theft is whether or not art is modern or ancient. In the multi-case study analysis, IRA was not successful because they stole modern art (“The Robberies”). Al-Qaeda and ISIS have used stolen art successfully because they stole lesser known, ancient art pieces (Wittman). Modern art is more well-known and thus harder to sell. Ancient art is either not well known or not documented yet, making it easier to sell because no law enforcement or recovery agency knows that it is missing.

Once the art moves onto Grey Market it makes hard to take any legal action (Nemeth). Art can disappear and not resurface for decades after it was stolen, as it can remain hidden in private collections or in the hands of the dealers. This prevents government and law enforcement personnel from finding the culprit and tracking the middlemen. It is difficult to track the movement of looted antiquities from archeological site to Western markets. However, the best counter measure would be to implore nations to protect their cultural sites from plunder and to explore the demand for these goods. Cut off the supply and demand of stolen artifacts. This calls for a second look at counter-theft measures in place and how to implement them in countries experiencing conflict. Strategies that prevent the theft of cultural objects and hinder terrorists from fulfilling their goals will be a necessary battle for governments and law enforcement agencies.

Data Collection and Analysis

The groups chosen for this study (the IRA, Al Qaeda, and ISIS) were carefully picked for a multitude of reasons. Their goals and methods as terrorist groups differ but they were ultimately chosen for two main reasons, the type of art that these groups stole and how they

subsequently used that art to benefit their group financially. This section will delve into the details of each case from their history to the thefts in order to fully understand how the art and artifacts are used and how to protect such objects from nefarious use.

Al Qaeda

The first terrorist group is Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is a global Islamist terrorist organization founded in the late 1980's out of the Soviet war in Afghanistan by a group of militants, most notably Osama bin Laden that served as a leader of their organization. Muslims from around the world rallied for the common cause, a holy war or jihad, in Afghanistan after it was invaded by the USSR. Osama bin Laden, the son from a wealthy Saudi Arabian family, took part in some battles but he was more well-known for his wealthy connections and generous "donations" to the cause against the Soviets. From the events in Afghanistan, Osama gained the momentum to develop his intricate terrorist cell. In addition to the wealthy connections that Osama made in his home country and other Middle Eastern countries, the United States and other countries were contributing in billions of dollars worth of weapons, assistance, training to rebels in their fight against the Soviets (The 9/11 Commission Report). These contributions helped Osama begin to build his terrorist network into the violent force that it is in the present day.

While Al Qaeda has been linked to a number of terrorist acts, their actions on September 11, 2001 were a devastating blow to the United States and the Western world and made the group infamous. The violent group sought to attack the United States in such a way that would be seen around the world and show the might of their power. The events of 9/11 have had a great deal of influence of foreign policy actions in the United States, especially in regards to launching the War on Terror (The 9/11 Commission Report). Currently, with the assassination of bin Laden, the group lost some of its central power and is composed of several offshoot groups that

operate as a stateless militia that believe in an extremist view of Islam. Tensions between the factions of Al Qaeda culminated in in-house fighting and separations (see ISIS).

Al Qaeda is also reported to have smuggled Afghan antiquities to fund its jihadist activities (The 9/11 Commission Report). The 9/11 Commission Report claims that, “al-Qaeda, anticipating that its accounts would be frozen after the September 11 attacks, sought to safeguard its finances by sinking money into a diverse portfolio, which included antiquities. Hijack ringleader Mohamed Atta approached a German art professor about peddling Afghan antiquities, Germany’s Federal Criminal Police Office reported. Atta’s reason: to finance the purchase of an airplane” (Bowman).

Aside from the funding methods of 9/11, Al Qaeda has cashed in on the grey market antiquities trade to help fund their insurgencies in conflict areas. Thousands of ancient Assyrian and Mesopotamian artifacts were looted from the National Museum of Iraq in Bagdad after the fall of Saddam and the invasion of the United States military ("The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago"). It is estimated that around 15,000 treasures were plundered in 2003 and so far only 4,000 had been recovered ("The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago"). Years after the initial looting, Al Qaeda and its affiliates are using the ransacked goods to finance their terrorist operations.

The events unfolding in Iraq highlights the need for protection of these sites as antiquities trafficking has serious national security consequences. Al Qaeda’s methods are also influencing their affiliates (ISIS). While there are various funding methods for terrorist groups, they are making a lot of money off the looting of art and antiquities. There is also evidence that the country's 12,000 poorly guarded archaeological sites were being systematically plundered by Al Qaeda ("The Impact of War on Iraq's Cultural Heritage"). This is a highly lucrative, global

criminal enterprise. Information leaked by informants has revealed that once the objects leave Iraq they “generally head overland to Jordan or Syria and then on to cities like Beirut and Geneva to obtain documents that will 'certify' them" ("The Impact of War on Iraq's Cultural Heritage").

