



PhD Thesis

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Museums and the Securitization of Cultural Heritage

The role of the museum sector in protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict



Nationalmuseet

 National Museum of Denmark

CHAC Nordic Center for
Cultural Heritage
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1. Introduction

1.1 Aims

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate how the use of cultural heritage in modern, armed conflicts – and the subsequent securitization of cultural heritage – has created new roles and challenges for the global museum sector. To elucidate this overall research question three separate studies were conducted, as presented in the three research articles:¹

- *The Cross-sectoral Linkage between Cultural Heritage and Security: how cultural heritage has developed as a security issue*
- *The Museum Sector as an Actor in Human Security*
- *Museum Actors' Perspectives on Involvement in Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict.*

This introductory chapter will introduce the key concepts and literature used in the thesis.

1.2 Identity, Heritage and Museums

This thesis pivots around the concept of cultural heritage, and thus a short introduction is provided on how the thesis understands this concept. Firstly, I use the term cultural heritage instead of cultural property. There is an ongoing debate about the relationship between cultural property and cultural heritage (e.g., Prott and O'Keefe 1992; Frigo 2005; Stanley-Price 2015) but the two concepts are today often used synonymously and interchangeably, also in international law. The term 'property' expresses ideas of property rights and commercial value. In literature concerning international law, illicit trafficking and military manuals the term is used with reference to the language of the "The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict".

Further, with military organisations including NATO's renewed interest in the protection of cultural heritage, the vocabulary has become very concrete, with use of acronyms such as CP (cultural property) and CPP (cultural property protection). Still, when working with heritage

¹ See Appendix 6,7 and 8.

studies and museology referring to artefacts, monuments, buildings and sites as well as the intangible heritage embedded into these, I find that the term cultural heritage is suitable because it implies a more complex ownership and a broader social value (even if these relations can be said to be implied by the concept of cultural property).

Concerning the definition of warfare, focusing on armed conflict and war endangering cultural heritage, I find it fitting to use the definition of “armed conflict” as defined by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in its “Cultural Heritage Disaster Preparedness and Response”. Here, armed conflict covers “War: international armed conflict with bombing, shelling, occupation of buildings, looting, etc. Military occupation: occupation of buildings and sites for military or other occupying force purposes; looting and illegal or irregular export of collections. Non-International armed conflicts: war effects (as above)” (Boylon 2004, 68). I also recognise that, today, the lines between war and peace are blurred and that conflicts often play out below the threshold of armed conflict – not least when it comes to skirmishes over or conflicts related to exploitation of cultural heritage.

My definition of cultural heritage is rooted in Laurajane Smith’s (2006) idea of heritage as “a cultural and social process, which engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present” (Smith 2006, 2). The underpinning of the social power of cultural heritage and its strong relation to the construction of identities is at the core of this definition (Smith 2006). Smith’s definition sees heritage as a multi-layered performance present in the actual geopolitical setting, used to construct, reconstruct and negotiate the formation of people’s identity and social and cultural values (Smith 2006, 3-4).

In this PhD thesis the definition is used to comprehend how cultural heritage is used to legitimise and maintain identity, and to underline that the protection and management of cultural heritage and identity formation can be seen as two interwoven processes.

Consequently, cultural heritage has a lot of emotional power and political value (as well as pecuniary), and that is why cultural heritage tends to be drawn into conflicts where it is used to strengthen power relations in the political struggle to legitimise or de-legitimise cultures (Rosén 2017, 12). Thus, cultural heritage can be viewed as a political symbol that often implies references to core community identities – including nationalism.

This symbolic power places the protection of cultural heritage within a human security agenda (Rosén 2022a; Christensen 2022). This placement is underpinned by the fact that NATO recently placed the topic protection of cultural heritage within the Human Security Framework (Rosén 2022b, 2).

When referring to human security, the focus is concentrated on the safety of people and communities rather than traditional state safety from military threats (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2014, 10). This approach allows for a people-centred and multidisciplinary focus where the referent object of security is “individuals” and the protection of fundamental freedoms. In essence, an ethical responsibility to protect rights relating to fundamental individual needs and identity (Newman 2010, 78).

In this PhD thesis the use of the concept of human security is a way to emphasise how cultural heritage protection is an undeniable factor in the broader international peace and security agenda. The right to participate in cultural life as part of individual identity – including the right to access and enjoy both tangible and intangible cultural heritage – is part of international human rights law.²

Working with this definition and understanding of cultural heritage, and its implications to security and peace, makes the museum institution an essential agent. “The museum” is a monumental and visual depiction of cultural heritage as well as a place for legitimising and maintaining selected identities. To be clear about what museums I am referring to – since museums are a universal phenomenon – I primarily focus on the big state-funded or partly state-funded museums in Europe and America.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) recently presented the latest international museum definition (2022). Here, the museum is defined as an institution in the service of society, fostering diversity and sustainability, as well as operating ethically, focusing on the participation of communities and offering knowledge sharing.³ This definition suggests a more proactive role for the museum in shaping society. It also shows a sector in motion, facilitating the expansion of the mission of the museum. Yet, I think this definition lacks transparency about the museum not being a neutral space. In my understanding the museum

² UN: A/HRC/17/38: Report on Access to Cultural Heritage as a Human Right (2011).

³ See the full definition: <https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-approves-a-new-museum-definition/> (accessed 08.09.22)

is a political arena. It often represents the political agendas in the country in question and is therefore pulled into contemporary dilemmas both on national and international levels. Inspired by Robert Janes, museums can be viewed as “social institutions” with a “broader commitment to the world in which they operate” (Janes 2009, 13), which leads them to anticipate and adapt to new roles initiated by complex political issues such as decolonisation, social justice, repatriation, unethical acquisition of artefacts and representation of identity. Anticipating and adapting to this demands transparency about the museum working in a politically charged environment, where a great deal of funding depends on the agenda of governments and donors. One must also be aware of the complex hierarchical infrastructure of the museum and the variety of stakeholders (e.g., audience, partners, donors, staff, trustees or local politicians) in society, influencing the diverse practices of the global network of museums. Consequently, museums are transnational social and politicized organisations with inherent conflicts and external impacts working with the process of legitimising and maintaining identity. This makes the investigation into how these developments have created new roles and challenges for the global museum sector, as presented in this collection of articles, important.

1.3 Cultural heritage and armed conflict

Conflict becomes the “external impact”, or change in environment, driving the changes that this thesis focuses on. It is well known that culture has always been endangered by wars, conflicts and political violence. However, since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, ideas of a common human heritage and cultural property emerged, and early efforts “to promote ideas of peace and cross-cultural understanding by way of preserving heritage” (Legnér 2017, 9) were developed during the nineteenth century (Legnér 2017). As a consequence, large-scale and deliberate destruction and looting of cultural heritage during wartime has since been condemned by other states – even though this has not prevented the looting and destruction of cultural heritage in armed conflict.

Studies on the exploitation of cultural heritage in armed conflict have shown that the tactical value of cultural heritage in armed conflict was actively exploited in the First and Second World Wars (Thurlow 2014; Legnér 2016; Meskell 2020). In the post-Cold War period, influenced by the conflicts in the Balkans and later in Afghanistan, the protection of cultural

heritage as a concept in human security was established with the framing of the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage as “crimes against humanity” (Nemeth 2011; Winter 2015; Legnér 2017; Meskell 2018, 188).

In response to this development a number of states, as well as regional and international organisations, have deployed legal instruments and policy interventions to “criminalise” the destruction of cultural heritage. In short, international legal protection of cultural heritage is rooted in the central regulatory instrument “The Hague Convention of 1954” and its two protocols, supplemented by “The European Convention on Human Rights” (1950), “The Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court” (1998) and different UNESCO conventions (e.g. “Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property” (1970), “Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” (1972) and “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2003).

The new framing, the reactions and condemnation by international society established heritage protection as a cross-sectoral topic in conflict management, linked to other security issues of nations and people, causing a mixture of sectors to interact around the protection of cultural heritage (Christensen 2022, 5).

In the heritage literature, analyses of the role of cultural heritage in armed conflict from the post-Cold War to the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa have concluded that cultural heritage protection has been connected to goals of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, tolerance and reconciliation, and recognised as a security issue by the UN Security Council⁴ (Nemeth 2011; Winter 2015; Legnér 2017; Christensen 2022, 10).

Furthermore, it has been argued that the shift in the organisation of the field of heritage protection is also a result of the way modern conflicts increasingly have come to revolve around cultural references and identity politics oriented towards cultural values (Rosén 2017, 29-30). This leads state military and non-state armed groups to include the strategic and

⁴ The UN Security Council passed “Resolution 2100” in 2013, which condemned all abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including destruction of cultural and historical heritage in Mali. Furthermore, the resolution adopted that the mandate of MINUSMA (The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) also was to support cultural preservation and to operate mindfully in the vicinity of cultural and historical sites (<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/748429>) (accessed 29-06-23).

tactical value of cultural heritage during combat and other military operations, as seen increasingly in modern conflict in the last two decades (Rosén 2017).

The discursive framing of heritage protection in recent conflicts in the Middle East – the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan in 2001, the looting of the National Museum in Baghdad in 2003, the destruction of historical monuments in Mali 2012 and ISIS’s destruction in Iraq and Syria (particularly Palmyra in May 2015) – is at the centre of this thesis. These acts of destruction caused emotionally strong reactions, often followed by condemnation by the international community, which caused a deployment of legal instruments and policy interventions by a number of states as well as local and international organisations (Christensen 2022, 4-5). Through this, cultural heritage protection was positioned as an important theme in international security politics.

Heritage studies have been interested in identifying the creation of this security narrative in international heritage protection. Russo and Giusti (2019) have characterised the process of this narrative as a *securitization* of cultural heritage (Russo and Giusti 2019). They argue that especially UNESCO, and former Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova, can be identified as the leading figures in pushing forward the framing of cultural heritage as an unconventional security threat (Russo and Giusti 2019, 848). Bokova and UNESCO introduced a dramatic rhetoric into the mainstream discourse around the destruction of cultural heritage in Mali, Iraq and Syria; these include “cultural cleansing” (in particular, the “fight against cultural cleansing”), “war crime” (and “crime against civilisation”) and “cultural terrorism” (UNESCO 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). While these terms were initially part of a new international discourse, the security narrative on heritage protection has since been adopted by other public figures and linked to the activities of other institutions and bodies such NATO, UNESCO, the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council, European Parliament, ICC and academic scholars. As a result, in recent years the protection-framework has produced a number of resolutions and statements on the subject (Rosén 2022b, 9; Christensen 2022).

The recognition of the link between cultural heritage and security has been termed a “heritage-security nexus”, a term that describes the framing of cultural heritage as a broader

security issue (Rosén 2022a, 6). The term emphasises the international communities' conceptual understanding of cultural heritage as a tool to “induce fear, provoke, destabilise communities and nations, escalate tensions and conflicts” (Rosén 2022b, 9).

The security narrative on heritage protection illustrates the power of securitization where assumptions about, e.g., “cultural genocide” or the impact of the connection between terrorism, looting and trafficking lack empirical evidence and systematic accounts – for instance, on the effects on cultures losing the material expressions of their cultural heritage or lacking convincing evidence that establishes a concrete link between looting and illicit trafficking of antiquities to large-scale financing of terrorism (Hamilton 2022; Hausler and Jakubowski 2022; Rosén 2017).⁵

Yet these assumptions have become part of the narrative on cultural heritage protection in armed conflict and agenda setting. The result is that the perception of loss connected to cultural heritage is now connected to tactical exploitation, terrorism, conflict escalation and societal vulnerability (Rosén 2022b). Cultural heritage as a weapon in war used to misappropriate, manipulate, destroy and exploit has evidently been emphasised in the Russian war against Ukraine (Rosén 2022b). It has been argued that cultural heritage and museum collections have been removed/and or re-narrated by Russian officials in Ukraine, and the previously occupied Crimea to legitimise Russia's invasion by “linking it to a grand narrative of Russian power and the recovery of ancestral lands” (Munawar and Symonds 2023, 1).

In line with this, reviews conclude that cultural heritage has turned into a hybrid threat (Rosén 2022b; Clack and Timothy 2023).⁶ Further, in May 2023, UNESCO's Director-General Audrey Azoulay participated at a UN Security Council meeting on the need to protect cultural heritage in armed conflict. Here Azoulay emphasised that the protection of heritage is a fundamental dimension of the maintenance of international peace and security, saying: “When heritage is targeted, it is always what it represents that is actually targeted”.⁷

⁵ See also “False Trades: Uncovering the Scale and Scope of Trafficking in Cultural Property”, New York: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). “Reconsidering the link between looting and illicit trafficking of antiquities and the financing of terrorism”, produced for: NATO and Cultural Property Protection Expert Workshop, 10. February 2023, NATO HQ Brussels

⁶ See also the study: “Protecting cultural heritage from armed conflicts in Ukraine and beyond”, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies Directorate-General for Internal Policies, European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education, 2023.

⁷ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-director-general-addresses-un-security-council-protection-cultural-heritage-conflicts> (accessed 05-05-23).

This underpins the protection of cultural heritage as an essential element in human security. For the same reason, cultural heritage is also a key element in peacebuilding, conflict transformation, reconciliation processes and the reconstruction of social cohesion in the aftermath of conflicts (Legnér 2017; AlDajani and Leiner 2022).

1.4 The museum sector and cultural heritage protection in armed conflict

The securitization of cultural heritage, the understanding of cultural heritage as a hybrid threat and its position in modern armed conflict and human security inevitably affects the heritage sector and its institutions.

In this context, museums are particularly affected since they constitute political arenas and physical spaces where the identity of individuals and communities are displayed, interpreted and maintained (Gray 2015; Gray and McCall 2020). In particular, museums play an important role in promoting social cohesion by solidifying identities as well as creating national and regional identities for their audience-members (Trofanenko 2006; Rosenberg 2011; Shaindlin 2019; Popescu and Albă 2022).

There have been several studies on the relationship between museums, collections and war. Overall studies have evolved around museums' role in nation building, state mechanisms for remembering war, engaging with violence and trauma, and contributing to reconciliation (Barringer and Flynn 1998; Winter 2006; Knell, Aronsson and Amundsen 2011; Pearson and Keene 2017). Furthermore, there have been reviews on post-conflict situations tracing stolen or missing works of art, reopening museums and reforming museographic programmes (Vinson 2003; Daniels and Wegener 2016).

Recent research in heritage conservation literature explicitly discusses reconstructions of museums in post-conflict situations, revealing that reconstruction of conflict-ruined museums is deeply political and emotional (Sabri, AlGhareeb and Alkhaja 2023, 250). Here, the museums' complex socio-political associations and role in re-establishing communities with their cultural identity is a challenge, emphasising how reconstruction depends on the political agenda behind state-building and the influence of individual actors (Ibid.).

Attention has also been drawn to the recognition of modern museums as formed by and continuously being impacted by new and old conflicts (Hicks 2020; Hill 2021), building on discussions of the museums as sites of international relations and as actors in cultural

diplomacy, with a focus on coloniality and racialization mechanisms. Studies show how museums are perceived as locations of truth-telling by the public, revealing them to be political sites which can be used in contemporary national and international politics to select what is deemed worthy or unworthy to be marked and remembered (Yunci 2013; Lord, Blankenberg and Florida 2015; Sylvester 2016; Tidy and Turner 2020). This perspective of soft power used for influencing museum audiences has been further studied, looking at exhibiting militaristic subjectivities and the curation of militarised conflicts. Here it has been argued that museums are used in narrations of armed conflict to (re)constitute security discourses (Reeves 2018a, 103-127). Yet it has also been suggested that the perception and displaying of events of political violence can entrench the division between political communities (Reeves 2018a, 2018b; Reeves and Heath-Kelly 2020; Miller and Wilson 2022).

A few studies have focused directly on how personnel affiliated with the museum sector have played key roles in establishing a link between museums and security as a result of the two World Wars (Satia 2008; Richter 2008; Riding 2010; Meskell 2020; Rorimer 2022). Research shows how the excavation and mapping of archaeological sites was linked to concrete military and political realities as well as encouraging imperialist agendas and gaining economic favour and territorial claims in the Middle East during WWI (Richter 2008, 225; Meskell 2020, 556-60). The link between museums and security is also present in literature on the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section, or later referred to as the “Monuments Men” (the latter term being used despite the contribution of women in the unit) and their work in WWII (Riding 2010; Rorimer 2022).

Regarding museums directly affected by armed conflict a variety of methods and manuals have been produced by international heritage organisations such as UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and ICOM including “Museum Emergency Programme”(ICOM 2002), the “Emergency Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk”(ICOM in partnership with UNESCO 2000-), “First Aid for Cultural Heritage in Crisis”(ICCROM in partnership with The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, 2009-), “Cultural Heritage Disaster Preparedness and Response” (UNESCO 2015) etc. These are all referring to the general heritage protection-framework in international humanitarian law and “The Hague Convention of 1954”. Publications on safeguarding museums during conflict has further been initiated by ICOM, recommending support for museums in conflict-areas with training programs, collections

evacuation and post-conflict programming (see for example Daniels and Wegener 2016). Likewise UNESCO has initiated the publication *MUSEUM International* (Vinson et al. 2003) where the focus is on learning from previous conflicts when dealing with looting during wartime, museum policy, reconstruction and rehabilitation of museums focusing on training programs, collections evacuation and post-conflict programming.

Most recently, in May 2023, the ICOM Head of Heritage Protection Department travelled to Ukraine to represent the museum community at the conference “Cultural Heritage Crime: In Wartime and Beyond”. At this conference, representatives from security and judicial authorities to museums and cultural institutions met to discuss the legal frameworks, operational approaches, and international and local responses to cultural heritage crime. As elaborated on ICOM’s website: “The conference aimed to alert and inform authorities from the political, security, judicial, and cultural spheres about the risks faced by cultural heritage in Ukraine, and highlighted the importance of cooperation, coordinated efforts and information exchange at national and international levels for its effective protection”.⁸

In the theoretical literature on museology, the sector’s involvement in armed conflict is implied in the discussion on how current tendencies and changes in societies and geopolitical contexts directly and indirectly influence the sector and its mission (Sandahl 2019). It does not touch directly upon armed conflict, yet critical perspectives on the social role and politicization of museums illustrate museums’ interdisciplinary character and advocate for expanding the museal field and applying a broader mindset when working with museology (Mason 2006; Mairesse and Desvallées 2010; Morales Moreno 2019; Lorente 2022).

1.5. Relevant research and current knowledge

The previous introductory chapter serves as a supplement to the three articles use and interaction with relevant and current research.

This article-based PhD has been structured so that the first article identifies the link and the academic research field between cultural heritage and human security threats. It presents a newly defined research field that combines heritage studies with security studies in academic

⁸ <https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-at-the-cultural-heritage-crime-in-wartime-and-beyond-conference/> (accessed 25-05-23)

fields such as political science and international relations. Through the article, I introduce the main bodies of literature I have engaged with while investigating this new field. Concerning heritage and museological literature, which does not touch specifically upon the link to human security yet still proves relevant for the understanding of the museum sector's involvement in the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict, the relevant bodies of literature in this field have been presented in the previous Introduction.

The theoretical and methodological literature I use in the thesis will be discussed in the following chapters.

In addition, to focus my research I placed the project in the field of critical heritage studies. In cultural heritage studies, complex questions of the mechanism of power in heritage, fixed definitions and Eurocentric values of heritage are raised, perceiving the ideas, practices and processes of heritage as inherently political (Smith 2006; Harrison 2013; Lähdesmäki, Zhu and Thomas 2019). The idea of heritage is contextualised by global cultural flows, cultural hybridity and movement of people within and across borders reflecting how heritage narratives are claimed by various identities beyond national borders (Lähdesmäki, Zhu and Thomas 2019, 1). Critical heritage studies seeks to disentangle hegemonic power structures in heritage by exploring “the workings of power in heritage from a broad interdisciplinary perspective” (Lähdesmäki, Zhu and Thomas 2019, 2).

I found this approach very useful when investigating how protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict is not a passive act of preserving “old objects” but a contemporary political and personal act which affects the role of the museum.

The relevance of researching the museum sectors' involvement in the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict is to contribute to understanding the use and misuse of cultural heritage as an identity marker in new ways of conflicting and confronting, using various forms of hybrid and information warfare (Clack and Timothy 2023, xvi-xviii).

Museums play an essential role, being the institution which provides the context and narrative for protecting and preserving cultural heritage. Therefore, it is essential for the museum sector to understand how contemporary geopolitical conflicts shape the museum and its mission.

2. Overall research question and study aims

The overall aim of this PhD is to address the question:

“How has the use of cultural heritage in modern armed conflicts and the subsequent securitization of cultural heritage created new roles and challenges for the global museum sector?”

