

# ENDANGERED CULTURAL HERITAGE: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

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## LESSON 1. What is cultural heritage? Why is it global?

- Duration: 2 hours

- Aims: 1. Understanding different levels of understanding of CH according to people and institutions.  
2. Providing with basic terminology about CH.

- Description: Students will be introduced to the key concepts of cultural heritage according to recognized public bodies such as UNESCO or ICOM VS cultural heritage as identified by local communities from around the world. Terms like tangible and intangible heritage, cultural genocide, cultural and religious cleansing, cultural property and ethnocide will be defined and analyzed through meaningful case studies.

- Videos: 1. *What is Heritage?* 2. *The Value of Heritage* 3. *Cultural Heritage. A Basic Human Need + discussion*

- Online resources: <https://en.unesco.org/>; <http://icom.museum/>

- Reading class:

UNESCO World Heritage convention, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>

Harrison, R. 2010. What is Heritage?, In R. Harrison (ed.), *Understanding the Politics of Heritage (Understanding Global Heritage)*, Manchester, 5-42.

Renfrew, C. and Bahn, P. 2012. The Future of the Past. How to Manage the Heritage?, In C. Renfrew and P. Bahn (eds.), *Archaeology. Theories, Methods and Approaches* (6<sup>th</sup> edition), London, 549-558.

## LESSON 2. Uses and abuses of cultural heritage. From UNESCO to ISIS, from Youtube to Facebook

- Duration: 2 hours

- Aims: 1. Understanding the current role of media in the communication of CH  
2. Global methodologies for protecting and enhancing CH (social media, open-source software etc.)

- Description: The growth of the global community and the impact of social media on our daily lives are reshaping the way in which the cultural heritage is perceived and communicated by people. The global media had a virtuous role in communicating CH, but at the same time they have been manipulated by organizations like ISIS to promote and advertise illicit activities (Iconoclasm). A critical analysis on the uses and abuses of the media as tools for protecting and promoting cultural heritage will be illustrated.

- Online resources: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/armed-conflict-and-heritage>  
<http://www.marketmassdestruction.com/>

- Reading class:

Harmanşah, O. 2015. ISIS, Heritage and the Spectacles of Destruction in the Global Media, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 78, 170-177.

Latour, B. 2002. What is Iconoclasm? or Is there a world beyond the image wars ? In P. Weibel and B. Latour (eds.), *Iconoclasm, Beyond the Image-Wars in Science, Religion and Art*, ZKM and MIT Press, 14-37.

### **LESSON 3. In the name of God. The destruction of cultural heritage for religious beliefs**

- Duration: 2 hours

- Aim: 1. Understanding the concept of “religious cleansing” through case studies.

- Description: Most of the heritage stems from religious practices and ideas. However, monuments around the world are often destroyed because of religion. During the fifth lesson we will explore the concept destruction of cultural heritage for religious purposes. To do so, we will consider two examples from Afghanistan: the Buddhas of Bamiyan and the Buddhist monastery of Mes Aynak which are among the monuments that have been destroyed or threatened by Taliban as they were “promoting Buddhism”.

- Video: Documentary *Saving Mes Aynak* + discussion.

- Online resources: <http://www.archinternational.org/projects/mes-aynak/>

- Reading class:

Falser, M. 2011. The Bamiyan Buddhas, performative iconoclasm and the “Image of Heritage”, in A. Tomaszewski and S. Giometti (eds.), *The Image of Heritage*, Firenze, Polistampa, 157-169.

Lawler, A. 2016. In the Line of Fire, *New Scientist*.

### **LESSON 4. From looting to the black market. The destruction of cultural heritage for illegal profit**

- Duration: 2 hours

- Aims: 1. Understanding the concepts of trafficking cultures through case studies.

2. Learning some basic digital sources and methodologies to identify and map looted sites.

- Description: Students will be introduced to the destruction of cultural heritage for illegal profit, focusing on the damages caused by looting and the black markets of antiquities in modern Iraq. Since 1990 the escalation of violence in this country caused high political discontinuity and a low surveillance over the cultural heritage. This void, together with the increase of demand for antiquities, the poverty and ignorance of part of the population, has fostered the looting of many archaeological sites and museums, including the famous Iraq Museum of Baghdad. Archaeologists designed strategies for looting assessment and monitoring through time, training of locals.

- Online resources: <http://www.virtualmuseumiraq.cnr.it/noflash.htm>  
<http://traffickingculture.org/>

- Reading class:

Brodie, N. 2006. The plunder of Iraq’s archaeological heritage, 1991-2005, and the London antiquities trade, in N. Brodie, M. Kersel, C. Luke and K.W. Tubb (eds.), *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Antiquities Trade*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 206-226.

Stone, E. 2015. An Update on the Looting of Archaeological Sites in Iraq, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 78:3, 178-186.