Irish Republican Army

The second group that will be covered is the IRA or Irish Republican Army. The IRA was an outgrowth of an earlier group that successfully challenged British rule in the whole of Ireland in the early years of the twentieth century that resulted in an independent Irish Free State in 1921. However, as a concession the earlier IRA group allowed Britain to maintain rule over six northern countries that were renamed Northern Ireland. Tensions between the free Irish State and Britain came to clash over the reunification of Ireland and mounting conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. The conflicts also caused a split in the IRA over ideologies. The “official” face of the group supported a united socialist Ireland by peaceful means but the "provisionals" splinter group “vowed to use violence as a catalyst for unification” (Gregory).

The provisional IRA (PIRA) had very little support from the public as they carried out sniper attacks, assassinations, and several small bombings. However support soared for the PIRA when “in January 1972, British troops opened fire on a Catholic rally in Londonderry, killing fourteen unarmed people” and membership soared as people flocked to join their cause (Gregory). Their bloody campaign started a series of bombing campaigns that targeted strategic military sites and civilian populations in Northern Ireland and Britain. Between the “Loyalist” groups that rose up to challenge the IRA, the British military, the IRA, and the police, about

3,600 people would lose their lives to the violence before a peace deal was brokered in the late 1990's.

The violent terrorist group that held a reign of terror over England eventually legitimized itself into the political party, Sinn Fein, and they hold various political positions in government today. However, two offshoot groups called the Real IRA and Continuity IRA still continue their armed campaign and remain on the terror watch list for Europe and the United States. Despite the fact that the IRA is now seen as a legitimate political party for decades it was thought to be one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world. While an inquiry into its affairs has led to the belief that the IRA has decommissioned its weapons, it still opposes what it calls an illegal foreign occupation of its country (Gregory).

The Russborough House is a “stately house situated near the Blessington Lakes in County Wicklow, Ireland” (“The Robberies”). Russborough Houses features a massive fine art collection and opens its doors to guests to peruse through their galleries of masterpieces. Some of the collection includes works from Goya, Thomas Gainsborough, and Vermeer. However this expensive collection has had four multi-million dollar art robberies, two of them topping \$30 million, in the past 31 years (“The Robberies”). The first robbery occurred in 1974 by an IRA gang, including the famous British heiress Rose Dugdale. As they could not sell the 19 famous paintings (estimated at 8 million pounds), they hoped to hold them for ransom in exchange for the release of certain IRA members from prison. However, the attempts to broker a deal between the British Government ultimately failed and the paintings were safely recovered in a sting operation and everyone involved was jailed.

A decade later in 1986 a notorious criminal, Martin Cahill, invaded the house with some of his fellow gang members and stole 18 paintings. Through the collaborative efforts of

authorities around the world, they managed to recover all but three of the paintings in raids in Turkey, London, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Cahill and his associates attempted to use the paintings as collateral for drugs to make enough money to get the paintings back but the famous paintings could not remain a secret forever as the whole world was looking for them. Despite these two robberies, the Russborough House still did not expand their security beyond a lone night guard, making it as a soft spot for further robberies. In 2001 an associate of Cahill also robbed the house in three minutes and in 2003 three men with possible IRA connections also got away with stealing five paintings. All of the paintings were recovered within a few months, as "they are not saleable on the open market. Maybe the thieves are hoping a reward will be offered" ("£2.5m Russborough House Paintings Theft").

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS or ISIL) is an Islamist terrorist group that operates in the Middle East and controls territory in Iraq and Syria ("What Is Islamic State?"). Formed in the late 90's, the group pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda in 2004 and played a role in the Iraqi insurgency during that period (Crooke). Years later it teamed up with other insurgent groups to create the Mujahideen Council that wanted to create an Islamic State (Crooke). ISIS flew under the radar until 2008 when it gained a significant presence and their violent tactics of targeting civilians with suicide bombings and the killing of prisoners of war led to a backlash from Sunni Iraqis and other insurgent groups.