To elucidate this overall question, three separate studies were conducted to address the following specific research questions:

1. How has the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats – and the recognition of this linkage – been recognised as a new theme in academic research?
2. How do both the global museum sector and affiliated practitioners in different key positions across the globe experience and relate to the sector’s role within the new nexus between cultural heritage and security in armed conflict?
3. How do museum actors and associated practitioners perceive the process of their own role in the securitization of cultural heritage and the effects of being involved in the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict?

3. Theoretical framework

In this PhD project, three theoretical perspectives were applied to answer my research questions.

Inspired by Bruno Latour I have used his interpretation of actor-network-theory (ANT) (Latour 1999) to identify the involved actors who have converted the securitization of cultural heritage into museums’ involvement in heritage protection. I refer to Latour’s understanding of an actor as “what *is made* to act by others” (Latour 2005, 46) – the concepts and theoretical lenses which encourage the development of cultural heritage in modern armed conflicts and the subsequent securitization of cultural heritage, causing new roles and challenges for the global museum sector. Using this approach, I want to illustrate how I have thought of the thesis’ theoretical framework as a unifying whole:

- The securitization theory helps explore the political discourse, which influences the museum sector, affecting the working conditions for museum actors.
- The theory on critical museology explains the institutional development and self-organisation of the contemporary museum sector that has had an impact on the actors.
- ANT supports the analysis of different actors and their perspective on museums' involvement in heritage protection based on a series of qualitative interviews with key members and practitioners in the field.

In the following, I will unfold these theoretical concepts. In the last part of the chapter, I will look at the relationship between the three theories.

3.1 Securitization

Security and securitization theory constitute the point of departure for my studies and drives my case for establishing a link between a political agenda and the actions of museums.

In historical terms, security is the field where states threaten and challenge the sovereignty and power of other states and defend their independence. However, the concept of security has evolved significantly and, over time, given way to a recognizable field rooted in the social sciences. Here security is a *term* and a *concept* used in conceptual frameworks and approaches (Brauch 2008, 27).

The implications of the Cold War for international society showed that conflicts and wars were no longer driven by territorial conflicts, economic motives or political-ideological systems. Instead, the roots of conflicts were increasingly related to culture and identity (Bagge Laustsen and Wæver 2000, 705). Focus shifted towards a “human-centred” security concept that demanded a widening and deepening of the concept. Security no longer referred only to the *state* but also to *people*, whether seen as individuals or as a global collectivity (Brauch 2008, 28-33).

To account for the broadening of the security agenda, the Copenhagen School of security studies, spearheaded by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, responded with writings on the expansion of the concept of security (Buzan 1991; Wæver 1995; Buzan and Wæver 1997;

Wæver 1997). In 1998 Buzan, Wæver and Jaap de Wilde formulated the term “securitization”.⁹

The core assumption of securitization theory is that there is no such thing as a predetermined security threat. Instead, security refers to certain activities that someone has to perform in a specific context regarding a specific referent object.

Securitization theory has been particularly interested in the agency of “securitising actors”, who present something of an existential threat for a relevant audience: “traditionally, but not necessarily, the state” (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998, 21, 25). Presenting a threat as *existential* indicates that the securitising actor constructs a sense of high priority and drama, arguing that if the threat is not resolved it will have a fatal outcome (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998, 25). This presentation by the securitising actor is the result of a speech act (“securitization”) where a speaker (the “securitising actor”) makes a “securitising move” by recasting a traditional non-security issue as a matter of security. A successful securitization convinces the designated audience to accept the securitised issue as being a threat and granting the securitising actor the right and legitimacy to use urgent extraordinary measures to deal with the threat (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998, 24-40). Upon acceptance by the audience and by labelling it a “security issue”, the issue is lifted out of the sphere of ordinary politics and into the political agenda and the realm of emergency politics (Bagge Laustsen and Wæver 2000, 708, 719; Floyd 2010, 1).

Since its emergence, the theory has extended to a more sociological approach to emphasise the context in which the process of securitization unfolds, as well as including research on the securitization of non-traditional security sectors like immigration and environment (Balzacq, 2005; Floyd 2010; Boas 2015; d'Appollonia 2015). This has caused the concept of security to embrace issues such as identity security, cultural security and ontological security of the state (Mitzen 2016).

⁹The concept of securitization theory as presented by the Copenhagen school has been criticised as being a Northern discourse on security that is unaware of and ignoring the thinking of the philosophical traditions in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Arab world (Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2020; first published online 2019). This critique also raises concern about eurocentrism, civilizationism, methodological whiteness and antiblack racism in the theory (Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2020). The critique has been met with strong reactions from Buzan and Wæver who argue that the critique is based on a defective methodological approach, full of misrepresentations and lack of supporting evidence (Wæver and Buzan 2020).

As a consequence of the extended understanding of the concept of security, scholars have argued that securitization must be seen as a performative process where power position and social identity of the securitising actors and their relation to their audience are important and part of an ongoing social construction of reality (Balzacq 2005, 187; Guzzini 2015, 11; Russo and Guisti 2019, 3).

Floyd (2010) has called for a shift from an almost exclusive focus on “how do actors securitise” to also include a focus on when and how to securitise and the intentions of securitising actors (Floyd 2010, 2, 192). Floyd argues that even if securitization is not followed by actions, the securitiser still has reasons why he/she securitised (Floyd 2010, 55). The intentions are causes for the securitization and the intentions of securitisers can often be found in the identities of the beneficiaries of any given security policy (Floyd 2010, 2, 44). As a result, the securitization theory used in this thesis also considers the intentions and causes of securitising actors and how these usually benefit from security policies.

To sum up: securitization is most of all a theory preoccupied with how subjects that become perceived as a threat start to change institutional frameworks. Securitization is a conceptual cornerstone in this project, as it explores how the political agenda has elevated heritage to a security issue causing museums to engage in heritage protection and thereby expanding the role of “the museum”.

3.2 Critical museology

To generate knowledge about the institutional context of the museum sector and the implications of the securitization of cultural heritage, I focused my interest on the institutional development of museums. My study of the changes and challenges of the missions and operations of museums is theoretically grounded in “critical museology”, as accounted for by Jesús Pedro Lorente (2022). Lorente argues for the need for critical thinking in and about museums and proposes a broader mindset when working with museology and the transition from “critical museology” towards “critical heritage studies” (Lorente 2022, 6, 21). This approach is useful for investigating how museums take on new tasks and acquire new roles and thereby potentially alter the meaning of the mission of “the museum”.

The term “critical museology” was coined by Lynne Teather, building on terminology from “critical theory” and with theoretical inspiration from social thinkers such as Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas (Lorente 2022, 13).¹⁰

Besides the theoretical inspiration from critical theory, critical museology builds on the milestones and legacies of the “new museology”.

The “new museology” was a theoretical and philosophical movement which evolved from the perceived failings of “old” museology focusing on traditional object-centred museum methods concerning matters such as administration, education or conservation (Vergo 1989) to a more theoretical and humanistic discourse focusing on the social and political roles of museums (Mairesse and Desvallées 2010; Macdonald 2010). New museology emerged in France in the 1970s and expanded internationally in the 1980s, linked to the idea that the role of museums in society needed to develop, powered by the flourishing of museum studies worldwide (Smith 1989; Stam 1993; Desvallées and Mairesse 2010; Lorente 2022).

The discourse further developed, drawing on postmodern philosophers such as Foucault (Hooper-Greenhill 1989, 1992; Bennett 1995) and Latour’s epistemological thinking on science and society (Mairesse 2015) to become a critical discourse focusing on the social role and politicization of museums, reflecting museums’ interdisciplinary character and paying attention towards the relationship between government, museum and cultural policy (Mason 2006, 23; Mairesse and Desvallées 2010, 55).

New museology and critical museology have been used complementary and, as stated previously, critical museology is linked to the new-museological upheaval (Grau Lobo 2010; Padró 2010). However, the critical museology movement developed in the 1990’s started from “critical anthropology”, with authors like Anthony Shelton, spreading through Spanish-speaking countries (courtesy of authors like Óscar Navarro, Jesús Pedro Lorente and Joan Santacana) (Mairesse 2023). Moreover, feminism and gender studies at the turn of the millennium increasingly influenced critical museologists (Lorente 2022, 13); and from the 2000s, terms of “ecomuseology”, “social museology”, “sociomuseology” and “participative museology” appeared, representing a theoretical and practical development that was often activist and engaged (Mairesse 2023, 326-327). At its centre was the demand for heritage management to be “more open, inclusive, representative and creative” (Harrison 2013, 225),

¹⁰ However, Teather later moved away from the use of critical museology, instead using a broader museological discourse, calling it ‘critical reflexive’ museology (Teather 1984, 2009, 2012).

encouraging museums to examine their assumptions and practices in order to remain relevant (Janes 2009, 13).

Critical museology suggested an approach where museums were viewed as interpreter of “our” collective ethical perceptions reflecting contemporary society, taking into consideration social power dynamics (Navarro 2012, 29). This proposes that traditional museology and museality must be understood as products of the society in which they were created – defined by the historical, political and economic context (Navarro and Tsagaraki 2010).

In the latest edition of the “Dictionary of Museology”, a critical museologist is described as being: “particularly focused on reinterpreting the expographic approaches of previous generations to try to deconstruct their underlying values from a nationalist, gender-based or postcolonial point of view” (Mairesse 2023, 327).

This movement represents perhaps the greatest challenge in heritage management, namely the involvement of contemporary society in reframing historic heritage. In a museological perspective this is framed by Annette Loeseke as “transhistoricism” – using the past to critique the present (Loeseke 2019). Loeseke argues that the political context of the museum is censored from museum interpretation and should, in a contemporary perspective, be communicated to the public: “Museums need to transparently communicate that they are contemporary as much as historical institutions; that they are about the present as much as the past” (Loeseke 2019, 149).

Relating this movement to the thesis, critical museology provides a perspective on the development of the museum sector’s position in society and the theoretical discussions this has generated. These discussions contribute a knowledge of the institutional context of the sector and how contemporary society and politics affect this.

3.3 Actor-network theory

In order to analyse the different actors and their perspectives on museums’ involvement in heritage protection, actor-network theory (ANT) was applied.

This theoretical and conceptual framework provides a way of thinking about how actors are made to act across constantly shifting networks of relationships (Latour 2005). The approach focuses on tracing how the actors are interlinked through networks of associations and investigates the movements and the chains of activities the actors follow (Tummons 2010; Pollack, Costello and Sankaran 2013). Contrary to traditional social science approaches, ANT

treats nonhuman actors as equally important participants of action as human actors (Latour 2005). So, in ANT, human and nonhuman actors can participate in actions, and actors' agency is relational: their ability to act comes from associations and networks (Michael 2016, 15-19).

While often ascribed to Bruno Latour, ANT is a collective achievement that, somehow simplified, describes a family of conceptual and methodological insights from studies in the sociology of science and technology as it evolved in French-British studies from the 1970s onwards (see, among others, Akrich and Latour 1992; Callon 2001; Latour 2005; Law 2009; Mol 2010; Michael 2016). ANT has developed beyond the study of science and technology, producing new conceptual and methodological approaches (Blok, Farias and Roberts 2020). Blok, Farias and Roberts argue that ANT is neither a theory nor a method but “entails a sensitivity for engaging with the world [...] to what an actor might be and to how things and actors coexist, clash, differ and associate” (Blok, Farias and Roberts 2020, 1). This view echoes that of the leading contributor to ANT (Latour 2005), suggesting that an ANT study is an ethnographic tracing of associations presenting an interpretation of the events of interest rather than a theorized account of reality (Latour 2005, 1-20). However, there are still debates as to whether ANT constitutes an “a-theoretical” approach (Lukka, Modell and Vinnari 2022); and in my understanding, this underpins that ANT is a complex conceptual theoretical formation with many variations.

Regarding the conducting of my analysis, I became aware that the understanding of human and nonhuman actors as a mixture of agents, which influences how actors act, was a key approach to my data. Here Bruno Latour's interpretation of ANT is useful since it makes the theory applicable to disciplines other than sociology – such as studies of cultural heritage and humanities, more generally. As previously mentioned, Latour sees human and nonhuman actors as important participants of action (Latour 2005).

In Latour's definition, an actor is “what *is made* to act by others” (Latour 2005, 46) and “action” is a “conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies” (Latour 2005, 44). Thus, ANT refers to “the summing up of interactions” (Latour 1999, 17) suggesting that relations should not be seen in isolation but as existing in relations of networks between humans and nonhumans (Latour 1993). Here ANT can be applied to recognise and make visible the shifting and hybrid webs of relations (Callon and Latour 1981; Latour 1988).

To use ANT as a new way of thinking about actors and agency, integrating ANT's inclusion of nonhuman actors in networks, has been done in the scientific fields of, e.g., tourism, development and conservation studies (Rodger, Moore and Newsome 2009; van der Duim, Ampumuza and Ahebwa 2014, 597; Beard, Scarles and Tribe 2016)

In Mark Salter's study concerning a revitalisation of securitization theory through Latour's ANT, he argues that inanimate forces such as the environment, the climate, geology, "the market", etc. are potentially important agents which make divergences in the world and then are represented in human discourses. These nonhuman actors essentially constrain and alter what kind of politics are achievable (Salter 2019, 363). Transferring this to my project, the nonhuman actors have to be uncovered to enable me to analyse how a mixture of agencies influences how the museum actors act in relation to heritage protection in armed conflict.

3.4 The relationship between securitization, critical museology and actor-network theory

To explore how different agencies make the individual museum employees' act in relation to heritage protection in armed conflict, I found inspiration in the actor-network theory framework.

Being inspired by ANT aligned very well with my overall focus on the interweaving of cultural heritage and human security (article 1), where a key requirement for this has been to consider the context in which the link between heritage and security developed, and subsequently how the process of securitization of cultural heritage unfolds (Floyd 2010).

In articles 2 and 3, I addressed the relationship between the securitization of cultural heritage and the institutional development of museums. I used critical museology as a perspective to understand this relationship, thus placing my research in an institutional frame. I found this valuable because it allowed my research to focus on how power dynamics and contemporary society affects the museum sector (Navarro 2012, 29). Furthermore, the perspective encourages to examine the assumptions and organisational self-knowledge in the sector (Janes 2009, 13).

In article 2, I address how the securitization of cultural heritage has made a handful of prominent western museums incorporate heritage protection into their mission, analysing the reasons and intentions behind this movement.

I found the securitization theory helpful in understanding how a political discourse develops as a performative process interacting with a range of actors as part of an ongoing social

construction of reality (Balzacq 2005, 187; Guzzini 2015, 11; Russo and Guisti 2019, 3).
 Securitization creates a discourse, which has huge impact on how the museums actors react.

Figure 1: The securitization of cultural heritage

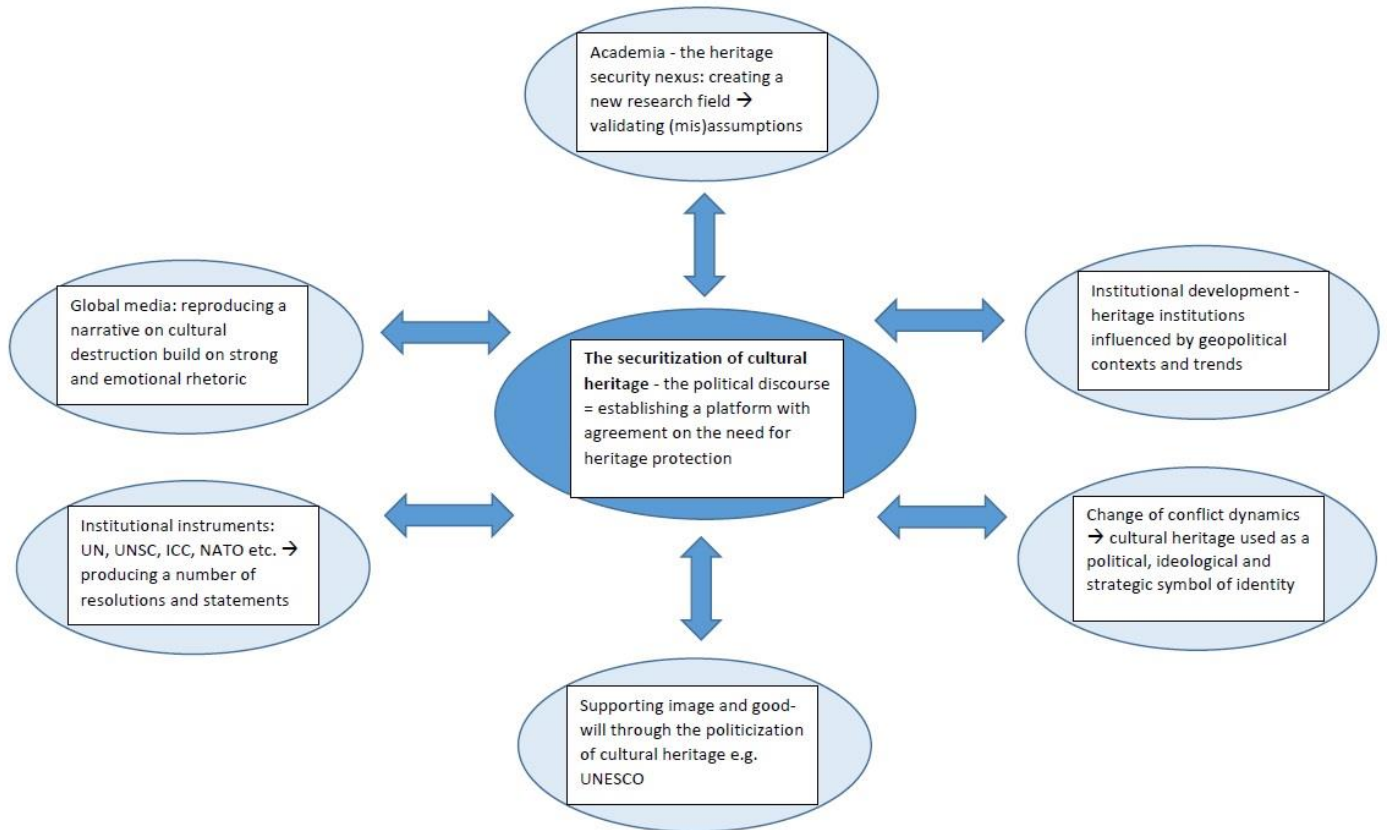


Figure 1: Shows how securitization is created through a performative process interacting with different actors with different intentions for constructing this platform.

I employed the principles of how securitization constructs a reality, or, as I frame it, a “platform” with agreement on the need for heritage protection, to explore how museum actors and associated practitioners perceive their role in the securitization of cultural heritage.

In article 3, I therefore combine securitization and ANT to analyse experiences of museum actors and associated practitioners and their intentions, motivations and agendas to provide a new way of looking at how many agents there are behind the actions of the museum actor. As previously mentioned, ANT refers to “the summing up of interactions” (Latour 1999, 17) and is a useful analytical model to map the action of the individual museum actors. By applying ANT, I could analyse the actions of the actors, mapping the mixture of agencies

influencing this action in order to interpret the individual's role in a complex network of associations.

Figure 2: ANT – the mixture of agents

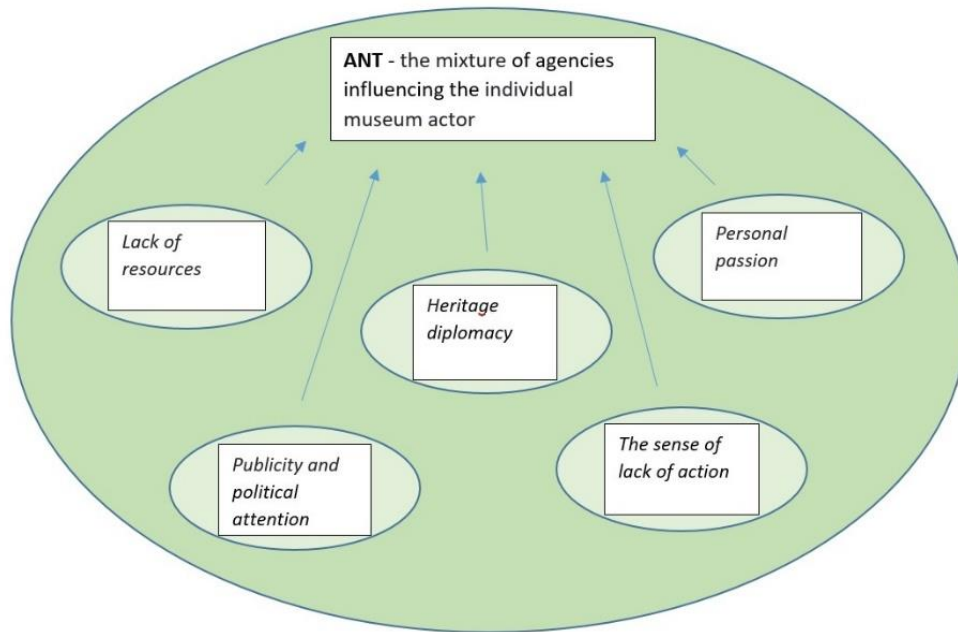


Figure 2: Illustrates how a mixture of agents are influencing the individual museum actor. The five identified themes are unfolded in article 3.