Recently ISIS has overtaken Al Qaeda as the biggest security threat to the world. The development from a small group of extremists to a major terrorist group in just a few short years has been astounding. Under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the groups role in the Syrian civil war they have grown immensely ("What Is Islamic State?"). Throughout the civil

war the group has taken over large areas of Syria and used that land for their benefit. In 2014 Al Qaeda broke ties with ISIS after an internal power struggle and disagreements. This same year as ISIS rose to prominence in the media over the beheading of James Foley and their capturing of major areas in Iraq, including the second largest city ("What Is Islamic State?"). ISIS proclaimed itself to be a worldwide caliphate under the name "Islamic State" (IS) and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was named its "caliph" or religious leader ("What Is Islamic State?").

Experts were baffled as to how ISIS could grow so rapidly and gain enough funds to carry out attacks and maintain its army in a few short years. Much evidence suggests that ISIS profited on the Syrian oil fields it captured. New intelligence has revealed that ISIS is copying their predecessors, the Taliban and Al Qaeda, in the looting of ancient archeological sites dating back to Mesopotamia (Salaheddin). Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria ISIS has cashed in on the looting of important historical sites such as the city of Apamea, that was nominated as a UNESCO world heritage site (Tucker). Satellite imagery located in Appendix 1 shows that over a nine-month period documented the destruction of the once proud ancient city to one that had been ravaged and destroyed by looters along with many other ancient cities. In the image below, satellite imagery of the city of Umma shows the physical devastation that looting has caused (Tucker).

Unfortunately, most of Syria's cultural and historical sites (estimated 90%) are in the areas that are battlegrounds for the volatile region (Martel). The situation is so dire that the International Council of Museums established the website, Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk, to document the destruction and theft and to keep law enforcement on alert for missing artifacts from statues to clay vases ("Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk"). It is estimated that the terrorist group made up to \$36 million from plundering

the artifacts in one area of Syria alone (Gibbon). Their tactics are not new as both Al Qaeda and the Taliban looted antiquities for the purpose of funding their operations so it is not unlikely that the Al Qaeda splinter group is using the same methods of funding as other sources of cash dry up. The Emergency Red List has released a map, pictured in Appendix 2, of over 1000 cultural sites and museums that are at risk ("Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk"). Many of these sites include UNESCO world heritage sites. The pie chart below the map shows that nearly all of Syria's sites are at risk.

From the map located in Appendix 3 in this paper, it becomes apparent of the sheer magnitude of sites at risk for plundering. As a comparison, the map below shows ISIS controlled areas and ISIS support areas as of April 7th, 2015 ("Despite Tikrit Loss, ISIS Still Holds Large Swaths of Iraq"). Looking at the two maps shows which cultural areas and sites are under direct ISIS control and which areas lie within their support, making them easy targets for the group to plunder from.

The recent reports have prompted the UN Security Council in February 2015 to ban all trade in artifacts from Syria, "accusing IS militants of looting cultural heritage to strengthen its ability to organize and carry out terrorist attacks" (Cox). Nicholas Saad, the head of Lebanon's bureau of international theft has noted that there has been a notable increase in the smuggling of looted artifacts in his country. Lebanon serves as a transit point from the Middle East to Europe, as Lebanon does not have a market for antiquities. Lt. Saad has also noted that the artifacts that were seized came "from the Islamic parts, Raqqa (the base) of the Islamic State" in Syria (Cox).

ISIS is attacking Assyrian communities in their controlled territories in Northern Iraq. Not only is ISIS attempting to eliminate a minority group, but additionally they are destroying the archeological traces of ancient Assyrian and pre-Islamic art. ISIS has released a video of a

group of militants smashing recently discovered statues of Assyrian Kings inside of a museum in the captured city, Mosul (Barnard). The militants present themselves as preservers of their religion, smashing idols like the Prophet Muhammed, but they have “veered between ideology and pragmatism in their relationship to antiquity — destroying historic mosques, tombs and artifacts that they consider forms of idolatry, but also selling more portable objects to fill their coffers” (Barnard). This most recent attack on art is a perverse way to carry out their ideology while ultimately provoking the West and its allies into war in order to gain supporters for their cause.

The Grey Market

The main difference between these groups is the type of art that was stolen and how sellable it is on the black and grey markets. It is important to understand how these markets work in order to fully grasp the nature of the art and the measures of success for the terrorist groups in using the art. The black market is an underground market in which goods or services are illegally traded as the transaction itself is illegal (Dobovšek). The goods that are traded can be legal or illegal to possess (Dobovšek). Due to the nature of the transaction, the black market exists separate of the legitimate and formal economy or white market (Dobovšek). The formal market has the support of states in order for them to survive and function but the black market does not have that distinction. People choose to trade on the black market to obtain/sell contraband or avoid taxes.