4. Overall research design

In articles 2 and 3, I present the PhD's qualitative design and sampling technique. This chapter is an extension of my consideration of the project's methodological approach. This PhD project is concerned with studying the creation of new roles and challenges for the global museum sector, which involve the need for collecting new and disorganised information. It also requires an exploration of interests from the insider's perspective. For this, the use of qualitative interviews was considered to be productive. The knowledge qualitative interviews can provide is preferable if you want to gain an understanding of *why* and *how* something happens or is experienced (Jensen, Gjødsbøl and Bogicevic 2019, 64). The most frequently used interview is the semi-structured interview, where the interviewer in advance has developed an interview guide with topics and questions that aim to explore the project's topic (Christensen et al. 2011). The preparation for this type of interview method consists of three parts: acquiring a qualified knowledge of the research topic, gaining access to the selected informants and preparing a relevant interview guide.

These parts are often closely connected and will be adjusted and adapted along the way when changes occur during the investigation process (Jensen, Gjødsbøl and Bogicevic 2019, 68).

For this project, the semi-structured interview was considered an information-rich approach. The key aim of each interview was to gain varied and complex information on the research topic, which, due to its nature, was otherwise unavailable via document analysis.

4.1 Access to and selection of informants

A total of 41 semi-structured interviews were conducted. However, four informants did not return a signed consent form. I have therefore not included these interviews in my data. Thus, the information I gained in the four interviews has been useful – mainly in the process of acquiring knowledge of the topic. In addition to the 37 interviews with signed consent form, I have included three public speeches.¹¹

My interviewees included four categories of actors: experts (e.g., researchers, lawyers, diplomats, governmental employees) within the field of heritage protection in armed conflict; actors from university museums (professors, affiliated researchers); museum professionals (curators, managers) and museum directors (former and present).

Table 1: Four types of informants

Categories	Number
Experts	21
Actors from university museums	2
Museum professionals	8
Museum directors	6

In terms of the approach to determining whom to interview, I used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is as a method for sampling the networks of one or several individuals through questions of professional or personal relationships (Audemard 2020). When the first informants are identified, these informants are asked to designate new relevant participants. This process can then be repeated several times, as new respondents chosen by new

¹¹ Appendix 1 is a table of metadata on all informants including the three public speeches.

informants can also be included in the sample. This method gathers information from the participants and information from their relationships (Coleman 1958).

In my project, I identified the first informants from their high profiles within the work on heritage protection in areas affected by armed conflict, which initially could be identified as American state-funded or partly state-funded heritage institutions. As it appears from Appendix 1, my first interviews were in March 2020 and were centred on the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield and Penn Museum/ University of Pennsylvania Museum.

In addition, I prepared a strategic selection of informants based on my knowledge of the research field. This included experts who had published important articles on the matter (e.g. senior researcher Serena Giusti) or actors directly affected by armed conflict (e.g. former director of Aleppo Museum Youssef Kanjou). This could be categorised as systematic sampling.

As the project developed beyond the first year, it became apparent which informants would be most relevant to the project. Being able to cover the field of heritage protection in armed conflict was manageable since the field is relatively small, with a modest coalition of individuals as frontrunners with branched networks and connections. For this situation, snowball sampling was very useful. Furthermore, conducting all interviews online provided the opportunity to broaden the selection of informants. I will also note that during the initial sampling of informants I worked together with my PhD colleague at the department, Joanne Dingwall McCafferty. Her research topic was concerned with the role of UNESCO in the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict in Yemen, Syria and Iraq, and she conducted interviews with stakeholders. We shared contacts and ideas of relevant informants.

4.2 Interview guide

Before conducting the interviews, I thoroughly prepared an interview guide.¹²

The idea of the interview guide was to organise the interview based on a given outline, but at the same time give the informant time to elaborate and move into explanations and stories about the subject. The interview guide describes which themes I wanted to touch on, and it

¹² See Appendix 2 for interview guides.

included probing questions to explore the topic of research. My interview guide was based on the preliminary research questions.

The focus of the interviews was on understanding the actors' experiences and perspectives on the process of securitization of cultural heritage and subsequently the new roles and challenges for the global museum sector.

Preparing my interview guide, I set up three research questions (RQ) which presented the key areas of interest in my project:

- RQ1) How has the securitization of cultural heritage drawn museums into work areas normally falling under defence and security?
- RQ2) How has the securitization of cultural heritage created new policies and practices in the museum?
- RQ3) How have those new work areas affected the development of the museum's social, political and institutional identity?

To frame these questions, I created five key themes representing my research questions.

The themes was:

- Theme 1: The museum "re-framed" in a security-dimension
- Theme 2: The limits of the engagement of the museum
- Theme 3: The museum's role in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage
- Theme 4: The self-perception of museum personnel when working within the security sphere
- Theme 5: A change in the museum's social, political and institutional identity

Each theme was given an overall question followed by sub-questions.¹³ The sub-questions were intended as a tool I could use if I needed the conversation to progress – or return to the research focus. Furthermore, I had to learn how to conduct these interviews, and the way I approached the informants was much more relaxed and "loose" during the later ones.

4.3 Conducting the interviews

As mentioned earlier, I began conducting interviews in March 2020. In April, I made the first reflection on the interview guide and the progress and results of the interviews.¹⁴ Here it became clear that not all of my informants shared my theoretical starting point, and the

¹³ See Appendix 2 for interview guides.

¹⁴ (Ibid.).

concept of securitization of cultural heritage needed further explaining. However, when the concept was explained more thoroughly, the informants began to reflect during the interview. Furthermore, I also learned that I had to make an altered version of the interview guide when interviewing experts not working directly at a museum. This change reflected how I, quite early in my gathering of data, expanded my informant group to include experts from international relations, political science, cultural heritage law and policy, etc. beyond the selected informants I had prepared. It shows how many of the informants that I was recommended to interview worked outside of the museum sector. In June 2020, I made a second reflection on my data collecting. First, I had experienced that the informants did not read the provided information before the interview. Many thought I was going to ask them about security in the form of alarms systems, guards, etc. So, I started to provide a more comprehensive context for my research each time I contacted informants. In the introduction email, I wrote: “Seen in the light of cultural heritage protection becoming a transnational and non-traditional security issue – and how this has drawn museums into work areas normally falling under defence and security”. I also added some sub-questions concerning ethics.¹⁵

Conducting the interviews, I began to tailor each interview to the individual interviewee, depending on their knowledge base and experience, to ensure reliable data. My last reflection on the interviews was in September 2020 when I decided to expand the research scope to a more global perspective, wanting to speak to actors from different African countries such as Mali and Tunisia but also Ukraine. As it appears from my data, I was not able to get in touch with museum professionals from African countries despite attempts through my growing network. On the contrary, I was able to get in contact with Ukrainian museum professionals. I also removed the two upper sub-questions in theme 3, as the informants often answered that they had already answered that. Furthermore, I added questions on the idea of “whose heritage is it?”, the success of heritage NGO’s such as UNESCO and if there was a positive side of the securitization of cultural heritage.

Table 2: Overview of when the interviews were conducted

Date	Number
2020	33
2021	2
2022	2

¹⁵ See Appendix 2 for interview guides.

As it appears from table 2, the main part of my interviews was conducted in 2020. I didn't make any new alterations to the interview guide after September 2020.

Regarding my own position as a researcher in relation to the informants, my position was characterised by my educational training in archaeology and conservation. This training has influenced my way of understanding the field and the questions I asked the informants. I had no professional or personal relations to the museums presented in the data, except for one interview with Jesper Stub Johnson who at the time of the interview was vice director at the National Museum of Denmark, where my project is partly affiliated. Furthermore, I had no professional or personal relation to the informants, except for Samuel Hardy whom I worked together with at the time of the interview while I was a guest PhD Fellow at the Norwegian Institute in Rome. I had also met Laurie Rush once before interviewing her, in relation to a Blue Shield Denmark event. Lastly, I was introduced to Serhii Telizhenko at an online conference before later conducting an interview with him.

4.4 Setting – online interview platforms

When planning the project, I intended to conduct fieldwork at major Euro-American museums combined with fieldwork in Syria and Iraq. However, seven months into the project the COVID-19 pandemic took hold globally, and I had to rethink and reschedule the way I would collect the project's empirical data. To continue a steady progression of the data collection, I therefore redirected all my fieldwork and planned interviews to online platforms – primarily Skype and Zoom.

Using online platforms for conducting interviews has its benefits and challenges. A study of using Zoom for qualitative data collection suggests the viability of online platforms like Zoom as a tool for collection of qualitative data because of its convenience, ease of use and its ability to facilitate personal connections between users (Archibald, M.M. et al 2019). The challenges are of course that it demands a stable internet connection and that technical problems can occur during the session (e.g., lagging). Furthermore, using an online platform often limits the length of the meeting to a 1-2-hour online session. This can influence the development of a relationship and the level of trust between the interviewer and informant, affecting the outcome of the interview and causing a reduction of information shared. On the

positive side, using online platforms opens up for a much larger group of informants and enables the interviewer to speak to respondents from all over the world. This was very useful in the project where my informants were located in Syria, Iraq, France, U.S., UK, Ukraine, Canada, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Ireland.

4.5 Limitations of Research

This thesis has some limitations. The first and most significant concerns the balance of representation among interviewees. The location of the informants centred in the US, Europe and the Middle East, meaning that the current thesis lacks the perspective of informants from countries in Asia and Africa, South America and Australia. While I have strived to regulate this inherent limitation in my sample by expanding my contacts each time I came across a new person working within this sphere, I was of course limited by both the lack of a network in some parts of the world and the language barriers. However, since the major Euro-American museums are frontrunners in this specific field (Christensen 2023, 12) I would argue that the sector is well represented, as it looks at the moment, and thus the sampling is considered relevant and rich in information. Furthermore, the project combines the analysis of qualitative data with an extensive survey of the most important academic literature, as well as an analysis of statements, recommendations, etc. from relevant stakeholders.

Another limitation can be found in the comprehensive interview guide and the explanation of securitization of cultural heritage provided to the informants.

This was a pragmatic choice because I realized early on that the informants did not share my theoretical starting point, and that the concept of securitization of cultural heritage needed further explaining for them to participate in the conversation.

I did not have the impression that the informants changed their agenda when they were introduced to the concept. Rather, it gave them a terminology with which to speak.

Finally, a potential limitation of this research is that it is interdisciplinary and draws a large part of its theoretical, conceptual and terminological framework from the field of political science. This means that, throughout the thesis, I have had to continuously acquire knowledge of a new academic field. I would argue that since this project is placed in critical heritage studies – more specifically in a branch that combines heritage studies with security studies

(article 1) – interdisciplinarity is essential. The purpose is to investigate how one sector has immigrated into another, and with this research question, I had to become acquainted with the framework belonging to an academic discipline unfamiliar to me.

5. Data analysis

As a strategy for my qualitative analysis, I was inspired by the use of templates in the thematic analysis of the data (Brooks et al. 2015, 203-204).

My argument for choosing this approach was that through the concept and theory of securitization I had a solid theoretical framework allowing me to look for *a priori* themes identified in advance of the coding process (Brooks et al. 2015, 204). As presented in “4.2 Interview guide” I was able to identify five themes which I developed the interviews around. The themes and the research questions they included were the starting point for the coding process. Prior to the coding process, all interviews were transcribed verbatim.

I followed the procedural steps in the template analysis as suggested by Brooks et al. (2015, 203-204). The first step was to become familiar with the accounts to be analysed. In this thesis, due to the number of interviews, I selected a subset of the transcripts of interviews with different types of informants to carry out a preliminary coding of the data. Inspired by the five themes from the interview guide, I formulated the following themes with a number of sub-themes:

Theme 1) The museum sectors reaction to cultural heritage protection:

1.1 *General statements on the museum sector’s involvement in cultural heritage protection during armed conflict*

1.2 *General statements on the museum sector’s engagement in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict*

1.3 *Institutional changes due to cultural heritage protection in the museum sector*

Theme 2) Transnational movements in the museum sector:

2.1 *Macro trends → globalisation, structural social changes*

2.2 *Politicization of the museum sector*

2.3 *Ethical practice and colonial ties*

2.4 *Destruction of cultural heritage*

2.5 *Museum-driven initiatives*

Theme 3) New work areas and challenges in the museum sector:

3.1 *Public outreach from the museum sector*

3.2 *Cross-sectoral collaboration*

3.3 *Redefinition of the museum concept*

Theme 4) The museum as an actor in global security:

4.1 *Museum professionals' and heritage professionals' thoughts on the securitization of cultural heritage*

4.2 *The position of the museum sector in global politics → legitimacy in the wider world*

Theme 5) The need for institutionalising:

5.1 *Micro level → Personal drive and passion, engagement, intentions and trust*

5.2 *Fluctuation in attention and funding/allocation of economic and political resources*

5.3 *Critique of heritage institutions and initiatives*

The subthemes were a way to organise emerging themes into meaningful clusters throughout the reading of my interviews. During this process, I added and altered some of the subthemes so that the template provided a good cross-section of the issues and experiences covered in the data as a whole. The template was applied to all my data.

The second part of my coding process was to construct a more focused template by re-evaluating and connecting themes and subthemes to my research questions into seven more specific themes:

Table 3: Overview of the seven themes in the final template

Theme
1) Evolving role/Expanding of the museum
2) Responsibility/Ethical practice and colonial ties
3) Publicity/Fluctuation
4) Need for institutionalizing/Future recommendations
5) Intentions/Personal drive
6) Acting and navigating in the security sphere
7) The implications for the sector

This final template was used in the subsequent analysis of the data.

6. Ethical reflections

Prior to conducting my interviews, I had the project ethically approved by The Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen. The approval includes research method applied (semi-structured, qualitative interviews), size of empirical data and informants.¹⁶

All informants were notified of their involvement in the research project prior to the collection of data, and were provided with a consent form, which they were asked to read and sign before the interview.¹⁷ However, I began each interview with information on the consent form, asking again if it was acceptable that the interview was recorded, and if they had not provided me with a signed consent form, I would kindly request receiving it after the interview. With consent from the informants, all of the interviews were audio recorded on a Dictaphone, used only for this purpose.

In a few cases, the informants wished to review the transcribed interview before giving their consent. Some informants added to their original statements or corrected errors in the transcription.

In the consent form, the interviewees confirmed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. They could decide if they wanted their contribution to be anonymised or not; if an informant initially elected to be identified, they had the opportunity to remain anonymous at a later stage.

The informants also accepted the use of the obtained data in scientific articles. Furthermore, I sent the manuscript of article 2, which identified the informants with their names, to the relevant informants before submitting the article – in addition to the already given consent.

Finally, I would like to state that all of the interviewees are adult professionals, from various countries, who are neither vulnerable individuals nor members of a vulnerable group.

All data is handled in compliance with the Danish Data Protection Act to ensure privacy, and stored for at least five years at the University of Copenhagen, following the end of the project, under the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

¹⁶ See Appendix 3 for ethical approval of The Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen

¹⁷ See Appendix 4 for Consent form

At the end of articles 2 and 3, I have inserted a “Declaration of Consent” which has been required by the journals in which I have published the articles.

7. Main findings

In the following sections, I will present the main findings of the three articles in this thesis under the following themes: “The cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security” (article 1), “The Museum Sector as an Actor in Human Security” (article 2), and “Museum actors’ perspectives on involvement in protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict” (article 3).

7.1 Article 1: “The cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security”

The objective of article 1 (Christensen 2022) was to map how the protection of cultural heritage has increasingly found its way into rhetoric related to peace and security and how this has affected the academic field of heritage studies.¹⁸ More specifically, it examined the linkage between how cultural heritage and security threats have emerged as a new theme in the academic literature. Accordingly, the article was constructed as a literature review describing the current knowledge about the linkage between heritage and security through the analysis of related published work. One of the article’s main contributions is to introduce the concept of securitization to heritage professionals and the impact of the securitization of cultural heritage on the field of heritage protection.

7.1.1 Cultural heritage protection: a transnational human security issue

I found that to identify the linkage between cultural heritage and security I had to analyse published work on cultural heritage as an issue in international security. Furthermore, I examined the development of the discursive framing of heritage protection in relation to armed conflicts and the impact it has had on the field of heritage studies.

In the “Introduction” of this thesis I summed up the concepts of cultural heritage and armed conflict using my research for this article, and presenting both historic key events and

¹⁸ See Appendix 6 for article 1.

discursive framing. In this section, I will elaborate on how article 1 investigates cultural heritage protection and its development into a transnational human security issue.

In the article, I show how the further entrenchment of the protection of cultural heritage, as a cross-sectoral topic in conflict management, resulted in cultural heritage migrating into matters of human security. Since the Cold War, there has been a shift in the organising of heritage protection, which has caused a mixture of sectors to interact around said protection and linked the protection of cultural heritage to other traditional security issues such as the security of nations and people (Christensen 2022, 5). The destruction and tactical use of cultural heritage in ongoing conflicts demonstrates how cultural heritage is part of the strategy of non-state armed groups (e.g. ISIS, Al-Qaeda) as well as state military (e.g. Russia, China) to spread propaganda, to manipulate, escalate conflicts, gain international attention and erase unity or national identity (Rosén 2022b, 6; Christensen 2022, 5).

This has led to the political recognition of and attention to cultural heritage as a political security issue and an important element in modern warfare.

As a result of this development, I found that a shift in the organising of heritage protection has occurred where cultural heritage protection has increasingly been connected to the security and protection of a society and its people (Christensen 2022, 5; Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022). The securing of a population's cultural heritage is now part of the political rhetoric and a matter of politics for security communities and security policy strategies. In this matter, the connection between heritage protection and terrorism has especially given rise to the political recognition of and attention to cultural heritage as a political security issue (Christensen 2022, 5).

7.1.2 A new research theme in heritage studies

Researching the linkage between cultural heritage and security also provided me with knowledge on the emergence of a new research theme in heritage studies.

In 1990 Joseph Nye evaluated the concept of power in the post-Cold War world and formulated the term “soft power” to describe the importance of heritage in the context of cultural discourse and practice in international relations (Nye 1990).

Yet the understanding of cultural heritage's migration into security really took hold in 2007 with Erik Nemeth's research on the significance of cultural property in issues of international

security (Nemeth 2007, 2008, 2011). From there, different publications appeared on the efforts to use the security rhetoric of the protection of cultural heritage in policy (Luke and Kesel 2012), the emergence of the term “heritage diplomacy” pivoting around mechanisms of soft power (Winter 2015) as well as reflections on the connections between heritage and security, formulating heritage as an active object of interest in armed conflicts and one that could be treated as an agent in security (Legnér 2017).

In 2019 Alessandra Russo and Serena Giusti documented the securitization of cultural heritage pivoting around an investigation of UNESCO’s former Director General Irina Bokova’s rhetoric around the destruction of heritage in the Middle East. In the wake of their article, more publications on the securitization of cultural heritage were published (Puskás 2019; Foradori, Giusti and Lamonica 2019), followed by reflections on the political perspective on making heritage protection a real security issue linked to fighting terrorism, and the ideological perspective of “the West against fundamentalists” (Barakat 2021). In 2022 this development culminated with the publication of “The Preservation of Art and Culture in Times of War”, describing the increasing cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security as a “heritage-security nexus” (Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022). Through this examination of heritage literature, the article shows the recognition of the linkage between cultural heritage and security as a new theme in academia.

7.2 Article 2: “The Museum Sector as an Actor in Human Security”

Article 2 (Christensen 2023) addresses the global museum sector as a dynamic network of transnational organisations navigating in geopolitical and -cultural agendas and how this positions the sector in a process of redefining and expanding its work areas.¹⁹

A significant outcome of this process is the museum sector’s cross-sectoral movement into the domain of human security, where the referent object of security is individuals and the protection of fundamental freedoms rather than the traditional safety of states from military threats. This movement has pulled the sector into the work areas and realms of responsibility normally falling within state sectors working on defence and security issues.

¹⁹ See Appendix 7 for article 2.

To study how different actors in the museum sector understand, experience and navigate in this new role as an actor in human security, I analysed the empirical data drawing on perspectives from critical museology. By using this perspective, the article contributes to expanding the existing museal field by creating an understanding of the consequences of the sector's role in maintaining and protecting identities by placing the sector within the domain of human security.

7.2.1 Experiencing the roles of museums within the nexus of cultural heritage and human security

My analysis of the interview-based data revealed four key themes relating to how museum actors experience the sector's role within the nexus of cultural heritage and security. The themes I found were: a) The evolving role of the museum; b) politics and publicity; c) acting and navigating in the security sphere; d) the implications for the sector. To be able to analyse the themes, I used the museological development to frame the expansion of the mission of museums relating to how the museum sector anticipates and adapts to new roles. In this article, I used a broader critical mindset when working with museology (Lorente 2022), arguing for the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the mission and operations of museums as institutions (Mairesse and Desvallées 2010, 56-74).

I found that renewing institutional formats and rethinking the humanitarian potential of museums (Sandahl 2019) was necessary for me to examine the museum sector's assumptions and practices (Janes 2009, 13).

In my analysis of the four themes, I found that that the sector's new role in human security is not institutionalised.

This lack of institutionalisation is reflected in how intergovernmental organisations such as UNESCO lack the capability to navigate political and bureaucratic barriers to provide sustainable long-term emergency action, resulting in a minimum of practical activities in the field (Meskell 2018; Meskell 2020; McCafferty 2022). Furthermore, governments which might be expected to implement heritage protection strategies are not doing so. In fact, no international institution or organisation is solely working with cultural heritage protection in armed conflicts (Rosén 2017). Organisations such as Blue Shield – founded to protect cultural heritage in emergency situations – lack sufficient funding, the necessary employees

to deal specific with heritage protection and a formal mandate. Neither is the international cooperation ALIPH (International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas) sufficient, being a private foundation on the initiative of France and the United Arab Emirates, as they are also subject to conflicts of interest.

I discovered that the lack of a consistent heritage protection policy encouraged certain museums like the Smithsonian Institute and Penn Museum to engage in heritage protection in areas of armed conflicts. As a result, the protection initiative largely depends on individual interest where museum professionals with a personal drive or as part of political soft-diplomacy push protection initiatives in areas affected by armed conflict. My analysis shows that it is museum professionals from major Euro-American museums who are frontrunners and fully aware of the museum sector's new role. The rest of the museum sector, located in areas not directly affected by armed conflict, is not as aware, however, unwittingly stepping into this expanding field (Christensen 2023, 7-12).

Moreover, I found that the museum sector's engagement in protection of cultural heritage in areas of armed conflict is heavily influenced by political agendas affected by the media. Through my analysis, it becomes clear how the funding for heritage protection fluctuates as a consequent of the change in media covers and political attention to the issue, and how the field is characterised by a low level of actual interventions and short-term planning. The lack of a systematic approach creates a disparity in the allocation of heritage protection responses and funding where the majority of the initiatives revolves around the Middle East (Christensen 2023, 7-12). In addition an increasing number of initiatives centred on Ukraine emerged in 2022 in contrast to the lack of attention to heritage destruction in conflicts in e.g. China or Ethiopia.²⁰

7.2.2 The museum sector as an actor in human security

My data showed a consensus about the major museums having a responsibility to contribute to the protection of cultural heritage in areas affected by armed conflict, which pushed my thinking further towards the perspectives of critical museology.

²⁰ See Appendix 5 for a table of museum-driven heritage protection initiatives.

This responsibility is urged on by a moral obligation rooted in colonial ties between the active museums of the global North and the countries where conflict takes place, especially when it comes to the recent conflicts in the Middle East (Christensen 2023). This phenomenon, which is documented in the discussion about restitutions in western museums (Hicks 2020, 239), is encouraging contemporary museums to act outside the traditional museum areas and responsibilities (Janes 2009, 13-25). This argument is reflected in critical museology through a discussion on the social and humanitarian potential of museums, alongside viewing museums as political institutions (Sandahl 2019, 5-6; Gray and McCall 2020).

The article advocates for providing transparency to museums workers – as well as the public – about how museums are working in a politically charged environment. Relating to the sector’s rhetoric on museums’ contribution to peace, justice and mutual understanding, the article underpins the argument presented by Hill (2021) that conflict shapes museums, and how this concerns not only museums’ collections, repatriation policy and cultural narratives but also pushes them to act and think outside traditional museum areas such as the involvement in heritage protection in conflict (Christensen 2023).

By combining empirical data and critical museology, the article exposes how the protection and preservation of cultural heritage has become a transnational cross-sectoral topic within a broader agenda of peace and human security.

The implication for the sector is, in addition to being an economic burden, that an insecurity emerges in how museum professionals should relate to the fact that museums are tools in soft power, culture diplomacy and international relations.

7.3 Article 3: “Museum actors’ perspectives on involvement in protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict”

Article 3 (Christensen 2023 submitted) employs the thesis’ empirical data to investigate further how museum actors and associated practitioners perceive the process of securitization of their field and their own role in this development.²¹ Through a Latourian approach, I use actor-network theory as an analytical model to map and analyse the position of museum actors embedded in the process of securitization of cultural heritage and how this has created

²¹ See Appendix 8 for article 3.

a new role with new professional challenges for the museum actors. In this analysis, I identified several recurring themes relating to actors' motivation and working conditions. The themes were: a) lack of material resources; b) chasing after publicity and political attention; c) heritage diplomacy; d) personal passion and the sense of a lack of action.

7.3.1 The need to act

The understanding of the importance of cultural heritage protection in armed conflict has been integrated into a range of policies and practices advancing a consensus agreement on *the need* for heritage protection (Christensen 2023 submitted, 1). However, the lack of a systematic approach to heritage protection from heritage organisations and institutions (as well as governments) has created a space and need for others to get involved.

The lack of a formal framework created a large leeway which I found created opportunities for acting and agenda-setting within this field. This led individuals and workers within the museum sector to engage with protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict as a responsibility and self-declared mission (Christensen 2023 submitted, 2). The actors then initiated a process of redefining and expanding their values and practices. Furthermore, I showed how even though the connection to the notion of security can generate networks and a common morality, many of the museum actors in the field of heritage protection work against each other in competition for the limited funding within this field (Christensen 2023 submitted, 2).

To analyse how museum actors and associated practitioners perceive this expanding role vis-à-vis a more conventional museum professional's role, I focused on a definition of the museum institution as a place of various stakeholders with diverging interests and a hierarchical structure working in a politically charged environment. This definition allowed me to look at the museum sector as a diversity of stakeholders with different and sometimes conflicting interests. This perspective enabled me to investigate which interests and intentions lay behind the involvement. I was inspired by Latour's description of how actors' actions are not always performed under fully conscious control but instead are the result of a diffuse network of influences (Latour 2005, 44-45).

7.3.2 The lack of systematic funding

A recurring theme in my interviews revealed how the museum actors' involvement in heritage protection in armed conflict was heavily influenced by the lack of systematic resources and engagement dedicated to heritage protection. Consequently, such involvement is characterised by short-term solutions – which makes it difficult for the sector to take on permanent new tasks demanding long term strategical planning.

This echoes an inter-organisational problem where a lack of finances can be attributed to the museum sector generally being an underfunded sector (King 2003; Heal 2022). The sector's perspective on where and how to prioritise is influenced by the global financial network – including both macrostructures, like COVID and energy crises, and also the microstructures within the museum (Christensen 2023 submitted, 9). I found that the lack of permanent resources is reflected in a general shift in the sector from permanent contracts to contractors. The museum contract worker who is working within the field of heritage protection has to jump to the next project, fighting for funding without being able to advance higher up in the system (Christensen 2023 submitted, 8). The result is that the actors have to approach things one crisis at a time, while often stalling in logistics and writing up the next application.

Another consequence of the lack of systematic resources is that the museum actors have to pursue timely public reactions in order to secure awareness and funding. The actors seek to get the right public and political attention and place donors in a positive light on public and political stages (Christensen 2023 submitted, 7-11). My analysis of the data further showed that the competition for existing funding means that each museum is working in a silo and each project is trying to be the most significant. I found that most of the museum initiatives on heritage protection are centred on whichever crisis the international media landscape is paying most attention to and which way political tendencies are going (Christensen 2023 submitted, 11). Therefore, the museum actor's involvement depends on a geopolitical setting around the destruction of cultural heritage, forcing them to act correspondingly (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the museum sector is using protection initiatives to display ethical behaviour and political correctness with the result that heritage protection is subject to the agendas of the western political elite (Christensen 2022; Christensen 2023 submitted, 13). I also found that with the Syria and Iraq conflicts and the associated heritage destructions a renewed

ethical wave of “compensation” and a morality-discourse have appeared from the major museums with colonial ties – especially the British and the French museums – which was reflected in the interviews. In this way, heritage protection initiatives are used as a kind of international currency and as a soft diplomacy tool (Christensen 2023 submitted, 13).

7.3.3 Personal passion

The individual actor plays an essential part in the museum sector’s involvement in heritage protection. Throughout my interviews, the protection initiatives revolved around individual people having a personal interest in it, reacting to the destruction of heritage in armed conflict out of frustration, calling for some kind of action and pressing it forward within their organisation. I found that these actors often had a personal or academic attachment to a specific area, thus influencing which areas their institutions were then allocating heritage protection. In addition, the actors were typically in networks and/or collaborative relationships with organisations involved in this field such as Blue Shield, UNESCO or ICOM (Christensen 2023 submitted, 15).

This reliance on personal passions and enterprises rather than policy and organisational structures makes heritage protection vulnerable to ebbs and flows in the tide of human resources, including rotation of personnel and internal affairs of the organisations (Christensen 2023 submitted, 16).

I also found an internal scepticism amongst the interviewees concerning how some actors are trying to capture and be part of a stream of funding when the awareness and funding window is suddenly open for a limited time – e.g. heritage protection in the Middle East.

Furthermore, my data showed that there is a lack of governmental interest in the protection of museum collections in areas directly affected by armed conflict. This is expressed through heritage protection not being on the domestic policy priority list, which means that there are no clear instructions concerning preventative measures or the allocation of funds.

Furthermore, politicians are often trying to deny the crisis (Christensen 2023 submitted, 17).

Thus, the initiative to help seems to fall back on individuals, causing the individual actor and associated networks to contribute to the production of the narrative of cultural heritage protection. This creates a diffuse image of heritage protection based on emotional rhetoric

and a lack of an identifiable and tangible strategy to incorporate cultural heritage protection in a broader operational strategy, e.g., in humanitarian aid (Ibid.). Throughout my interviews, this perspective resonates in a general call for coherent international institutions and continuous financial support to secure long-term heritage protection initiatives in armed conflicts.

I demonstrated that the museums actors' involvement in heritage protection in areas affected by conflict is influenced by a lack of material resources, lack of policies, publicity, political trends, diplomacy, personal relationships, personal engagement and concern, career opportunities and the sense of a lack of action by officials rather than policy and organisational functions.

8. General perspective: (re-) politicization and absence of institutionalisation

This section will present the general perspectives and shared issues exposed by the connection between the three articles' findings and conclusions.

The objective of this thesis was to study how the use of cultural heritage in modern armed conflicts and the subsequent securitization of cultural heritage has created new roles and challenges for the global museum sector. Analysing the empirical data with my theoretical perspectives, beginning with securitization theory (Buzan 1991; Wæver 1995; Buzan/Wæver 1997; Wæver 1997; Floyd 2010; Russo and Giusti 2019), allowed me to focus on how a political discourse influences the museum sector, affecting the working conditions for museum actors. The outcome of the securitization of cultural heritage, the protection of cultural heritage as a security issue, increased the political effect of attacking cultural heritage and, thus, created a platform for defenders to act causing an agreement on the need for heritage protection. To analyse how this development has affected the working conditions of museum actors I chose to use Latour's interpretation of ANT theory (Latour 1999, 2005) in my analytical approach to the empirical data. Also, I used the theoretical perspectives of critical museology (Lorente 2022) to explain the institutional development and self-organisation of the contemporary museum sector in relation to the securitization of cultural heritage.

Overall, this facilitated maintaining a coherent focus in this thesis, while the three articles each contributed both new practical and theoretical perspectives to the existing knowledge. In this section, I will combine the findings from the articles and discuss them in relation to existing knowledge. To point out the implications of the main findings, I will address and discuss the findings under the following two themes: “The (re-) politicization of cultural heritage and museology” and “Absence of institutionalisation”.

8.1 The (re)-politicization of cultural heritage

My way of combining theoretical perspectives – in order to focus on the museum sector’s movement into human security – makes a new contribution to the existing heritage literature. The analytical combination of the theory and data helped to reveal a novel perspective on the politicization of museums and the reorientation of their function.

The idea of cultural heritage as a political global resource is well established (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Loulanski 2006; Smith and Waterton 2009; Labadi and Long 2010). Moreover, heritage’s role in legitimizing or de-legitimizing claims to justice, identity, territorial attachment and as a resource in political conflicts has been widely explored in the heritage literature (see, for instance, Silverman and Ruggles 2007; Langfield 2010; Winter 2015). The politicization of cultural heritage has led to fundamental changes in the understanding and management of cultural heritage as a category of legal, political and governmental significance (Coombe 2013, 375).

The main findings in article 1 contribute to an expansion of the understanding of heritage as a political resource by using the theory of securitization to underpin how securing a society’s cultural heritage is now part of the political rhetoric and a matter of security policy strategies. Based on my findings, I would argue that we are witnessing a re-politicization of cultural heritage. The idea of re-politicization refers to the process of politicizing again and the reactivation of the political origin of the matter, which demonstrates a form of “critical awareness of the political character of policy decisions” (Fawcett et al. 2017, 32).

The re-politicization of cultural heritage is expressed in how cultural heritage is becoming an inherent concept of human security underpinning heritage as an undeniable factor in the broader international peace and security agenda. Likewise, the increasing shift from protecting cultural heritage for its own sake to viewing its protection as connected to broader

agendas of peace and security is a clear expression of this development (Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022). With recent conflicts having intensified with Russia's invasion in Ukraine, cultural heritage is now recognised as a part of military strategy and hybrid warfare by state and non-state actors in order to achieve military, political, economic and diplomatic advantages (Rosén 2022b, Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022; Clack and Dunkley 2022).

This is a novel development and will have a major impact on the museum sector.

Reflections on the politicization of museums has been part of museology since the arrival of New Museology in the late 1980s. Here reflections on how political discourses affects museum operations focusing on the social role and politicization of museums emerged within the museum sector itself (Vergo 1989; Hooper-Greenhill 1989, 1992; Bennett 1995; Mason 2006, 23; Mairesse and Desvallées 2010, 55).

The theoretical movement of critical museology advocating for a broader mindset when thinking in and about museums has further called on the sector to be transparent about the political context of the museum (Sandahl 2019; Loeseke 2019, 149; Lorente 2022, 6, 21). By using this perspective, articles 2 and 3 examine the expansion of the existing museal field by analysing the consequences of the sector's role in heritage protection in armed conflict. The broader context of securitization is showing how the sector is interwoven with the re-politicization of culture heritage. When cultural heritage is securitised, it expands the museum sector's place and role in society.

Articles 2 and 3 show how museums take on new tasks and acquire new roles becoming actors in the international peace and security agenda. I would argue that this contributes to altering the meaning of the mission of "the museum". The awareness on how the mission of museums are entangled with international political trends, and the incorporation in international humanitarian and military systems, are desirable. Thus, the sector is in need of funding for this new role and of being placed in an international system (Christensen 2023, 11, Christensen 2023 submitted, 18-19).

In combination with the museological development, transitioning from 'critical museology' towards 'critical heritage studies' (Lorente 2022, 6, 21), this reclassifies the mission of the museum as cross-sectoral – not only in partnerships and collaborations (e.g. Bowden and Ciesielska 2016; Li and Ghirardi 2019) but also for the purpose of providing holistic heritage

protection strategies. This argument is supported by my findings, which show that there is agreement among professionals working in and around the museum sector on the understanding that the sector has a cross-sectoral moral responsibility to act and think outside traditional museum areas.

The re-politicization of the museum is leading to theoretical and practical reflections on the need for interdisciplinarity when working in and around the museum. In combination, my findings contribute to the literature regarding these reflections.

With a detailed analysis of the expanding of the museal field and how it is perceived by the actors involved, I suggest museums examine their intentions and practices, demanding that they show transparency and take ownership of being political and social institutions seen in the theoretical light of the transition to critical heritage studies (Lorente 2022).

8.2 Absence of institutionalisation

To gain an analytical meta-perspective on the expansion of the museal field into human security and how it is perceived by the actors involved, I identified four themes in article 2 and article 3, respectively. The eight themes established an overview of which factors were at play in museum actor's response and navigation in the securitization of cultural heritage. One theme cluster illustrated the evolving role of the museum with the expansion of its values and practices and how the sector was acting and navigating in the security sphere, becoming an actor in human security. Another cluster encompassed how external impacts such as politics and media attention, often combined with heritage diplomacy, provided agency for the museum actors to act. The third cluster focused on the institutional impacts such as personal drive, lack of material resources, the sense of a lack of action taken by officials, which influenced an actor's behaviour and intentions. The fourth cluster addressed the implications for the sector of the cross-sectoral movement into human security for the sector.

Within these themes, the global museum sector's and affiliated practitioners' relation to the heritage-security nexus and the actors perception of this was discussed.

As previously mentioned my main findings of the three articles showed how the sector's new role in human security is not institutionalised. The sector's involvement in heritage protection

largely depends on the understanding and performance of this role by individual actors from the major Euro-American museums all of whom are influenced by a mixture of agencies.

This perspective helped me to reveal how there is no consistency in the policy concerning heritage protection in armed conflict, and therefore no consistency in what the museums are doing. Despite the rather large body of research on heritage management (e.g. journals such as “Heritage management”, “Journal of heritage management”, and “Journal of cultural heritage management and sustainable development”) there is still limited knowledge on this failure of maintaining consistency in the policy concerning heritage protection in armed conflict (e.g. Meskell 2020; McCafferty 2022; Finkelstein, Gilman and Rosén 2022).

Based on my findings, I would argue that the lack of knowledge of the inconsistency in heritage protection in armed conflict is linked to the absence of the recognition of the re-politicization of cultural heritage and the shift in organising of protection.

As shown in article 1, this is a newly defined research theme which requires cross-sectoral approaches. In this thesis, the composition of informants helped me gather cross-sectoral inside information on the museum sectors’ lack of consistency in heritage protection.

I think it is telling that of the 37 informants, 21 were heritage experts not working in a museum (see table 1). The numbers illustrate how the knowledge of the museums role in heritage protection in armed conflict are more established amongst heritage experts looking at the museum sector from outside rather than within. Beside the experts working in the fields of archaeology and conservation the experts were positioned in political science, international relations, anthropology, peace studies, they were lawyers, and one a diplomat.²² This distribution emphasizes how interdisciplinary knowledge is needed when working with protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict. Thus, a solution to the problem about the lack of consistency in heritage protection must be found in cross-sectoral collaboration.

Based on my findings in articles 2 and 3, I believe that a discussion of the implementation of coherent international strategies and political support for permanent funding in heritage protection is called for.

Taking the re-politicization of cultural heritage and the shift in organising protection into consideration, heritage protection policy cannot depend on a museum sector led by individual actors. As shown in the thesis’ findings, these actors do not have the mandate to decide on wide-ranging changes in institutionalising heritage protection in armed conflict.

²² For more information on the informants see Appendix 1.

I also show that the museum sector is facing difficulties in trying to secure the interest of donors or governments funding the protection initiatives, and planning actual sustainable interventions on the ground.

I would argue it would be desirable to incorporate heritage protection into international humanitarian strategies and stabilisation work. This argumentation is supported by the aforementioned research on the lack of capability of intergovernmental heritage organisations to overcome political and bureaucratic barriers (Meskell 2018; Meskell 2020; McCafferty 2022).

However, to enable heritage protection in armed conflict to be incorporated into the international humanitarian system, a common terminology is needed. I would argue that the re-politicization of cultural heritage is the key. It provides a common denominator by recognising the protection of cultural heritage as an issue falling under international peace and security. If cultural heritage could be considered a protection issue such as gender, the protection of civilians, human trafficking, etc. it would permit an exchange of experiences and best practices between the cultural heritage sector and organisations and institutions working with peace and security. However, this illustrates an important paradox: as long as the protection initiatives are driven by personal engagement and associated networks, the narrative of cultural heritage protection becomes muddy, based as it is on emotional rhetoric and a lack of identifiable and tangible strategies. This generates a need for more discussions across sectors on cultural heritage protection with the aim of distancing the narrative away from the emotional rhetoric and moving it toward empirical evidence and systematic accounts. Accordingly, this thesis contributes a nuanced knowledge based on an analysis of empirical data on how the re-politicization of cultural heritage has created new roles and challenges for the global museum sector and how the sector perceives this.

9. Implications for practice

Based on my specific findings concerning the intentions and agendas that govern purposes for the contemporary museum sector's involvement in protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict, the thesis contributes several potential implications for practice.

First, I suggest that when getting involved in heritage protection in areas affected by conflict, it is important to be aware of the complexity of the task and the field of interest museum

professionals navigate in – the task is set in a muddy landscape of demands from many sides. I propose transparency in the struggle between agendas and conflicting interests within the sector and the need for discussion in order to be able to act on an informed basis.

The continuing shift from protecting cultural heritage for its own sake towards viewing its protection as connected to the protection and preservation of rights related to fundamental individual needs and identity must be further disseminated in museums institutions.