The Grey market goods refer to “legal goods” which are sold outside normal distribution channels by companies, which may have no relationship with the producer of the goods (Atewood). If a person was to import legally restricted items such as hardcore drugs or firearms then that would be considered a black market trade and this is the major distinction from the grey

market (Atewood). Under the grey market, goods are “legal” and are distributed through legal, but largely unofficial, unauthorized, unintended channels (Atewood). While the art is illegally obtained, the art itself is not a restricted item, which lends itself to the grey market. Additionally, what makes a piece of art legitimate is the provenance (Wittman). It is illegal to sell a piece of art without this record of origin, and no reputable art dealer would make a purchase without one. That is why once the stolen artifacts are transferred out of the country that they are given falsified provenance’s to assist in making the sale easier and to prevent authorities from recovering the art piece or tracking down the terrorist group and affiliates (Charney). However, the sale of ancient artifacts is legal under certain criteria. For instance, in Israel, an object can be sold through the legal antiquities market if it was found before 1978, when Israel passed a major antiquities law (Brodie). Dealers can get around this by keeping their inventories vague (Brodie).

Trafficking in looted antiquities is a criminal organization’s ideal dream. The trafficking networks already exist in the form of the drug trade, illegal weapons smuggling, and money laundering schemes that have been going on for decades or longer (Charney). The market comes into play depending on the type of art that is to be sold. ISIS and Al Qaeda were examples of successful art heists that had beneficial returns for those two terrorist groups. On the other hand, the IRA was not as successful in this capital venture. This is because the IRA stole well-known pieces of art that could not be sold on the underground market. No reputable art collector or dealer would risk purchasing a famous art piece, as they would face harsh legal consequences (Wittman). Additionally, if such a famous painting were to be sold it would be at 10% of the original price (Wittman). Meanwhile, ancient artifacts are harder for law enforcement to track down and are easier to move out of the country and sell.

Art in areas of conflict such as civil unrest and violence are at risk for plundering. Looters take advantage of the conflict in order to steal artifacts from unprotected museums and archeological sites. For example, during the Cambodian Civil War in the 1970's the country experienced a surge in looting from ancient temples and archeological sites (Tess). Decades later three thousand year old statues turned up in some of the most reputable auction houses and museums in the world. Once it was discovered that the statues did not come from a reputable dealer and were in fact stolen the museums gave the statues back to Cambodia (Tess). While Cambodia was lucky enough to recover a piece of their history back, that is not usually the case. When a country experiences internal conflict the market sees a surge in artifacts from that region, which are then imported to developed nations where there is a demand for the artifacts (Lis). Once the ancient artifact is moved out of the country it is easy to create a false provenance and no one knows that it is missing in the first place (Lis). While illegally obtained, the art becomes a legal good when it is moved to a new country (Lane). Arms and drugs are outlawed contraband so unlike art they always remain an illicit good that must be sold on the black market.

Counter Measures

In examining the existing measures to prevent art theft, it become clear that not enough is being done to prevent the theft and sale of art. The reasons for using this method are to identify and further the understanding of the current counter measures in place to protect art from being stolen, especially ancient art. This is because the ways in which art can be protected and counter-terrorist measures must be analyzed in order to further progress towards additional research in the way of counter-terrorism by bringing the funding of terrorists activity through art to light. In countries that are developed they have law enforcement entities that deal primarily with the theft and ale of antiquities and art. The United States being the outlier here, as they do not have a

dedicated art crime unit such as Scotland Yard does (Wittman). However, these institutions in place are only in developed countries and they do not extend that same level of protection towards other countries cultural goods. With no concrete security in place to protect archeological sites it makes them easier to plunder.

The way that the supply chain is organized is based upon the:

Routine activities of a population, and the rate of such activity may be understood as the product of three factors: a suitable target, a motivated offender, and the absence of a capable guardian. Target suitability refers to qualities such as the value of a person or property, access to them, and resistance capability. Motivation of offenders refers to both criminal inclinations and the ability to carry out those inclinations. Capable guardians may be either formal or informal third parties with a capacity for intervention (Lane).

Through this understanding of how the unprotected art is a “suitable target” for criminal syndicates or “motivated offenders” then it is conceivable that states and their bodies of law can create a system of “capable guardians”. Ideally these guardians would be able to protect the artifacts at all times, but it is especially imperative that the art is protected during times of duress and instability in the state. This is when the artifacts are most vulnerable for plunder as the attention is focused on the political or violent situation and thus there’s a lack of protection for these archeological sites.