Museum actors as well as other professionals affiliated the museum sector have to be informed about how the sector's growing cross-sectoral obligations push museum actors to act outside the traditional museum areas and responsibilities.

In addition, I suggest that educational institutions educate archaeologists, conservators and other professionals working with cultural heritage in how museums are placed in politically charged environments and are influenced by national and geopolitical trends and soft-power issues.

Furthermore, based on my findings, I argue that it is important to be vocal about how the lack of permanent funding allocated to heritage protection creates short-term planning and a low level of actual interventions, none of which contribute to sustainable solutions. Based on my interviews it seems that most actors are very much aware of this problem, yet they often present their involvement or initiatives as a success without mentioning this concern. I am fully aware of the difficulty in presenting this argument to donors, and I recognise that one must tread carefully. However, I would still suggest that the actors explicitly raise their concern about the short-term perspective when applying for funds or planning an initiative, in order to raise awareness of the problems and avoid a continuation of the current unviable situation.

Considering that cultural heritage is part of a specific local context, and realising that sustaining and protecting cultural heritage will often depend on local communities, I argue that new initiatives should take the contemporary context into account by analysing which values the local community attach to the object(s) and/or site(s) in question – and the advantages or disadvantages it gives them. Paradoxically this approach requires more resources and a long-term horizon of heritage protection projects, and it is perhaps more about creating sustainable employment or proper systems for storage of archaeological material than about organising training courses. However, the need for dialogue between the organiser of the heritage protection initiatives and the local community in question is

essential for a more holistic approach. Moreover, it is notable that cross-sectoral collaboration with organisations and institutions working with humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and human security in heritage protection is a key for the initiatives to be sustainable.

Additionally, my findings show that it is vital to be aware of the risk that museum actors may end up becoming pawns in a game of the political interests of donors, be they governments or private foundations. The museum sector – especially state-funded or partly state-funded museums – needs to tick-off the right boxes in terms of interests in order to gain attention and attract donors. It is important to realise that adopting this kind of money-focused business strategy makes the practice of the museum sector vulnerable. The sector has to “earn” funding by placing donors in a positive light both in the public and on the political stage. The sector is thus dependent on public and political awareness dictated by the geopolitical setting around the destruction of cultural heritage. In consequence the sector cannot always select the most sustainable solutions or get involved in all places of need around the world (Christensen 2023 submitted, 10-11).

These are the pragmatic realities; therefore, the global museum sector should focus more on how to create structural changes to promote more independent and reliable funding for the protection of heritage in conflict. I believe this could be achieved by the sector, desirable led by an international organisation such as ICOM, starting a dialogue about incorporating heritage protection in international humanitarian strategies and stabilisation work. Not only to ensure protection of heritage in armed conflict but also to contribute to rethinking and realising the humanitarian potential of museums (Sandahl 2019).

10. Implications for research

The findings in this thesis have several implications for research. First, I suggest that future research focus on how to incorporate interdisciplinarity in the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict. There is a need for research investigating the discourses and frameworks in which heritage protection unfolds, to be able to provide approaches suited to help in protecting heritage in sustainable ways, which take local conditions into account. This calls for reflections on what interdisciplinary research can offer and how research which combines heritage studies and security studies – perhaps also sociology and anthropology – with humanities-based qualitative and empirical research can provide knowledge about the

communities and stakeholders that are charged with the responsibility to carry out and manage the protection initiatives. This thesis shows how a range of conditions influence the museum sector's involvement in heritage protection. However, there is a need for more research on intentions, agendas and circumstances behind protection initiatives in the general heritage sector besides those of the museum sector and UNESCO. To map and analyse why organisations and institutions engage in protection initiatives can help address the obstacles that make it difficult to institutionalise the initiatives.

Also, more research is needed on how the protection initiatives are funded, here with a view to better understand how donor interests are affecting the initiatives by analysing what the donors want to achieve by becoming involved in the protection initiatives. The fluctuating funding for the museum sector makes the implementation of protection projects, programs and policies sporadic. Moreover, there is a lack of systematic evaluation of the results of museum-driven initiatives. We need research on what has been achieved so the results become applicable, usable and generalisable.

Based on the lack of balance, with a northern and western bias of representations among interviewees in my thesis, I also recommend that additional research focus more on museum actors' experiences with heritage protection in armed conflict in affected countries in Asia, Africa and South America.

Lastly, there is a need for more research on how to best incorporate heritage protection into international humanitarian strategies and stabilisation efforts in order to generate a more stable and permanent involvement in the protection of cultural heritage in areas affected by armed conflict. This will require research on the re-politicization of cultural heritage, and the development of a common terminology within the heritage sector which mirrors how the protection of cultural heritage as an issue belongs under international peace and security. Moreover, it will require collaboration between policymakers, museum professionals, donors and researchers.

I suggest that researchers engage more with cross-sectoral perspectives on the roles, responsibilities and practices of museums. I believe this will enhance the collaborations, perhaps preventing museums from working in a silo structure with each project trying to be the most significant. Instead, a cross-sectoral approach should benefit everyone involved by

better unleashing the full potential of collaborating across sectors to secure the sustainable protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict.

11. Conclusion

Taken together, the studies in this PhD thesis demonstrate the importance of understanding how the use of cultural heritage in modern armed conflicts and the subsequent securitization of cultural heritage has created new roles and challenges for the global museum sector.

The section on “General perspectives” provides a contextualisation of the thesis in relation to significant research in the field. Research on the exploitation of cultural heritage in modern warfare and the connection to peace and security agendas has contributed to framing the thesis in a larger context outside the museum sector (Rosén 2022b, Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022; Clack and Dunkley 2022). Through the context of securitization the thesis emphasises how the protection of cultural heritage has become a transnational, cross-sectoral topic and shows how the museum sector is interwoven with the re-politicization of culture heritage. This has positioned the sector as an actor in human security, thus expanding the sector's place and role in society.

This must be understood if museums are to take ownership of being political and social institutions. Hence, this thesis underlines the great importance of interdisciplinarity when rethinking institutional formats and the potential of contemporary museums.

I show how the sector's new role in human security is not institutionalised, and how this entails the risk of disparity in the allocation of heritage protection responses and funding. The thesis emphasises how the lack of systematic approaches to heritage protection causes heritage protection initiatives to be characterised by a low level of actual interventions and short-term planning. This result is contextualised in recent research on the lack of capability among intergovernmental heritage organisations.

The thesis also generates important knowledge on the museum sector's perceptions and practices in the securitization of cultural heritage. This knowledge provides insight into the institutional development inside the sector from within and shows how the museum actors are products of the society in which they are situated.

The discursive displacement which securitization causes is indeed a central player in heritage protection but not necessarily in a clear way. It creates importance and a platform where there is agreement to focus on the need for heritage protection during conflict. However, it also muddies the intentions and agendas, which is underpinned in the use of the Latourian actor-network approach throughout the thesis, pointing to the unclear conditions affecting and influencing the actors. Securitization is the discourse that causes the actors to act, while the actors enforce the process of securitization with their engagement in heritage protection (see figure 1). I show how the museums actors' involvement in heritage protection is influenced by a mixture of agencies, which does not make it more manageable for the actors involved (see figure 2). In fact, the understanding and performance of the sector's role in human security is still underway, with the major Euro-American museums as frontrunners.

Lastly, the thesis contributes essential knowledge concerning the potentials and barriers for researchers, museum professionals and policymakers to collaborate on incorporating cultural heritage protection in a broader international humanitarian operational strategy.

All in all, this thesis reveals the multifaceted complexities the museum sector faces when organising and carrying out the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict.

English summary

The overall aim of this PhD thesis is to address *how the use of cultural heritage in modern armed conflicts and the subsequent securitization of cultural heritage has created new roles and challenges for the global museum sector*. To elucidate this question, three separate studies were conducted under the following themes: “The cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security” (article 1), “The Museum Sector as an Actor in Human Security” (article 2), and “Museum actors’ perspectives on involvement in protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict” (article 3).

Over the last two decades cultural heritage has become a growing issue in human security, and the protection of it a transnational cross-sectoral topic. Current literature has explored the securitization of cultural heritage and how cultural heritage now is recognised as part of military strategy and hybrid warfare by state and non-state actors in order to spread propaganda, to manipulate, escalate conflicts, gain international attention, and erase unity or national identity. This has established a politically platform with agreement on the need for protection of cultural heritage during conflict, yet institutionalized strategies for who is going to implement this protection lag behind.

This PhD thesis contributes with knowledge about the identification of the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats and the recognition of it as a new research field.

The thesis argues that a re-politicization of cultural heritage is expressed in how cultural heritage is becoming an inherent concept of human security. A clear expression of this development is in the increasing shift from protecting cultural heritage for its own sake to viewing its protection as connected to broader agendas of peace and security. This is a novel development and have a major impact on the museum sector - when cultural heritage is securitized, it expands the museum sector's place and role in society causing museum actors to act outside their traditional institutional field of work.

Through an extensive collection of semi-structured interviews with museum actors as well as other professionals affiliated with the museum sector, the thesis generates important knowledge on the museum actors’ experiences and perspectives on the process of

securitization of cultural heritage and subsequently the new roles and challenges for the global museum sector.

The thesis shows how the museum sector's new role in human security is not institutionalized and how it largely depends on individual interest and political agendas. Especially state-funded or partly state-funded museums need to tick-off the right boxes in terms of interests in order to gain attention and attract donors be they governments or private foundations. Thus, the sector is dependent on public and political awareness dictated by the geopolitical setting around the destruction of cultural heritage. In consequence, the sector cannot always select the most sustainable solutions or get involved in all places of need around the world.

Furthermore, the PhD thesis demonstrates how the museum actors' involvement in heritage protection is influenced by a mixture of agencies, and how this weakens the manageability for the actors involved. Thus, the actors' involvement is influenced by a lack of material resources, lack of policies, quest for publicity, political trends, diplomacy, personal relationships, personal engagement and concern, career opportunities, and the sense of a lack of action by officials. This entails the risk of disparity in the allocation of heritage protection responses and funding.

The thesis emphasizes how the lack of systematic approaches to heritage protection causes heritage protection initiatives to be characterised by short-term planning and a low level of actual interventions.

The thesis underlines how the general understanding and performance of the museum sector's role within the nexus of cultural heritage and human security in armed conflict is still underway, with the major Euro-American museums as frontrunners being aware of this new role while the museum sector as a whole lacks an international institutionalised system.

Lastly, the thesis contributes essential knowledge concerning the potentials and barriers for researchers, museum professionals and policymakers to collaborate on incorporating cultural heritage protection in a broader international humanitarian operational strategy. The thesis advocate for structural changes to promote more independent and reliable funding for the protection of heritage in conflict. Overall, this thesis reveals the multifaceted complexities the museum sector faces when organizing and carrying out the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict.

Danish summary (Resumé)

Formålet med denne artikelbaserede ph.d.-afhandling er at undersøge, hvordan brugen af kulturarv i moderne væbnede konflikter og den efterfølgende sikkerhedsliggørelse af kulturarv har skabt nye roller og udfordringer for den globale museumssektor.

Dette overordnede spørgsmål bliver belyst i tre separate undersøgelser udført inden for følgende temaer: "Det tværsektorielle link mellem kulturarv og sikkerhed" (artikel 1), "Museumssektoren som aktør i human security [menneskelig sikkerhed/ civilbeskyttelse]" (artikel 2) og "Museumsaktørers perspektiver på involvering i beskyttelse af kulturarv i væbnet konflikt" (artikel 3).

I løbet af de sidste to årtier er kulturarv blevet et voksende felt inden for human security [menneskelig sikkerhed/ civilbeskyttelse], og kulturarvsbeskyttelse er blevet et transnationalt tværsektorielt emne. Kulturarv er blevet en integreret del af militær strategi og hybrid krigsførelse, og (mis)-bruges af statslige og ikke-statslige aktører som et middel til at sprede propaganda, til at manipulere og (eller) eskalere konflikter, til at opnå international opmærksomhed og fjerne sammenhold eller national identitet. Sikkerhedsliggørelsen af kulturarv har etableret en politisk platform, hvor der er enighed om behovet for beskyttelse af kulturarv under konflikt, men endnu mangler institutionaliserede strategier for, hvem der skal implementere denne beskyttelse.

Denne ph.d.-afhandling bidrager med viden om sammenhængen mellem kulturarv og sikkerhedstrusler samt anerkendelsen af dette som et nyt forskningsfelt. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at der er sket en re-politisering af kulturarv, hvilket kommer til udtryk i den måde, kulturarv er blevet et iboende begreb i human security [menneskelig sikkerhed/ civilbeskyttelse]. Dette ses tydeligt i, hvordan der er sket et skift fra at beskytte kulturarv for dens egen skyld til nu at betragte kulturarvsbeskyttelse som associeret med bredere dagsordener inden for fred og sikkerhed. Dette er en ny udvikling, som har stor betydning for museumssektoren. Når kulturarv sikkerhedsliggøres udvider det museumssektorens rolle i samfundet, hvilket får museumsaktører til at handle uden for deres traditionelle institutionelle arbejdsområde.

Gennem en stor mængde semistrukturerede interviews med museumsaktører samt andre fagpersoner med tilknytning til museumssektoren, genererer afhandlingen vigtig viden om museumsaktørernes erfaringer og perspektiver på processen omkring sikkerhedsliggørelse af kulturarv samt de nye roller og udfordringer, dette skaber for den globale museumssektor. Afhandlingen viser, hvordan museumssektorens nye rolle i human security [menneskelig sikkerhed/ civilbeskyttelse] ikke er institutionaliseret, og i høj grad afhænger af individuelle interesser og politiske dagsordener. Især statsstøttede eller delvist statsstøttede museer er nødt til at tilpasse sig for at få opmærksomhed og tiltrække donorer, hvad enten det er regeringer eller private fonde. Sektoren er således afhængig af offentlig og politisk opmærksomhed, der bliver dikteret af de geopolitiske rammer omkring ødelæggelsen af kulturarv. Som følge heraf kan sektoren ikke altid anvende de mest bæredygtige strategier eller involvere sig alle de steder i verden, hvor der er behov.

Ph.d.-afhandlingen demonstrerer yderligere, hvordan museumsaktørernes engagement i kulturarvsbeskyttelse påvirkes af en bred vifte af interessenter og netværk, hvilket ikke gør det mere overskueligt for de involverede aktører. Aktørernes involvering er påvirket af mangel på materielle ressourcer, manglende politik på området, mangel på offentlig opmærksomhed, politiske tendenser, diplomatiske tiltag, personlige relationer, personligt engagement og karrieremuligheder samt følelsen af manglende handling fra offentlige instanser. Dette udgør en risiko for, at beskyttelsesinitiativer bliver ulige fordelt. Afhandlingen understreger, hvordan manglen på systematiske tilgange til kulturarvsbeskyttelse bevirker, at beskyttelsesinitiativer er præget af kortsigtet planlægning og få konkrete indgreb.

Det påpeges tillige, hvordan den generelle forståelse og udførelse af museumssektorens rolle inden for feltet mellem kulturarv og human security [menneskelig sikkerhed/ civilbeskyttelse] i væbnede konflikter, stadig er undervejs. Der ses en tendens til, at de store euro-amerikanske museer er bevidste om denne nye rolle, mens museumssektoren som helhed mangler en institutionaliseret tilgang.

Endelig bidrager ph.d.-afhandling med væsentlig viden om potentialer og barrierer for forskere, museumsfagfolk og politiske beslutningstagere for at samarbejde om at inkorporere kulturarvsbeskyttelse i en bredere international humanitær operationsstrategi.

Afhandlingen advokerer for strukturelle ændringer for at fremme mere uafhængig og pålidelig finansiering til beskyttelse af kulturarv i væbnet konflikt.

Alt i alt udfolder afhandlingen de mange komplekse problemstillinger, museumssektoren står over for i forbindelse med organisering og udførelse af beskyttelse af kulturarv i væbnet konflikt.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Metadata on all informants: Table of informants with signed consent

Name	Position when interviewed	Date	Method	Language	Location of the informant	Description
Amr al Azm	Shawnee State University. Former employee at the Department of Antiquities and Museums of Syria as Director of Scientific and Conservation Laboratories at the same department (1999-2004) .	22.06.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Expert. University Professor/ Archeologist
Anonymous informant	British diplomat with focuses on stabilisation and security in the Iraq.	25.06.20	Skype	English	Iraq/UK	Expert
Ariane Thomas	Curator in charge of Mesopotamian collections, antiquities department, Louvre.	28.5.20	Skype	English	France	Museum professional/ Curator
Brian Rose	Professor of Classical Archaeology, in the Classical Studies Department, joint appointment as curator in charge of the Mediterranean section of the Museum, and also Director of the expeditions at Gordion, in West Central Turkey. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.	17.3.20	Zoom	English	U.S.	University museum professional/ Curator/Archaeologist
Christos Tsirogiannis	Associate Professor, Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, Denmark and previously 'Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, University of Glasgow, UK. During his AIAS-COFUND Fellowship, Tsirogiannis will be working on the project 'Monitoring the Trade in Illicit Antiquities'.	08.6.20	Skype	English	Denmark	Expert/ University Associate Professor / Archaeologist
Corine Wegener	Director of The Smithsonian cultural rescue initiative at the Smithsonian institution in Washington DC. Founding President of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield.	16.3.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Museum director/ Curator/ US Army Reserve officer
Dick Drent	Former security director at the Van Gogh Museum, Managing Partner at International Security Expert Group.	19.10.20	Skype	English	Netherlands	Museum professional /Security expert

Fedir Androshchuk	Director of the National Museum of the History of Ukraine.	21.05.22	Email + one public speech (25.11.22, Moesgaard Museum).	English	Ukraine	Museum director
Helen Frowe	Professor of Practical Philosophy, University of Stockholm and Director of Stockholm Centre for the Ethics of War and Peace	23.11.20	Skype	English	Sweden/UK	Expert
Helga Turku	PhD (Int'l Relations) and author.	22.06.20	Zoom	English	Germany	Expert
Jesper Stub Johnsen	Former vice director for the National Museum of Denmark.	02.12.20	In person	Danish	Denmark	Museum professional / Conservator
Jessica Johnson	Head of Conservation at the Smithsonian institution	01.07.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Museum professional / Conservator
John MacGinnis	Senior Curator in the Department of the Middle East and one of the two Lead Archaeologists in the Iraq Emergency Heritage Management Training Scheme.	19.06.20	Skype	English	UK	Museum professional / Archaeologist
Josephine Munch Rasmussen	Post Doc, University of Agder.	06.10.20	Zoom	Danish/Norwegian	Norway	Expert/University
Kateryna Chuyeva	Deputy Minister for Culture and Information Policy for Ukraine and Head of the Department of Antique Art of The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Arts.	22.08.22	ICOM Conference, public speech	English	Ukraine/Praque	Museum professional/ expert
Lauire Rush	Cultural Resources Manager and Army Archaeologist stationed at Fort Drum, NY, and a Board Member of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield.	04.11.20	Zoom	English	U.S.	Expert/military/ Archaeologist
Lynn Meskell	Professor of Anthropology in the School of Arts and Sciences, Professor in the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, and curator in the Middle East and Asia sections at the Penn Museum.	19.11.20	Zoom	English	U.S.	Expert/University Professor/ Archaeologist
Maamoun Abdulkarim	Former Director for The Directorate-General for Antiquities and Museums (2012-2017), Professor Damascus University.	Received 22.06.20	Written questionnaire	English	Syria	Expert /University Professor
Mattias Legnér	Professor in Conservation (Kulturvård) and docent in History, Uppsala University.	16.02.21	Zoom	English	Sweden	Expert/University Professor
Michael Danti	Programme manager for the University of Pennsylvania's Iraq Heritage Stabilization Program IHSP. Before that the Director of the ASOR, American Schools of Oriental Research cultural heritage initiatives.	05.5.20	Skype	English	U.S.	University museum professional/ Anthropologist

Nadia Hashimi	CEO of Sayed & Nadia Consultancy (former World Bank Employee).	17.05.22	Zoom	English	Canada/Afghanistan	Expert
Nancy Wilike	Archaeologist and professor at AIA. Former member of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee of the U.S. State Department and President of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield.	09.4.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Expert, University Professor/ Archeologist
Noelle Higgins	Associate Professor in Law, Maynooth University	02.6.20	Skype	English	Ireland	Expert/University Associate Professor/ Lawyer
Oleksandra Kovalchuk	Director of the Odesa Fine Arts Museum	19.05.22-22.05.22	Youtube, public speech	English	Ukraine/U.S.	Museum director
Patty Gerstenblith	Research Professor of Law; Faculty Director, Center for Art, Museum & Cultural Heritage Law, DePaul College of Law. Secretary in the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield.	19.3.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Expert/University Professor/ Lawyer
Rene Teijgeler	Senior Cultural Advisor. Anthropologist, Conservator, Risk Manager.	03.4.20	Skype	English	Netherlands	Expert/ Anthropologist/Conservator
Richard Jackson	Senior Fellow, Lieber Institute for Law and Land Warfare, Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center, Special Assistant to Army TJAG for Law of War, US Military Law of War Community. Former U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield Vice President.	10.3.20	WhatsApp	English	U.S.	Expert/ University Adjunct Professor/ Lawyer/ Colonel
Richard Leventhal	Executive Director of the Penn Cultural Heritage Center, Penn Museum. Professor of Anthropology and curator University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.	31.3.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Museum director/ University Professor
Rohit Jigysau	Project Manager, Urban Heritage, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, Programme Unit, ICCROM.	12.10.20	Skype	English	Italy	Expert/Conservation
Samuel Hardy	Postdoctoral Fellow The Norwegian Institute in Rome, UiO. Former UNESCO employee.	13.10.20	In person	English	Italy/Norway	Expert /Archaeologist
Sasan Aghlani	Assistant Head of Policy at the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government.	26.10.20	Skype	English	UK	Expert/ International relations
Serena Giusti	Research Fellow for the Russia, Caucasus and Central Asia Centre at Italian Institute for International Political Studies.	08.4.20	Skype	English	Italy	Expert/ University Researcher

Serhii Telizhenko	Senior researcher at the Institute of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.	27.11.20	Zoom	English	Ukraine	Expert/University researcher/ Archaeologist
Stacy Bowe	Training Programme Manager, Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative.	20.3.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Museum professional / management
Stefan Weber	Director of Museum für Islamische Kunst.	21.08.20	Webex/online	English	Germany	Museum director/Islamic Studies
Vernon Rapley	Director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security. Victoria & Albert Museum.	07.10.20	Zoom	English		Museum professional /Security expert
Victoria Reed	Curator for Provenance at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.	01.05.20	Skype	English	U.S.	Museum professional/ Curator
Youssef Kanjou	Former Director of Aleppo Museum, University of Tübingen, IANES Department, Department Member. Studies Near Eastern Archaeology.	05.07.22	Zoom	English	Germany	Museum director
Zaid Ghazi Saadallah	Director of Mosul Museum, Iraq.	08.01.21	Written questionnaire	English	Iraq	Museum director/Archaeologist

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE – 1. Edition:

The key area of interest in my project is centered on the following three research questions (RQ):

- RQ1) How has the securitization of cultural heritage drawn museums into work areas normally falling under defense and security?
- RQ2) How has the securitization of cultural heritage created new policies and practices in the museum?
- RQ3) How has those new work areas affected the development of the museum's social, political and institutional identity?

The underlying reason for conducting these interviews is that I see museums increasingly engaging in a range of new activities which would normally fall within the security sphere. This indicates that the museum has become a significant actor within the area of global security and has been 're-framed' to include a security-dimension. The museums have, in this sense, become sites of international politics and security, and it appears that museums have entered a new area of activity and influence. My research revolves around this shift and I would like to hear about your thoughts on my observation - do you agree, or do you have a different perspective.

My interviews centre on five key themes there represent my research questions and which shape the discussion: 1) the museum 're-framed' in a security-dimension, 2) the limits of the engagement of the museum, 3) the museums role in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage, 4) the self-perception of museum personnel when working within the security sphere and 5) a change in the museums social, political and institutional identity.

Questions:

Theme 1 – RQ1-2) *Could you explain a little about this museum, its purpose, organization, funding, and your own position here?*

- Can you tell me if you think that your museum currently has any direct involvement in cultural heritage protection during destruction caused by armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?

- Who is it at the museum who engage in this work? Is it a specific profession at the museum who is involved in this? For example, the archaeologists, the curators, the *conservationists etc.*?
- What do you think about the work of museums in general in cultural heritage protection including engagement with police, military, and security matters?
- How do you think your museum has been active in the political debate surrounding war and terrorism?
- How do you think that museums in general have participated in the political debate surrounding war and terrorism?

Theme 2 – RQ1-2) *As an outward looking institution, what do you think this museum should engage with in society?*

- In your opinion, what kind of direct involvement and resources should this museum put into cultural heritage protection during armed conflict?
- Has your museum engaged with events concerning cultural heritage protection during armed conflict which you think lay beyond the normal work areas of the museum?
- What do you for example think about the following statements:
- Museums set out ‘no strike’ lists for military actors?
- Museums engaging in training of military actors?
- Museums conducting training of professionals with a view to protect cultural heritage in areas affected by conflict?
- Museums assisting in the creation of special units (Monuments Men/CPP units) tasked with the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?

Theme 3 – RQ1-2) *Could you tell about how this museum has engaged in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?*

- What kind of position does the museum have in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural heritage?
- How do you see museums in general reacting to threats of cultural heritage destruction during armed conflict via engagement in the public debate?
- Can you tell how your museum has informed or educated the general public on issues of war and cultural heritage?

- How do you think museums in general have been advocating the ratification of legal instruments aimed at the protection of cultural heritage in the context of armed conflict?
- What role would you say museums in general have played in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?
- Do you think that museums should have a designated cultural heritage protection officer/staff member? (Added on 8/3/20).

Theme 4 – RQ3) *Have your museum in anyway been an actor in global security and has it affected your institution?*

- Can you provide some examples of changes? (E.g. have working groups been established? Has time been allocated? Have other resources been allocated?)
- Does it affect the institutional organisation of the museum (funding, main focus, state relation etc.)?
- How do you determine the level of engagement dedicated to this in relation to the other activities of the museum?
- Has the role, as an actor in area of global security, change the self-perception of museum personnel? And how?

Theme 5 – RQ2-3) *Has this new role (as an actor in global security) changed the social, political and institutional identity of your museum in anyway?*

- Do you think this role has led to the creation of a specific policy on this area within the museum?
- What kind of changes, if any, has the role as a security actor caused in how museums are run?
- How do you think the role of the museum in society has changed?
- Do you have any thoughts about museums becoming social actors in areas affected by armed conflict?

INTERVIEW GUIDE - museums professionals, 2. Edition:

Theme 1: The museum “re-framed” in a security-dimension

Overall question:

- *Could you explain a little about this museum, its purpose, organisation, funding and your own position here?*

Sub-questions

- Can you tell me if you think that your museum currently has any direct involvement in cultural heritage protection during destruction caused by armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?
- Who at the museum engages in this work? Is it a specific profession at the museum which is involved in this? For example, the archaeologists, the curators, the conservationists, etc.?
- What do you think about the work of museums in general in cultural heritage protection – including engagement with police, military and security matters?
- How do you think your museum has been active in the political debate surrounding war and terrorism?
- How do you think that museums in general have participated in the political debate surrounding war and terrorism?

Theme 2: The limits of the engagement of the museum

Overall question:

- *As an outward looking institution, what do you think this museum should engage with in society?*

Sub-questions

- In your opinion, what kind of direct involvement and resources should this museum put into cultural heritage protection during armed conflict?
- Has your museum engaged with events concerning cultural heritage protection during armed conflict which you think lay beyond the normal work areas of the museum?
- What do you, for example, think about the following statements:
- Museums set out ‘no strike’ lists for military actors?
- Museums engaging in training of military actors?

- Museums conducting training of professionals with a view to protect cultural heritage in areas affected by conflict?
- Museums assisting in the creation of special units (Monuments Men/ CPP units) tasked with the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?

Theme 3: The museum's role in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage

Overall question:

- *Could you tell me about how this museum has engaged in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?*

Sub-questions

- What kind of position does the museum have in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural heritage?
- How do you see museums in general reacting to threats of cultural heritage destruction during armed conflict via engagement in the public debate?
- Can you tell me how your museum has informed or educated the general public on issues of war and cultural heritage?
- How do you think museums in general have been advocating for the ratification of legal instruments aimed at the protection of cultural heritage in the context of armed conflict?
- What role would you say museums in general have played in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?
- Do you think that museums should have a designated cultural heritage protection officer/staff member?

Theme 4: The self-perception of museum personnel when working within the security sphere

Overall question:

- *Has your museum in any way been an actor in global security, and has it affected your institution?*

Sub-questions

- Can you provide some examples of changes? (E.g., have working groups been established? Has time been allocated? Have other resources been allocated?)

- Does it affect the institutional organisation of the museum (funding, main focus, state relation, etc.)?
- How do you determine the level of engagement dedicated to this in relation to the other activities of the museum?
- Has the role as an actor in the area of global security changed the self-perception of museum personnel? And how?

Theme 5: A change in the museum's social, political and institutional identity

Overall question:

- *Has this new role (as an actor in global security) changed the social, political and institutional identity of your museum in any way?*

Sub-questions

- Do you think this role has led to the creation of a specific policy in this area within the museum?
- What kind of changes, if any, has the role as a security actor caused in how museums are run?
- How do you think the role of the museum in society has changed?
- Do you have any thoughts about museums becoming social actors in areas affected by armed conflict?

INTERVIEW GUIDE – cultural heritage experts

Theme 1 – RQ1-2) *As an introduction could you explain a little bit about your work on cultural heritage protection?*

- What do you think about the work of museums in general in cultural heritage protection including engagement with police, military, and security matters?
- How do you think that museums in general have participated in the political debate surrounding war and terrorism?

Theme 2 – RQ1-2) *As an outward looking institution, what do you think the museum should engage with in society?*

- In your opinion, what kind of direct involvement and resources should the museum put into cultural heritage protection during armed conflict?
- What do you for example think about the following statements:
- Museums set out ‘no strike’ lists for military actors?
- Museums engaging in training of military actors?
- Museums conducting training of professionals with a view to protect cultural heritage in areas affected by conflict?
- Museums assisting in the creation of special units (Monuments Men/CPP units) tasked with the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?

Theme 3 – RQ1-2) *Could you tell about how museums has engaged in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting?*

- How do you think museums in general has informed or educated the general public on issues of war and cultural heritage?
- How do you think museums in general have been advocating the ratification of legal instruments aimed at the protection of cultural heritage in the context of armed conflict?
- Do you think that museums should have a designated cultural heritage protection officer/staff member?
- Would you say that there is a difference in the way the junior and senior staff at the museum approach this topic?

- Do you think that protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict is driven by personal connections and personal drive then institutional and policy driven agendas?
- Do you think that it is the ethically responsibility of the museum to be involved in cultural heritage protection in areas affected by conflict? Is it first an ethical issue then a legal issue?
- And how is this affecting the transparency and reputation of museums?
- Who would you say are the stakeholders in the protection of cultural heritage in areas affected by conflict?
- Who's idea of heritage are we protecting? Who speaks for who in the international legal heritage framework?
- Would you say that museums have become inherently politicised because they protect culture?
- How successful do you think large museums and international NGOs have been in there practical initiatives on cultural heritage protecting in areas affected by armed conflict?

Theme 4 – RQ3) *Before the next question on museums as an actor in global security. Could you then tell me if you have any thoughts on the securitisation of cultural heritage?*

- What do you think about my statement that museums have become actors in global security?
- Do you think that major museums perceive them self differently now than they did before the wars and looting in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria?
- In your opinion, has there been a clear voice in the emerged of a securitarian narrative in cultural heritage protection?
- How do you determine the level of engagement dedicated to this in relation to the other activities of the museum?
- Has the role, as an actor in area of global security, change the self-perception of museum personnel? And how?
- Do you think that securitisation of cultural heritage is something positive?

Theme 5 – RQ2-3) *Has this new role (as an actor in global security) changed the social, political and institutional identity of the museum in anyway?*

- Do you think this role has led to the creation of a specific policy on this area within the museum?
- What kind of changes, if any, has the role as a security actor caused in how museums are run?
- How do you think the role of the museum in society has changed?
- Do you have any thoughts about museums becoming social actors in areas affected by armed conflict?



ETHICAL APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT

The museum as an actor in global security: the museums new roles and challenges in cultural heritage protection

ETHICAL APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Marie Berg Christensen

The Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen, has assessed your project “The museum as an actor in global security: the museums new roles and challenges in cultural heritage protection.”

Based on the information you have provided in your Application for Ethical Approval, the Committee has concurred that the project activities are in accordance with the relevant International and Danish ethical guidelines and regulations.

The Committee bases its assessments on appropriate University, National and International guidelines, codices and legislations, including:

- Nuremberg code (1947);
- The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2014) and Act. No 502 of 23 May 2018: Act on supplementary provisions to the regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (the Data Protection Act);
- Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation);
- The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity in 2010);

6 JULY 2020

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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- The Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations (developed at the 3rd World Conference on research Integrity in 2013).

The Committee hereby approves your project.

On behalf of the Committee



Klemens Kappel,
Chairman, Professor



CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA

University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Humanities' Research Ethics Committee

I understand that Marie Elisabeth Berg Christensen is collecting data via semi-structured interviews for use in an academic PhD research project at the University of Copenhagen, which will be recorded in audio/written/note-taking form. All audio-recorded content will be transcribed.

I understand that the interviews will serve to inform and progress her PhD research project around the new roles and challenges museums face in relation to security matters in the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict, and that I have been chosen to be interviewed based on my knowledge of and/or involvement with the subject of her research topic. I further understand that:

- my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- should I wish my contribution to be anonymised, this decision will not affect my legal right to be acknowledged as the author of the contribution.
- opting to be identified does not affect my right to privacy under the Danish Data Protection Act.

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the Participant Information for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I am happy with the location of the interview.
- I am happy for any contribution in written form, on audio recording or in notes taken from the interview to be used for the purposes of the aforementioned research project.

Please delete/cross out as appropriate

- I may be identified in connection with the aforementioned research project and hereby waive any rights to anonymity in connection with same.
- I wish my contribution to be anonymised.

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- it will be used for the purposes of the aforementioned research project, and that the information obtained during the interview may also be used in scientific articles and other dissemination/teaching
- it will be recorded in audio/written/note-taking form.
- it will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- it will be stored for at least 5 years, following the end of the project, under the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Following this, the data may be archived on a personal, secure hard drive.
- all personal data will be treated in compliance with the Danish Data Protection Act to ensure privacy.

Signed by the contributor: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: Marie Elisabeth Berg Christensen, mebc@hum.ku.dk

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Appendix 5

Table of museum driven heritage protection initiatives

This table illustrates the range of museum driven initiatives (programs, statements, exhibitions ect.) concerning protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict up until 2022.

Institution	Initiative
British Museum, London (UK).	Iraq Scheme: The Museum's Iraq Emergency Heritage Management Training Scheme (2015-2020).
Grand Palais, Paris (France).	Grand Palais in collaboration with Louvre, the exhibition: "ETERNAL SITES. From Bamiyan to Palmyra A journey to the heart of universal heritage" (2016-2017).
Historisk museum/University of Oslo (Norway).	The research initiative HEI: Heritage Experience Initiative: Heritage activism and conflict. Pre-project phase in 2018, but officially launched in 2019.
International Council of Museums (ICOM)	<p>Emergency Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk (ICOM in partnership with UNESCO 2000-).</p> <p>Emergency Programme (2002).</p> <p>The role of museums in the context of a crisis: ICOM organises a training seminar for museum professionals in West Africa (2014).</p> <p>Joint Statement on Cultural Destruction in Iraq and Syria (2015).</p> <p>Statement: We condemn the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage and violence against those who protect it (2015).</p> <p>ICOM strongly condemns the targeting of cultural heritage as a weapon of war in the Nagorno-Karabakh region (2020).</p> <p>Statement on the recent aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh (2020).</p> <p>ICOM and ICOMOS jointly and strongly condemn any deliberate destruction of cultural heritage (2020).</p> <p>Statement on the threats to cultural heritage in case of armed conflicts – with ICOMOS (2020).</p> <p>Statement concerning the situation facing cultural heritage in Afghanistan (2021).</p> <p>Statement concerning the Russian invasion into Ukraine (2022).</p> <p>ICOM Condemns Russia's Destruction of Ukrainian Heritage (2022).</p>

	<p>ICOM will establish a protocol on respecting the ICOM Code of Ethics during conflicts (2022).</p> <p>ICOM Call for Donations to Support Museums and Museum Professionals in Ukraine (2022).</p>
Imperial War Museum, London (UK).	The exhibition: “What may remain” (2019-2020).
International Network of Museums for Peace (INMP)	<p>Conference: “The role of museums for peace in preventing war and promoting remembrance, historical truth and reconciliation” (2014).</p> <p>Global webinar: “Peace Heritage or War Heritage?”(2022).</p>
Louvre, Paris (France).	<p>The Mosul Cultural Museum Project (2018-).</p> <p>A collaboration between the Louvre, the Smithsonian Institution, Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), World Monuments Fund (WMF), and the International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH).</p>
Museums Association	Statement on the invasion of Ukraine (2022).
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (Germany).	The Syrian Heritage Initiative (2013-).
Moesgaard Museum, Århus (Denmark).	The exhibition “RUS” and the keeping of Ukrainian artefacts (2022-).
Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO)	Museums support Ukraine (2020-).
Odesa Fine Arts Museum (Ukraine).	Museum for Chance. NGO founded by director of the Odesa Art Museum Oleksandra Kovalchuk (2022-).
The Maidan Museum and a range of Ukrainian museum experts (Ukraine).	The Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (HERI). The HERI’s operation and activities are coordinated with UNESCO, ICOM-Disaster Resilient Museums, ICCROM - conserving culture (2022).
The Mediterranean Museum, Stockholm (Sweden).	Exhibition about Palmyra: “The story of a cultural heritage” (2015).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (U.S.).	<p>Conversations on the Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq and Syria, speech by politician and diplomat John Kerry (2014).</p> <p>Conference in Istanbul with Columbia University and Koç University about the crucial issues around cultural heritage preservation in Syria and Iraq (2015).</p>
The Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago (U.S.)	Exhibition on the looting of archaeological sites and museums in Iraq: “Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq’s past”. Inclusive a publication (2008).
The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (U.S.)	<p>Cultural Rescue Initiative (2012-).</p> <p>Heritage Emergency and Response Training (2017-).</p> <p>The Mosul Cultural Museum Project</p>

	<p>A collaboration between the Musée du Louvre, the Smithsonian Institution, Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), World Monuments Fund (WMF), and the International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) (2018-).</p> <p>Army Monuments Officer Training Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (2019-)</p> <p>The exhibition: “Age Old Cities”—A Virtual Journey to the Devastated Sites of Mosul, Aleppo and Palmyra (Freer Gallery of Art & Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2020).</p>
The Ukrainian Museum in New York City (U.S.).	SAFE - “support for the vital needs and adaptive strategies of museums in Ukraine during the war “(2022).
University of Pennsylvania Museum/Penn Museum, Philadelphia (U.S.).	<p>Establishment of the Penn Cultural Heritage Center in 2008 as a response to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (2008).</p> <p>The Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria and Iraq Project (SHOSI), a consortium of Smithsonian Institute and the Penn Cultural Heritage Center (2013).</p> <p>The Special exhibition: “Cultures in the Crossfire: Stories from Syria and Iraq” (2017).</p> <p>The Syrian Interim Government’s Heritage Task Force (2014).</p> <p>The Iraq Heritage Stabilization Program with the state department on post-conflict response (2018).</p>
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (UK).	<p>Culture in Crisis Portal (database)(2015-).</p> <p>Culture in Crisis programme (2015-).</p> <p>Memory & Authenticity: Cultural Protection in Conflict, event (2017).</p>



The cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security: how cultural heritage has developed as a security issue?

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The cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security: how cultural heritage has developed as a security issue?

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ABSTRACT

The understanding of cultural heritage as a growing issue in contemporary security has been described as a heritage-security nexus recognising the protection of cultural heritage as a cross-sectoral topic. It represents an urgent issue in international security politics and in the related field of heritage studies. This article shows how the protection of cultural heritage has found its way into rhetoric relating to security politics, thus placing it on political agendas. This development has had an important impact on the academic field of heritage studies. Therefore, this article seeks to identify the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats and the recognition of it as a new theme in academia during the last two decades. The study argues for a newly defined research field that combines heritage studies with security studies in academic fields such as political science and international relations. Finally, this article argues that the academic field of heritage studies, as well as the heritage institutions and related organisations, needs to have a critical approach to the securitisation process. Involved parties need to consider the intentions and causes of the securitising actors and how they usually benefit from security policies.

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Introduction

Conflict dynamics worldwide have shifted from state-on-state conflicts organised around the geopolitics of national borders and territories to increasingly focusing on cultural references and identity politics orientated towards cultural values. The understanding of cultural heritage as a growing issue in contemporary visions of security can be described as a heritage-security nexus (Rosén 2022). This nexus indicates a mixture of policy areas that used to be relatively separate and calls for a more cross-sectoral approach to addressing security issues related to cultural heritage. To understand this development and enable us to respond adequately to its challenges, this article examines how the discursive construction of cultural heritage destruction as a security threat has strengthened the link between heritage and security within research and in contemporary global politics.