Given the anarchic world that we live in, there is no global police force or “guardians” to protect these sites so the levels of protection depend on the country itself. Egypt is no stranger to tomb raiders with their pyramids and tombs of treasures being high profile targets ever since they were built. Unlike their counterparts, Egypt employed military might in order to protect the Cairo Museum from potential plunder during the Arab Spring and subsequent revolutions (Charney). While many countries can learn for Egypt’s example, the harsh reality is that not all artifacts are conveniently located in a museum. There are hundreds of archeological sites that are

still being examined so it is not entirely feasible to predict that a country can protect all of its treasures from plunder. It would be a good place to start though, given the significant damage to the cultural and historical heritage of Iraq with the looting of their National Museum. However, the institutions in place to regulate these objects and sites are limited in their effectiveness. This is due to issues ranging from corruption and unwillingness to enforce the law. In many states in which there is a high level of looting of cultural sites, there is often direct involvement by public officials who are in positions in which they are charged with the protection of ancient artifacts (Charney).

According to Interpol, a transnational conglomerate of law enforcement from 190 member countries, it is a very difficult issue. The established after World War I, the main goals of their organization are to:

Centralize information. Data sent to the General Secretariat is analyzed and entered in the Works of Art database. Transmit information received to member countries and official partners as rapidly as possible. Develop the tools to enable member countries to counter the traffic in cultural property effectively. Organize international conferences, either at the General Secretariat in Lyon, France, or in member countries, and participate in other international conferences and workshops across the world. Organize training courses on countering the traffic in cultural property. Maintain a close working relationship with the international organizations involved in countering the traffic in cultural property (Interpol).

The exact size and scope of the problem is immeasurable simply because “it is very difficult to gain an exact idea of how many items of cultural property are stolen throughout the world and it is unlikely that there will ever be any accurate statistics” (“Works of Art”). It is difficult for Interpol to acquire accurate statistical data on the magnitude of the looting member countries either do not track that information themselves or the theft is not discovered until the object is already in the grey market. Only 60 of its 190 member states report statistical information on looted artifacts to Interpol (“Works of Art”).

As an alternative, I would suggest for a focus on not only addressing how to stop the supply chain, but also reduce the demand for conflict art in developed countries. In order to combat looting we must first confront the demand for these archaeological artifacts. Scholars blame the wealthy for such infractions, as their desire for ancient objects (no matter the source) feeds directly into the market and allows these terrorist groups to thrive (Bowman). As Bowman states “most looting occurs in economically dependent, developing nations whose rich archaeological heritage is sold off to satiate demand generated in wealthier market nations. First, ...trading in antiquities is altogether legal; second, objects are sold at remarkably high prices; and last, buyers... are usually of prominent socioeconomic status” (Bowman 227-236). The grey market is what makes trafficking in looted antiquities so attractive and lucrative for organized crime.

While it would be difficult to accomplish a possible method of protection would be to establish an international catalogue system through either Interpol or another international art organization in which all private and museum art collections must register their art, from the fine pieces to the ancient ones, with their provenance. Through this method it would be easier for law enforcement and reputable art dealers to check the provenance and ensure that the works were not looted or falsified. It would be based upon Interpol’s database of stolen objects that contain descriptions and pictures of around 43,000 items (Interpol). Access to this catalogue would not be for public use. It would only allow those that are authorized users, such as law enforcement, governments, reputable art dealers, museums, etc, to use the system.

Auction houses and art dealers play a pivotal role in determining a fake painting from a genuine one and a looted artifact from a real one. This is because majority of art passes through these channels via the legal market and then into the hands of collectors. One of the main

functions of these institutions is to determine legitimate goods from the ones of questionable origin. In order to market an art piece for its full potential value then authenticity and legality of the object must be demonstrated. A catalogue system would also allow representatives from the countries, art dealers, archeologists, and other experts to be able to possibly identify any known pieces that have been stolen in order to pursue legal action and ensure the return of the objects to their home country. Through forcing art collectors to put their collections on official record, it might curtail the purchase of illegally obtained artifacts and art as so to avoid damage to their reputations and not face jail time.

In these conflict areas it is important to establish means of protection for the ancient archeological sites. In times of conflict, it is not always feasible that the ruling body in a state can allocate their resources and manpower towards protecting these sites of historical importance. While understandable, it destroys the very culture and history of the region and then goes further on to fund insurgent and terrorist groups that threaten these states security. It seems like an endless cycle with no hope for change. However, if Interpol and another organization, such as the UN, could band together and create an initiative that calls for the protection of these sacred sites then it is possible to see a reduction in the theft of ancient art. Under this initiative, states would be called to establish an art crime team (if it does not already exist within the state) and to provide support (possibly monetary or in the form of man-power).