Through an overview of key historical events and situations, this article investigates how views on cultural heritage in armed conflicts have developed. It shows that after the Second World War and especially the Cold War, the protection of cultural heritage has progressively been connected to goals of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, tolerance, societal resilience and reconciliation. These elements are similar to a broader peace and security agenda and define heritage protection as an inherent concept in human security as well as hybrid warfare (Rosén 2017, 2022). This development is closely

connected to events of heritage destruction in conflict situations and has escalated with the massive, performative destructions and systematic lootings in the Middle East during the last two decades. This article shows how the protection of cultural heritage has increasingly found its way into rhetoric related to peace and security. This development has had an important impact on the academic field of heritage studies. Therefore, this article seeks to identify the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats and the recognition of it as a new theme in international politics and academia during the last two decades. The study argues for a newly defined research field that combines heritage studies with security studies in academic fields such as political science and international relations. The recognition of a heritage-security nexus and the interrelation between heritage and security studies is an important contribution to understanding a cross-sectoral approach to cultural heritage protection.

Cultural heritage as an issue in international security

Since the creation of the modern nation state and the development of national identities in many Western and Central European countries in the nineteenth century, cultural heritage has become a political resource vulnerable to attacks (Legnér 2016b). Historic events and national identities were given material expressions in cultural heritage symbols, made to represent cultural and national identities (Legnér 2016a). Cultural heritage became more targeted during the First World War and was even used as part of the propaganda machinery. Heritage professionals like archaeologists, especially in the Middle East, also became involved in different aspects of security and warfare, such as espionage, intelligence gathering and diplomacy (Meskell 2020).

During the Second World War, entire cities and historical sites were destroyed in bombings, battles, or due to deliberate demolition (Legnér 2016). The recognition of the tactical value of cultural heritage, together with the systematic looting of artworks in occupied territories, especially by Nazi Germany, placed the strategic significance of 'cultural intelligence' within security services. The response was to create intelligence capabilities with the help of civilian heritage professionals to collect intelligence for the acquisition, control and countering of abuses of cultural heritage (Nemeth 2011). After the Second World War, UNESCO was established in 1945, followed by ICOM (International Council of Museums) in 1946 and a few years later by the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 which defined the guidelines for the protection of cultural property, still limited, however, by the wording of military necessity (Thurlow 2014, 159). In 1954, it was supplemented by the *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*. The Convention introduced the concept of cultural heritage to the United Nations and made the concept more recognised (Legnér 2016b; Thurlow 2014). It also provided the international community with a definition of cultural property that is still seen as a cornerstone in policies, military manuals and reports today (O'Keefe 2006; Rosén 2017). Organisations relating to the protection of cultural heritage gradually created 'soft power' platforms. In this article, soft power will be understood as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments' (Nye 2004, 256). This, coupled with the attempt to create international legislative instruments for the protection of cultural heritage, made cultural heritage into an international security issue. The two world wars brought international focus on heritage protection in armed conflict and emphasised the need to create an environment for the development of heritage organisations and legal guidelines.

Post-Cold War: heritage as an inherent concept in human security

During the Cold War, soft power strategies were increasingly used as a power resource in international relations, which resulted in cultural heritage becoming a platform for securing loyalty and alignment (Nye 1990; Winter 2015). The Cold War called for a reconceptualisation of security, a recognition of new security threats and the fact that states no longer were sole actors in matters of security and warfare' (Brauch 2008, 33).

In the post-'Cold War period, heritage and its connection to security developed further. Focus shifted from the physical survival and cohesion of the state towards a 'human-centered' security concept, in which security no longer referred just to the *state* but also to *people* – and the well-being of people – whether seen as individuals or as a global collective. Conflicts were now driven more by identity and culture than territory, economic motives or political-ideological systems (Laustsen and Wæver 2000), placing cultural heritage protection in the broader human-centred security concept. Alongside the period's dramatic processes of decolonisation, culture and identity politics framed a new set of political relations around culture and its governance (Winter 2015). Ethnic strife and political violence resulting in the destruction of cultural heritage sites made it clear that state military and non-state armed groups considered the strategic and tactical value of cultural heritage during conflict (Nemeth 2011).

The conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s marked a shift where the intertwining of identity, ethnicity, religion, and culture as the war was largely driven by cultural and ethnic divisions (Legnér 2016a). The term 'cultural cleansing' emerged among commentators during the conflicts to describe the deliberate destruction of identity and memories of ethnic groups (Legnér 2017). The intentional destruction of cultural heritage affected the international community's perception of the war and provoked international condemnation followed by diplomatic and economic sanctions (Legnér 2017; Meskell 2018, 188). The attacks on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dubrovnik in 1991 and the Old Bridge in Mostar in 1993 became icons of how cultural heritage was targeted in wartime. These incidents were subsequently described by the international community as crimes against humanity (Meskell 2018, 188). This description was also used in the judicial aftermath of the conflict, where two senior commanders from the Yugoslav National Army and Navy were convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for the intentional destruction of cultural heritage in Dubrovnik (Legnér 2016a). Even though their convictions were primarily connected with atrocities committed against civilians, the ICTY also focused on the destruction of cultural heritage. The fact that Dubrovnik was on UNESCO's World Heritage List made the ICTY conclude that the attack was a 'crime not only against the cultural heritage of the region, but also against all of humanity' (Walasak 2015, 313). The consequences of the Balkan wars and the international aftermath defined the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage as a factor in human security because it was considered a crime against humanity. As a result, these events showed how culture is an inherent concept in human security.

The discursive framing of heritage protection in recent conflicts

The demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001 marked another turning point in heritage protection. It integrated the normative framework and accountability for 'crimes against humanity' and 'cultural terrorism' (Russo and Giusti 2019). It continued and strengthened the narrative created in the aftermath of the Balkan wars and consequently the destruction of cultural heritage was defined as terrorism.

The way the demolition was planned and carried out was very different from previous attacks on cultural heritage (Meskell 2018, 190). No crimes against humans were part of the destruction, and it was orchestrated like a strategic, well-planned and performative global media happening. The purpose was to get international attention to the situation in Afghanistan and the Taliban's dissatisfaction with different aspects of Western intervention and priorities (Meskell 2018, 190).

The destruction, looting and vandalising of archaeological sites and museums gained new momentum during the Iraq War in 2003. The looting of the Iraqi National Museum is a particularly strong symbol of the failure and indifference in the U.S.-led coalition forces in the protection of Iraqi cultural heritage. The forces were meant to protect Iraq's cultural institutions and archaeological sites from the systematic destruction of cultural heritage, which was initiated to rewrite Iraq's history and reshape national identity after the fall of the Ba'athist regime (Isakhan 2011). However, the attention to cultural policy issues came very late in the conflict and the lack of

policies caused major damage to heritage sites, e.g. when coalition forces built military barracks and training camps on important heritage sites like Babylon and the Great Mosque of Samarra (Meskell 2018, 191). This led to a massive critique of the United States (Luke and Kersel 2012, 78). To counteract the critique, the U.S. government changed their funding initiatives to give more grants to rebuild and secure Iraq's museum and heritage organisations. The change of the U.S. Department of State's funding policy strengthened the position of cultural heritage in diplomatic relations (Luke and Kersel 2012, 79–87)

In the following years, the attacks on cultural symbols by armed Islamic radicals intensified in the Middle East and North Africa. The attacks were countered by several states, as well as regional and international organisations, by deploying legal instruments and policy interventions (Russo and Giusti 2019). The UN Security Council passed 'Resolution 2100' in 2013, integrating support of the protection of cultural heritage into the mandate of the UN stabilisation mission in Mali. The International Criminal Court's (ICC) case against Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi for the destruction of World Heritage sites in Mali in 2012 reflected the deployment of legal instruments. Though the general focus of the court was on human rights violations, the ICC specifically charged Al-Mahdi with war crimes for destroying cultural heritage in Timbuktu (Russo and Giusti 2019). This was a marked difference from the previously mentioned case in ICTY, where the destruction of cultural heritage always featured alongside crimes against humans. Human rights violations echoed the perception of how 'cultural rights' related to identity, self-expression and creativity had a legal basis in international human rights instruments. According to Helle Porsdam, it empowered cultural rights, placing them in 'the center of human rights and in the center of law and humanities' (Porsdam 2019, 38).

The growing reports of ISIS's attacks and looting of archaeological sites in the Syrian warzone raised international concern. It peaked in May 2015, when the international media reported the seizure of Palmyra, which was followed by acts of plunder, destruction and public executions at the site. After the attack, international attention towards the destruction of cultural heritage increased and the global media reported many stories and images of damage done to heritage in their daily reports of ISIS and the war in Syria (Winter 2016). Thus, the international media created a narrative about Palmyra as a global icon of cultural destruction. ISIS's brutal murder of archaeologist Khaled al-Asaad, who worked as head of antiquities in Palmyra, added another dimension to the destruction of cultural heritage. The execution was carried out in front of the local museum and displayed at Palmyra's archaeological site (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights 2021). With the murder of Assad and the other public executions at the site, ISIS explicitly used the international attention of a UNESCO world heritage site in their warfare. This positioned cultural heritage in global politics and human security.

The issue of the destruction of cultural heritage, along with the atrocities committed at Palmyra, resonated in the international community. Heads of international organisations and states referred to the destruction of cultural heritage in Mali, Iraq and Syria and increasingly framed destruction of cultural heritage as an urgent and existential threat to global security. UNESCO's former Director General Irina Bokova (2009–2017) repeatedly associated the destruction of cultural heritage with 'cultural cleansing', 'war crimes' and 'crimes against civilisation' (UNESCO 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). After ISIS's attack on the museum of Mosul, she referred to the protection of heritage as not only 'a matter of cultural urgency, but also a political and security necessity' and described culture as 'a central consideration for any strategy for peace' (UNESCO 2014, 5). Bokova, representing an established and recognised heritage institution and UN organ, thereby creating a narrative of ISIS's attacks on cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, consistently establishing a strong link between attacks on culture heritage and threats to human life. The language (Bokova and UNESCO's speech act) framed the attacks not only as strategic acts of war against the people of Syria and Iraq but also as attacks against modern civilisation. It clearly created exclusionary categories of 'them' and 'us', Western society against Islamic fundamentalists. It fitted into the narrative of terrorist acts threatening international peace and security and

entered the UN agenda with the adoption of the UN Security Council 'Resolution 2199' on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts by Al-Qaida and associated groups in 2015. This discursive framing of heritage protection in powerful international organisations was further underlined when former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stated that ISIS's systematic destruction and looting of cultural sites in Syria and Iraq 'highlights the strong connection between the cultural, humanitarian and security dimensions of conflicts and terrorism' (UN Secretary-General 2016, 4).

The political recognition of and attention to cultural heritage as a political security issue and important element in modern warfare was further emphasised when UNESCO published *Protection of CP. Military Manual* (O'Keefe et al. 2016). The discursive escalation of heritage as a security issue reached a temporary climax with United Nations Security Council 'Resolution 2347', *Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict* (2017). The resolution brought the connection of heritage protection and terrorism into legislation, thus legitimising the narrative. In NATO, an international organisation for political and military alliance and collective defence, heritage protection was also recognised as a security issue with the report *NATO and Cultural Property. Embracing New Challenges in the Era of Identity Wars* (Rosén 2017). This mobilisation of resources, initiatives and cooperation between states and international organisations showed that cultural heritage had become a central issue for international security. It underpinned cultural heritage as part of military geography, playing a role in both tactical and strategic considerations at all levels, and stimulated a cascading growth of awareness and concept across states, international organisations and professional milieus. In March 2021, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC published a draft Policy as part of a strategy that pays attention to crimes affecting cultural heritage. In the policy draft, crimes against cultural heritage are thought to suppress the culture of occupied communities, leading to feelings of insecurity and repression. With the draft, the Office will widen its network of partners naming NATO as one. Furthermore, the policy recognises the importance of United Nations Security Council 'Resolution 2347' (ICC 2021).

Cultural heritage protection as a transnational human security issue

This review of key historical events and situations has shown how the perception of loss connected to cultural heritage has changed from material expression of collective memories to tactical exploitation, terrorism and conflict escalation and therefore as an element in peace-building and security. Cultural heritage protection is becoming a transnational human security issue. Since the Cold War, there has been a shift in the organising of heritage protection, which has caused a mixture of sectors to interact around this protection. The protection of cultural heritage has increasingly been established as a cross-sectoral topic in conflict management and is linked to other traditional security issues such as the security of nations and people. In practice, this is reflected in ongoing politics and conflicts, where the destruction is part of the strategy of non-state armed groups to spread propaganda and to gain international attention. In addition, the damaging of heritage is used to erase unity or national identity (Rosén 2022, 6). Examples of this could be the ongoing conflicts in Crimea, Nagorno-Karabakh and Israel-Palestine. Paradoxically, these conflicts and the following destruction of heritage have not received the same attention and exclamations from the international society as the destruction in the Middle East. The lack of international outcry illustrates the political dimension of cultural heritage protection, where international politics and powerful states decide which acts of destruction get attention. The destruction by non-state armed groups in the Middle East fits very well into the existing narrative regarding 'the war on terror' and the tension between Western society and radical Islamic fundamentalist groups. Almost every state and politician without conflicting interests have been able to condemn the destruction, as it has fitted into the political strategy used to manage fears surrounding the security issue of terrorism.

Cultural heritage and security in academic research

The previous section summarises the connection between security and cultural heritage, how it has evolved since the creation of the modern nation-state, as well as the growing role of cultural references, identity politics and transnational communities. This has led to a mixture of sectors interacting around the protection and the associated narrative of heritage protection. Nevertheless, the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats as an explicit theme is a relatively recent phenomenon, which is also reflected in the academic literature of heritage studies. Several research paradigms are represented, reflecting the complexity and the mixture of interests in this field. One perspective is based in traditional heritage studies, drawing on research traditions from archaeology, conservation, etc. Another approach is anchored in fields like political science and international relations. This has created different views and agendas for the writing on heritage protection and its implications. One could argue that linking cultural heritage and security threats might benefit some heritage professionals and institutions, due to the public and political attention it generates and how protection initiatives are reflected in political trends. However, even though the academic literature does not have the same position as publications from NATO or UNESCO, which indicate an overall organisational development, the appearance of this linkage in the research agenda is an important expression of it becoming a theme in its own right.

In the academic literature of heritage studies, the linkage first appeared in the context of international relations, where Joseph Nye in his evaluation of power in the post-Cold War world formulated the term ‘soft power’ to describe the importance of heritage in

the context of cultural discourse and practice in international relations (Nye 1990).

In 2007 Erik Nemeth argued that the looting and trafficking of cultural property and the destruction of heritage as acts of political violence and terrorism underpinned the ‘growing significance of cultural property in issues of international security’ (Nemeth 2007, 21–26). Furthermore, Nemeth framed the concept of ‘cultural security’ as embracing research, analyses and strategies aiming to show the relationship between the field of heritage and the related international legislation and counterterrorism (Nemeth 2007, 20). In that sense, the research reflected the situation after the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and the looting of the Iraqi National Museum, but also after ‘9/11’ and the increased attention to the ‘war on terror’. Nemeth drew attention to how the development in military technology had also increased the responsibility to protect cultural heritage, strengthening the link between cultural property and international security (Nemeth 2007). In his subsequent research, Nemeth claimed that human-intelligence networks in the art world, which specialised in trafficking of cultural property, had great importance for counterterrorism and therefore for the protection of national security (Nemeth 2008, 358). Furthermore, he pointed out that the destruction of cultural heritage in campaigns of cultural cleansing shows how integrated cultural heritage has become as an issue in international security (Nemeth 2008). Nemeth argued that recognising cultural heritage security or as he called it ‘cultural intelligence’ – the tactical and financial exploration of cultural property in conflicts – placed ‘the protection of sites of cultural heritage into the context of regional security’ (Nemeth 2011, 232), which supports national security and is therefore an asset to foreign policy and international affairs (Nemeth 2011). Simultaneously, Rama Mani argued that even though cultural repression is not considered a threat to international peace and security, it can be a breeding ground for disaster and therefore demands responses from both the UN Security Council and NATO (Mani 2011, 121–122). Again, culture was placed in relation to international security politics.

Casting the protection of cultural heritage as a security issue is also a component in Christina Luke and Morag Kersel’s examination of cultural heritage policy in the U.S. following the Iraq war (Luke and Kersel 2012). Referring to Nemeth, Luke and Kersel examined U.S. efforts to use the security rhetoric of the protection of cultural heritage in policy, e.g. by encouraging U.S. embassies to create relationships with the relevant ministries of culture to secure cultural intelligence and prevent unrest (Luke and Kersel 2012, 80–81). Kersel and Luke concluded ‘U.S. goals for

contributing to world stability through cultural heritage protection mimic other U.S. foreign and national policies on security' (Luke and Kersel 2012, 81). The entry of cultural heritage protection into foreign policy is expressed in the conceptual term 'heritage diplomacy', which aims to see decolonisation and cultural politics of contemporary international relations as components in cultural nationalism, international relations and globalisation (Winter 2015). According to Tim Winter (2015), heritage diplomacy not only pivots around mechanisms of soft power but also incorporates forms of hard power such as developmental aid and military intervention. In relation to soft power and its significance in heritage diplomacy and international relations, Natsuko Akagawa (2015) concluded in her study of Japan's heritage conservation policy and practice that conservation is used as a form of soft power. 'Through which [Japan] has been able to establish its international position in the global economy and international security arrangements' (Akagawa 2015, 185). Research on heritage diplomacy and soft power also came to reflect how the global media and international society reacted to ISIS's destruction of Palmyra with condemnation. As Mattias Legnér asked in his review of the use of cultural heritage in armed conflicts: who benefits from these condemnations? (Legnér 2016b). Answering this, Legnér argued that the primary aim is to show the proponents' position towards their opponents and to encourage others to take this position. Legnér concluded that the consequence is 'that cultural heritage is increasingly woven into political rhetoric and in [to] security policy strategies' (Legnér 2016b, 670). Legnér also discussed the connections between heritage and security and distinguished between *heritage in security* and *heritage as security* (Legnér 2017). Legnér argued that *heritage in security* is the aspect in which heritage is seen as an (active) object of interest in armed conflicts and thus 'treated as an agent capable of contributing to (in)security' (Legnér 2017, 8). This is exemplified by ISIS's destruction of heritage in the Middle East in 2015 and 2016 and the international reaction which created the narrative of destruction of cultural heritage as a threat to global security. It shows how heritage has been securitised (Legnér 2017). On the other hand, Legnér's *Heritage as security* referred to the interconnection between heritage and security with a focus on reconciliation and reconstruction in the aftermath of conflicts (Legnér 2017), which is nicely exemplified by the reconstruction of heritage monuments after the Balkan wars.

The active exploration of the role of cultural heritage in armed conflicts and as an agent in security was addressed by Thomas Weiss and Nina Connelly (Weiss and Connelly 2017). They explicitly called for extending the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine¹ to include heritage protection through military intervention (Weiss and Connelly 2017). Weiss and Connelly (2017, 20) highlighted how cultural heritage had 'benefited' from its association with threats to peace-building and security. Presenting this along with the list of resolutions passed by the UN Security Council (2100, 2199, 2253 and 2347), Weiss and Connelly proposed a shift in the discourse on international heritage protection, linking it to human security, comparable with other elements of mass atrocities and terrorism (Weiss and Connelly 2017, 21–22). They concluded that the protection of cultural heritage is a 'fundamental aspect of R2P' (Weiss and Connelly 2017, 45). The role of cultural heritage in military geography and as a tool in warfare is also recognised by NATO in the previously mentioned report, *NATO and Cultural Property. Embracing New Challenges in the Era of Identity Wars*, from the NATO Science for Peace and Security Project (Rosén 2017). The lack of cultural policy and military guidelines for the U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq, along with the performative destructions of cultural heritage in the Middle East, set the scene for NATO to release such a report. Frederik Rosén wrote on heritage protection from a political science approach, emphasising how modern conflicts (identity wars) have cultural heritage as a symbol of identity and belonging, which makes the protection of heritage a security issue and a matter of politics to security communities (Rosén 2017). Rosén also commented on the mixture of sectors in heritage protection and argued how cultural heritage has migrated from the cultural sector to the security domain (Rosén 2017). This migration can be traced in Colin Atkinson, Donna Yates and Nick Brooke's study of counterterrorism security at museums in the U.K. (Atkinson, Yates, and Brooke 2019). Their study showed how heritage institutions like museums have implemented

counterterrorism security measures after consultation with security agents (Atkinson, Yates, and Brooke 2019). The paper referred to the attacks conducted by Islamic radicals on museums in Paris and London between 2017 and 2018, which pinpointed museums as terrorist targets. This underpins the link between cultural heritage protection and fighting terrorism and reflects how cultural heritage protection has become a matter of state security.