Conclusion

The theft and sale of art and artifacts highlights the deception that that illicit antiquities trade is a benign entity that has no real impact on the state of the world. It is in part tolerated because it is considered a victimless crime. This is a fallacy, as we are in an age where there are ripple effects are felt all over the world. With the antiquities trade there is not only a great loss in

cultural, historical, and aesthetic objects, but also a loss of human life and security as terrorist groups are able to use this unique method in order to fund themselves. Sadly, “terrorism and transnational trafficking in people, drugs, and arms are at the forefront of criminological concerns, transnational crimes against culture are easily forgotten. Given the sheer volume of archaeological resources, it is as such impossible to assess just how damaging the effects of looting have been” (Bowman 229).

Through the course of this paper we have explored how different terrorists cells use art and artifacts to fund their activities and what factors contribute to their success. To restate the thesis and intention of this paper: Terrorists groups use the grey market to sell art and historical artifacts obtained illegally from areas of conflict and then use those funds to support their activities all over the world. Through this multi-case study of art theft perpetrated by the IRA, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS, one gains an understanding of how criminal groups such as terrorist cells are able to profit from the illegal antiquities market. The type of art (fine/modern art versus ancient art) and the conflicts occurring in the state of origin all contribute to how a terrorist group can successfully obtain and sell art. Through the use of the grey market, these groups are then able to move an illicit good to an area where it becomes a licit good, through fake provenances and that the art itself is not an outlawed good like drugs.

In the world of crime, the finer nuances of looting are not entirely clear. It is a very pretentious affair in a world that is not easily accessible. The illegal antiquities trade is incredibly vague and is generally a world open to the elite and preserved by museums around the world. From museum curators, antiquities dealers, philanthropists, collectors, foreign journalists, archaeologists, government officials, lawyers, smugglers and thieves the art travels through many hands before it reaches its destination, which only makes it ever the more frustrating to

track.

Just what is the effect of looting antiquities on transnational crime, archaeology, history, and the cultural loss of looting to indigenous populations? The plundering of these ancient sites directly effects how archaeologists can work and explain history to us. When a site is plundered it causes archaeologists to lose valuable information needed to reconstruct the past. Once an artifact has been removed from context in which it was found then archaeologists cannot say where it came from and what material it is associated with (Wittman).

Throughout this paper, I had hoped to identify the unique strategies that terrorist groups implement in their attempts to make money for their operations in order to showcase how art is an economic opportunity for terrorist cells. Through this research it becomes evident that terrorists take advantage of states that are experiencing conflict in order to loot art from museums and archeological sites. The terrorists group is more successful in its endeavors to sell the stolen art if the art is ancient and not known to the public because the movement of the art to the Grey Market makes it harder to track. In this case, an illicit good becomes a legal good that can be sold without major consequence.

There are certain counter measures to the theft of art that exist, but they are not effective or universal in states that are in crisis. By its nature alone ancient art is more difficult to track and recover than modern art, which makes developing counter measures especially hard. Counter-terrorism efforts will be need to be redirected to actions that are effective, especially to high risk areas. I believe that a positive step would be for the United States to establish a permanent art crime team to tackle these issues and support their European counterparts in prevention and recovery. Secondly, it would be beneficial to address the demand of the art and

how to reduce that demand through enforcing a system of cataloguing private art collections and increasing legal action towards those who possess art that has financed terrorist groups.

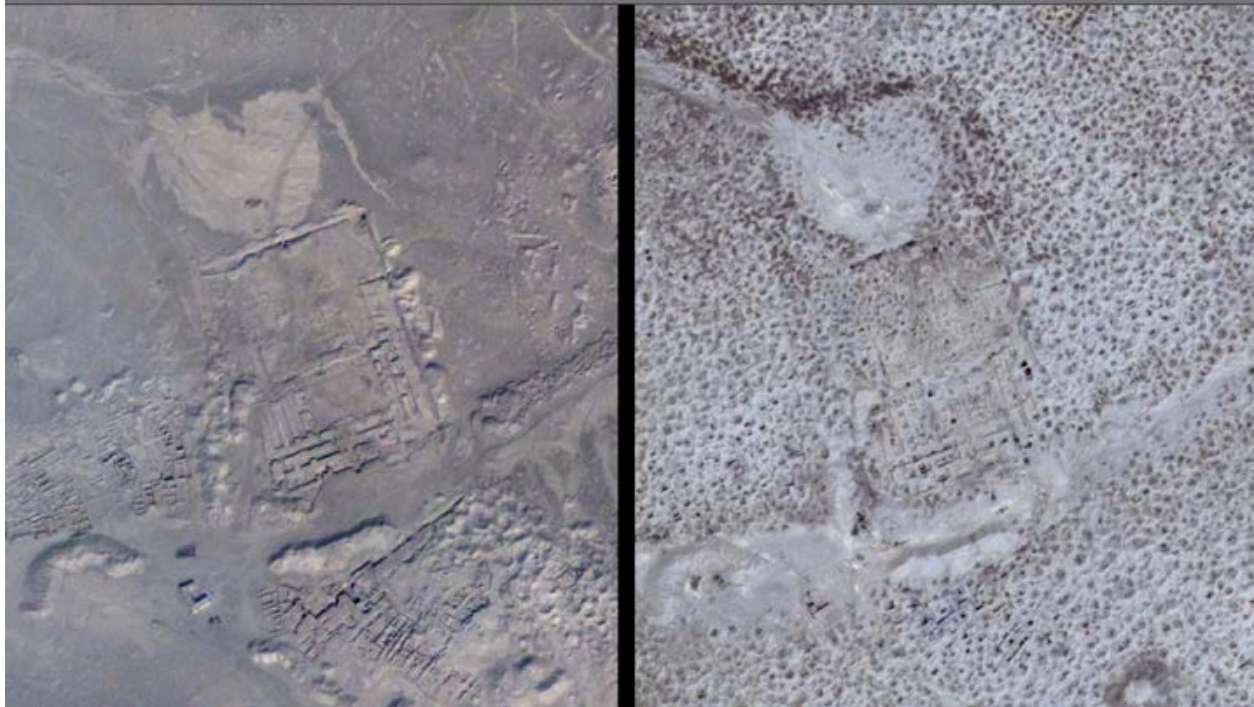
Currently we have very little reliable data on the global revenue generated by the illicit antiquities trade, and even less on the role it plays in funding terror groups. These current issues are bringing the subject matter to light and relevance, and it is imperative that we answer the “how’s” and “why’s” of it and how to prevent looting of artifacts. The future implications of this research are to further the existing research on how terrorist groups are able to finance themselves. This research can also assist in the developing counter-terrorism measures in order to attempt to hinder terrorists groups ability to carry out attacks because lack of funds. The need to expand research beyond the three-featured terrorist groups in this study is now apparent.

Appendix

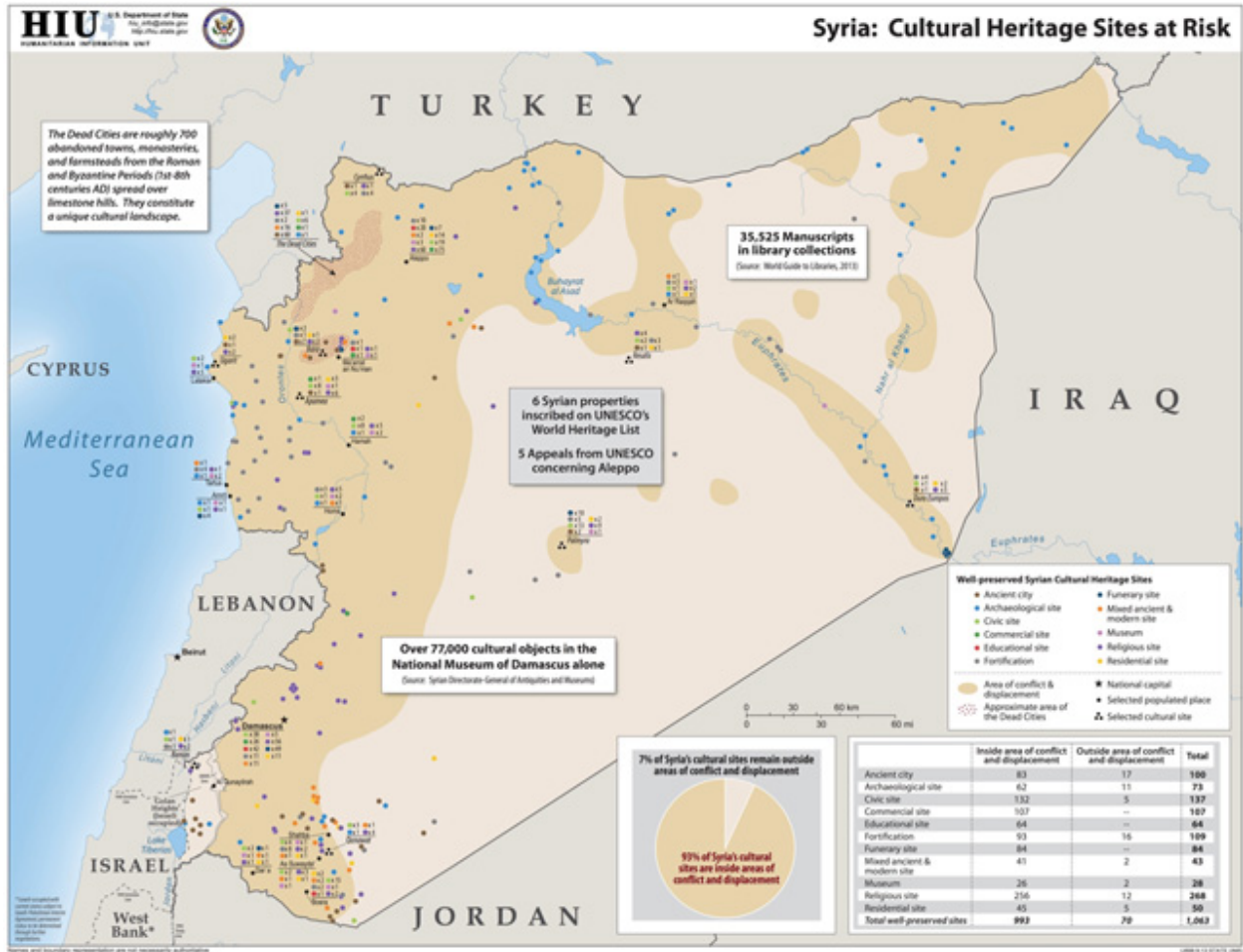
1)

Umma (Tell Jokha), Iraq – Looting

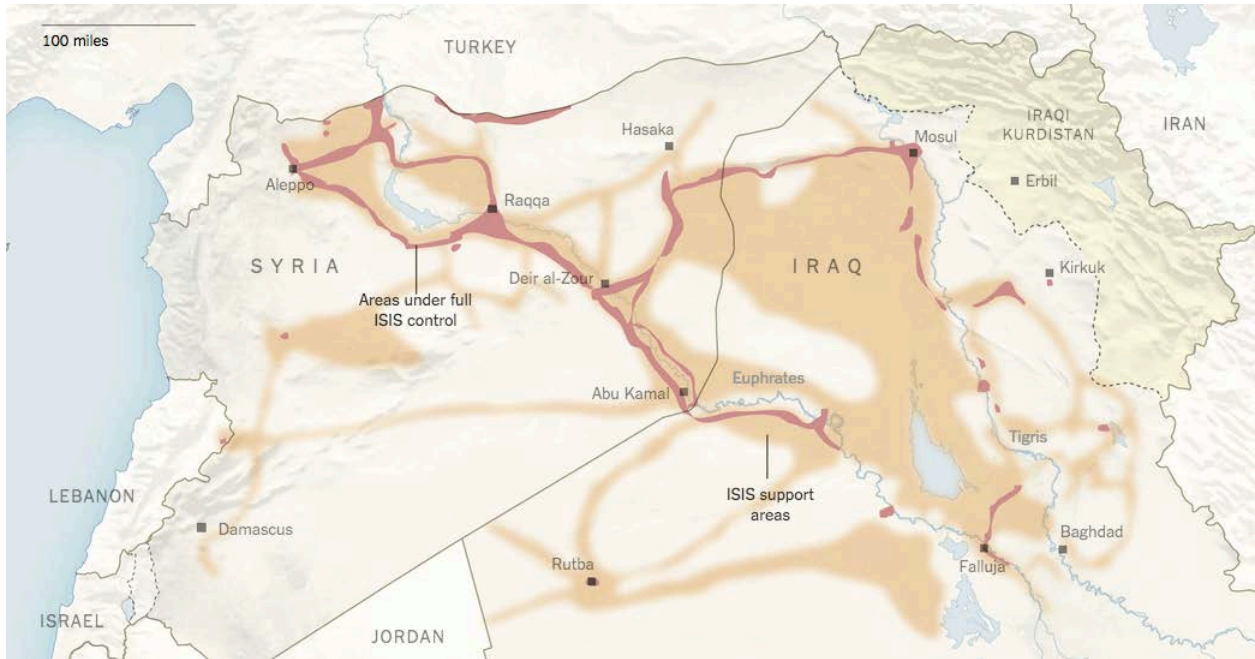
High-resolution DigitalGlobe satellite imagery from February 2003 of the ancient archaeological site of Umma, before the Iraq War started (at left). Only scattered looting is evident. The same view from 2010 (at right), devastated by massive looting.



2)



3)



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