In Helen Frowe and Derek Matravers's response to Weiss and Connelly's suggestion that military intervention regarding heritage protection in the context of R2P is a necessity, they criticised the lack of moral analysis of heritage protection (Frowe and Matravers 2019). Frowe and Matravers drew attention to the proportionality calculations of the risk that military intervention in heritage protection poses to combatants and civilian lives (Frowe and Matravers 2019). The need for assessing how much heritage is worth, the ranking of its value and the comparison of the risk with the lives, which protects it, exemplifies the complex moral framework of heritage protection (Frowe and Matravers 2019). This debate reflects what happens when a traditional soft power issue like cultural heritage migrates into the sphere of security and peace. Consequently, this linkage between heritage and security threats requires the international community and heritage institutions to rethink their perception of the concrete value of cultural heritage and respond to these new issues.

The securitisation of cultural heritage and the heritage-security nexus

As the previous chapter illustrates, the conceptual understanding of the linkage between cultural heritage and security is relatively new in academia. It has inevitably fostered discussions on what happens when one sector migrates into another sector with a different normative framework. In academia, international protection of cultural heritage and the narrative threads created in the protection framework has been characterised as a *securitisation* of cultural heritage (Russo and Giusti 2019). This characterisation of the securitisation of cultural heritage has been important for subsequent research. In their article documenting the securitisation of cultural heritage, Alessandra Russo and Serena Giusti drew on a human-centred concept of security, which was expanded by the Copenhagen School of security studies, spearheaded by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (Buzan 1991; Wæver 1995; Buzan and Wæver 1997; Wæver 1997). In short, it can be said that the securitisation theory in its core assumes that there is no such thing as a predetermined security threat. Instead, security refers to certain activities that someone has to perform in a specific context regarding a specific referent object (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). Russo and Giusti adopted this analytical framework and the concepts further develop into a more sociological approach, embracing identity security, cultural security and ontological security of the state. Russo and Giusti viewed securitisation as a process where issues were framed in a security dimension and spoken of as demanding urgency and extraordinary measures, often in a fast-tracked and undemocratic process (Russo and Giusti 2019). Again, the demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan and ISIS's attacks on Palmyra in Syria were emphasised as turning points 'in the emergence of a securitarian narrative on the international protection of cultural heritage' (Russo and Giusti 2019, 5). It can be added that it is hard to say who took advantage of whom and what events in the situation in Syria between 2014 and 2016. Both ISIS and the international community, led by organisations such as UNESCO, used and reinforced the importance of protecting cultural heritage from destruction. They all addressed the common sentimental rhetoric associated with the 'world's common cultural heritage' and the values this has come to symbolise. Thus, Russo and Giusti argued that the 'leading figure' in the development of this security narrative was the former Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova. As previously mentioned, Bokova established a strong link between cultural heritage and security in her rhetoric. The discursive construction of cultural heritage destruction as a security threat increasingly infiltrated the language of other international officials and

national elites, creating a constellation of security rhetoric in heritage protection (Russo and Giusti 2019). The discursive security construction can therefore be traced back to Bokova and UNESCO pushing forwards the integration of this concept into the heritage protection rhetoric.

After the integration, the security narrative on heritage protection was used in a range of initiatives, partly to gain international legitimacy and cast donor politics in a positive light. This reflects the many different intentions behind securitisation and shows how the end-product of the discursive escalation has turned the protection of cultural heritage into a security issue and a political tool. This was also reflected in (Foradori, Giusti and Lamonica's 2018) study of cultural heritage protection policies at a time of securitisation. In their study, they found that the protection of cultural heritage had been 'elevated from the traditional sphere of cultural diplomacy – a subset of public diplomacy used to mobilise soft power – to that of a *sui generis* articulation of foreign policy' (Foradori, Giusti and Lamonica 2019, 98). This line of argument is in line with Nemeth's claim that the protection of heritage and cultural heritage security plays an important role in, and is an asset to, foreign policy and international affairs (Nemeth 2011). Foradori, Giusti and Lamonica summed up how the securitisation process had strengthened the linkage between heritage and security threats in contemporary global politics. This development was also reflected in Christophe Foultier's writing on how heritage is a political resource and an instrument in public policy (Foultier 2020, 13). Ayse N. Ereğ and Eszter Gantner added that the number of different actors involved in production or demolition of heritage in the last decade has multiplied (Ereğ and Gantner 2020, 153). The same pattern also applies to heritage protection, and one could argue that academia needs a critical approach to the many actors in the securitisation process. Thus, within the field of heritage studies, researchers should be careful in navigating between heritage and security, addressing who creates the discourse and which interests and intentions lie behind placing heritage protection as a security issue. This approach was seen in Sultan Barakat's critique of international resources and responses to post-conflict recovery of cultural heritage in the Arab World. He pointed out that international humanitarian and development actors in the last decade had come to recognise post-war reconstruction of countries emerging from a violent conflict as a key to achieving 'global security and eradicating 21st century poverty' (Barakat 2021, 432). Barakat also argued that the intention and starting point for the international actors often is opportunistic self-interest and related to concerns about Western security, including terrorism (Barakat 2021). His argumentation reflects the political perspective on making heritage protection a real security issue linked to fighting terrorism and the ideological perspective of 'the West against fundamentalists'. That is the result of the securitisation of cultural heritage, which started with Bokova and UNESCO's rhetoric around the destruction of heritage in the Middle East.

As examined in this section, the many actors involved in heritage protection and its relation to security concerns reflect the migration of the cultural sector to the security sphere. Even though this merging of sectors has not yet been institutionalised, a descriptive concept developed to refer to the framing of cultural heritage protection as a security issue has recently been introduced by Rosén (Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022). This concept frames the development from a political science perspective. The term 'heritage-security nexus' is used to describe the increasing cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security. It frames a development in heritage protection, reflecting similar connections of broader security issues in sectors such as climate change and migration (Rosén 2022, 11). In that sense, the heritage-security nexus emphasises the international communities' recognition of the interweaving of cultural heritage and security and reflects 'the broader peace and security agenda' (Rosén 2022, 6). This is illustrated in Barakat's argument about self-interest and concerns about Western security, which has been the red thread in the creation of a security narrative on cultural heritage protection. The heritage-security nexus as a research agenda deals with not only issues of security in conflicts between the West and Islamic fundamentalism but also other geopolitical tensions and manifestations of power. Furthermore, the nexus provides support for those general policy recommendations that combine heritage and security, aiming to change the heritage institutions in a more cross-sectoral direction.

Conclusion

In this article, the development of the cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security has been identified. The overview of key events and situations has shown how the tactical value of cultural heritage was exploited in the First and Second World War. This led to the creation of heritage institutions and conventions which established the concept of cultural heritage in the international community, thus using cultural heritage as a soft power platform and as a tool for creating international legal instruments. In the post-Cold War period, influenced by the conflicts in the Balkans and later in Afghanistan, the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage and framing of the destruction of cultural heritage as ‘crimes against humanity’, alongside the reactions and condemnation by international society, defined cultural heritage as an intrinsic concept in human security. Cultural heritage protection was connected to goals of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, tolerance and reconciliation – elements similar to a broader peace and security agenda. The organisation of the field of heritage protection shifted and caused a mixture of sectors to interact around protection. It escalated after the seizure of Palmyra, strengthening the position of cultural heritage in diplomatic relations and in the international community. This caused a number of states as well as regional and international organisations to deploy legal instruments and policy interventions which positioned the role of heritage in global politics and as a political security issue. Resultatively, cultural heritage protection is becoming a transnational security issue in contemporary world politics and armed conflicts. Since the 2000s, this has led to a growing development of a concrete linkage between cultural heritage and security. The purpose of cultural heritage protection has increasingly been connected to the security and protection of society and its people. In that way, securing a society and a population’s cultural heritage has found its way into the political rhetoric, placing it in international relations, framed as heritage diplomacy. It has become an actor in human security and thus a matter of politics for security communities and security policy strategies.

Following this, the understanding of the linkage between cultural heritage and security has also emerged as a new research theme in heritage studies. Discussions have been developed on what happens when one sector migrates into another sector with a different normative framework, and a cross-sectoral perspective has been applied.

Over time, the narrative of cultural heritage as a security issue has been described as a securitisation of cultural heritage in research. This approach invites heritage studies to consider the intention behind the framing of cultural heritage protection in a security dimension. Research has shown how the representation of cultural heritage in security terms has been used as a political tool by a variety of actors from politicians to international organisations involved in heritage, heritage professionals and heritage institutions. Many actors have used the integration of the security rhetoric in heritage protection to their own benefit, to legitimise initiatives, gain attention and funding or as part of a strategy reflecting a certain political agenda. Based on the understanding of the interweaving of cultural heritage and security, the concept of a heritage-security nexus provides a framework for research on the protection of cultural heritage as a security issue.

This article finally argues that the field of heritage studies as well as the heritage institutions and organisations need to have a critical approach to the securitisation process. Furthermore, they need to consider the intentions and causes of the securitising actors and how those actors usually benefit from security policies. The recognition of the heritage-security nexus is part of institutionalising the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflicts and has changed views on cultural heritage as an issue in contemporary manifestations of security. The nexus also requires an understanding of security as a political struggle over authority, control and power and thus the role of heritage in this struggle. Further research could focus on the consequence of not having a more formal structure in international heritage protection and on how the heritage security-nexus development unfolds and affects heritage institutions, which are now becoming actors in global security politics and governance.

Note

1. The Responsibility to Protect is an international doctrine seeking to ensure that states and the international community take special responsibility for protecting civilian populations from mass atrocities such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and other crimes against humanity. The doctrine provides a coherent framework for preventing and stopping these types of assaults and points out actions for specific actors in the various phases of the conflict.

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Notes on contributor

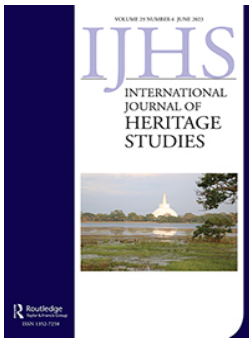
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The museum sector as an actor in human security

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ABSTRACT

The global museum sector is in a process of redefining and expanding its work areas. A main reason for this is cultural heritage as a growing issue in human security, and protection as a transnational cross-sectoral topic. Based on interviews this article examines how museum actors experience the sector's role within the nexus of cultural heritage and human security in armed conflict. The article addresses the sector as a dynamic network of transnational organisations navigating in geopolitical and -cultural agendas arguing that this new role is not institutionalised and largely depends on individual interest and political agendas. This results in a disparity in allocation of protection responses and funding where the major Euro-American museums are frontrunners in understanding and performing the new role while the museum sector as a whole lacks an international system. Consequently, heritage protection in general should be incorporated in international humanitarian strategies and stabilisation work.

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The museum sector; expansion of the museal field; securitisation of cultural heritage; actor in human security; contemporary heritage protection; armed conflict

'I think being very neutral is not acceptable, I think that ignoring facts is not acceptable, I think that being ignorant is not acceptable' (Kateryna Chuyeva, Deputy Minister for Culture and Information Policy for Ukraine and Head of the Department of Antique Art of The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Arts).

Introduction

The global museum sector (in this article identified as the big state-funded or partly state-funded museums) is in a process of redefining and expanding its values and practices (Sandahl 2019; Fraser 2019; Mairesse 2020; Brulon Soares 2021). One of the main reasons for this is the way cultural heritage increasingly is used as a political, ideological and strategic symbol of identity in conflicts around the globe, placing the protection of cultural heritage within a broader peace and human security agenda (Rosén 2022a; Christensen 2022).¹

Cultural heritage holds a strong social and emotional power, which represents a political value. This causes cultural heritage to be drawn into conflicts where it is used to strengthen power relations, and in the political struggle to legitimise or de-legitimise cultures (Smith 2006; Rosén 2017). In this context, museum collections and heritage sites are significant since they constitute political arenas and physical space where identity of individuals and communities is displayed and maintained (Gray 2015; Gray and McCall 2020). The recognition of the access to and enjoyment of cultural heritage as part of international human rights law and the responsibility of states to ensure it were established in the UN report *Access to Cultural Heritage as a Human Right* (2011).² Further, a second UN report emphasised how the destruction of cultural heritage affected a range of human

rights, including the right to take part in cultural life. The report called on effective national and international strategies for protection of defenders of cultural heritage.³

These statements mirror the processes of migration of the heritage sector into the security domain which scholars have framed as the ‘heritage-security nexus’ referring to the international communities’ recognition of the interweaving of cultural heritage and security (Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022; Rosén 2022b, 6–11). A significant outgrowth of this process is the museum sector’s cross-sectoral movement into the sphere of human security pulling the sector into the work areas and realms of responsibility normally falling within a security domain like defence. One could, as an example, mention the newly formed partnership between The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative and the U.S. Army Civil Affairs, resulting in a training program in heritage protection for Army Reserve Civil Affairs Soldiers. Or Kateryna Chuyeva’s outcry (see the opening quote) at the ICOM General Conference in 2022 for the obligation of the museum sector to be truthful and to present facts about the war in Ukraine.⁴

The understanding of the sector’s movement is an important contribution to museum studies underpinning the museum sector as a dynamic network of transnational organisations navigating in geopolitical and geocultural agendas causing them to redefine and expand their values and practices. Whether they are conscious of it or not, the museum sector is already a player in security politics.

Thus, there is a need for investigating how the sector understands and experiences this new role as an actor in human security and how museum professionals act and navigate in the security sphere. Furthermore, it must be recognised that this new position has potentially huge implications for the sector. This article seeks to address these challenges by exploring how the museum sector and affiliated practitioners in different key positions across the globe experience and relate to their role as security agents within this new nexus between cultural heritage and security in armed conflict. By addressing this complex issue, the article contributes to clarifying the museum sectors’ challenges working in a field lacking an organised and coordinated strategy.

To carry out this investigation, the article draws on a large collection of semi-structured interviews with museum directors, curators, managers as well as professors, diplomats, lawyers and heritage researchers working in or around the museum sector. Furthermore, two public speeches are included.

Through the relevant body of literature, the theoretical lens of museology and empirical data, I show how different actors in the museum sector understand, experience and navigate in this new role as an actor in human security.

Critical museology: expanding of the museal field

One could argue that from its very beginning, the museum has been used to define, register and protect national heritage (Hill 2021). The relationship between human security and museums is therefore not a new theme. Personnel affiliated with the museum sector have played key roles in establishing a link between museums and security as a result of the two world wars (Satia 2008; Richter 2008; Riding 2011; Meskell 2020; Rorimer 2020; Janes 2009; Hicks 2020).

The slowly broadening museum sector and its role as educational facilities, accessibility to the public and as a service of society and its development (Lehmannová 2020) has prompted museological attempts to embrace the museum’s role in a changing world. With the entry of ‘new museology’ in the 1980s, a critical discourse was established focusing on the social role and politicisation of museums. The discourse was inspired by a Foucauldian approach discussing the political nature of museums in historical, social and cultural contexts (see, for example, Hooper-Greenhill 1989, 1992; Bennett 1995) reflecting museums’ interdisciplinary character and attention towards the relationship between government, museum and cultural policy (Mason 2006, 23; Mairesse and Desvallées 2010, 55). Conceptually and chronologically linked to this theoretical

approach is ‘critical museology’ which takes the matter of social inclusion in museums as a key issue alongside how to present contentious issues, opposing views and museological controversies (Lorente 2022). This approach illustrates how museology has become a wider field comprising theorisation and critical thinking about the mission and operations of museums as institutions (Mairesse and Desvallées 2010, 56–74). This approach is also underpinned by the need for museums to examine their assumptions and practices in order to avoid seeing the sector become irrelevant and potentially collapse as a social institution (Janes 2009, 13). This is interweaved with the recognition of current trends and changes in societies and geopolitical contexts directly and indirectly impacting the sector and its mission. This has forced the sector to once again renew known institutional formats and rethink the social and humanitarian potential of museums (Sandahl 2019). There is an academic echo arguing for a growing tendency towards intellectual transpositions and interconnections beyond differences (Smith 2011), advocating for an expanding of the museal field in a broad sense (Morales Moreno 2019) and proposing a broader mindset when working with museology – perhaps framing it under the interdisciplinary label ‘heritage studies’ (Lorente 2022, 21).

This expansion and redefining of the museal field is illustrated in the latest international museum definition (2022) by the International Council of Museums, which represents a core document in relationship with partner organisations and in the museum legislation of several countries. Here, the museum is defined as an institution in the service of society fostering diversity and sustainability, as well as operating ethically, focusing on the participation of communities and offering knowledge sharing.⁵

The definition illustrates how a variety of stakeholders (e.g. audience, partners, donors, staff, trustees or local politicians) in society affect the diverse practices of the global network of museums. Despite the absence of phrases such as decolonisation, repatriation and restitution, the new definition is showing a sector in motion. As Muthoni Thangwa, the development manager at the National Museums of Kenya and spokesperson for ICOM International Committees said in relation to the new definition:

We are sitting here and debating what should be and what can be a museum, but life and the world and the forces of the current activism in the world, have set in motion a new museum [...] Whether we define it or don’t define it, it is already in motion [...] it is going to happen. It is the future of our sector (Seymour 2022).

It emphasises that a global shift in the museum sector is inevitable (Hicks 2022, 234).

Moreover, I propose that the definition can be used to apply a more transparent approach to and awareness of the sectors’ transnational movements. A desired outcome of this approach could be for more museums to declare that they are working in a politically charged environment (often representing the political agendas in the country in question), thus being transparent about museum management being a part of national and international politics, especially at the big state-owned museums. In that sense, the new museum definition facilitates the expansion of the mission of the museum related to how the museum sector anticipates and adapts to new roles. This definition speaks well to the more holistic-labelled heritage studies where protection of cultural heritage is an urgent issue that combines heritage studies with security studies (Christensen 2022). One of the aims of this article is to contribute to the expansion of the existing museal field by understanding the consequences of the sector’s role in maintaining and protecting identities by placing the sector in the domain of human security.

Methodology and research design

In order to investigate how the sector understands and experiences this new role, I have conducted 37 semi-structured interviews that allow the representation and different perspectives of the museum sector ensuring as rich a data material as possible. The participants cover four categories of professionals working in or around the museum sector: experts (e.g. researchers, lawyers,

diplomats) within the field of heritage protection in armed conflicts; professionals from university museums (professors, affiliated researchers) and museum professionals (curators, managers) and museum directors (former and present). The data gathered from professionals working around the museum sector are indicated as ‘interview with’, whereas professionals directly affiliated with a museum are quoted.

Data were collected between March 2020 and August 2022, and they are transcribed verbatim.⁶

The study was approved by The Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen. The approval included the research method applied (semi-structures interviews) and the informants included in the study. All informants were informed of their involvement in the research project prior to the collection of data. Before the interview, each informant was asked to read and accept the Consent Form which I had provided. In the Consent Form, the informants confirmed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw any time. Further, they could decide if they wanted their contribution to be anonymised or not. The informants also accepted the use of the obtained data in scientific articles.⁷ According to the accepted and signed consent forms, I have included name, title and institution to emphasise the actor’s position in the field.

I identified the interviewees using snowball sampling (Bernd et al. 2017). The first participants were selected from their importance within state-funded or partly state-funded museums active in heritage protection responses or being associated with museums in areas of armed conflicts. These participants were mostly associated with major Euro-American museums since most recognised professionals within this field are employed here. Following the selected sampling method, I asked the first participants to assist with identifying other relevant professionals active in the field. This way of gathering useful contacts to further research was manageable since it involves a relatively small group of individuals with branched networks and connections working within the field of heritage protection in armed conflicts. However, I am aware that this sampling method is reflecting personal networks and the participants’ recommendations which may be a limitation. I have attempted to compensate for this by conducting a comprehensive survey of the field, organisations and institutions involved in heritage protection in armed conflicts. Thus, each time I came across a new person working within this sphere, I did a thorough research of his or her background and possible prejudices and interests.

I would argue that the sector is well represented in the data and that the sample was informative and provided a very relevant material for this study.

All interviews were coded in two steps: first, themes from my interview guide were applied, and second, I re-evaluated and in some cases redefined themes for the subsequent analysis (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley and King 2015). These data allowed me to study how museum professionals act and navigate in this new role. Through my analysis, I have identified four key themes in the data, namely, (a) the evolving role of the museum; (b) politics and publicity; (c) acting and navigating in the security sphere and (d) the implications for the sector. I would like to emphasise that in investigating the museum sector’s new role in security, I have no intention of judging the performance or commitment of individual museum professionals. The point of the article is to address the challenges museum actors are experiencing in this new role.

The evolving role of the museum (expanding its values and practices)

Given the current expansion and redefining of the museal field, it is not surprising that the sector has experienced an extension of work areas. The destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq has been described as a ‘turning point’ for universal museums by the former director of the Louvre, Jean-Luc Martinez.⁸ This statement echoes in the article’s empirical data where there is a consensus among the interviewed about how the major museums in the global North have turned their

attention to heritage protection in areas of armed conflicts since the destruction of cultural heritage and looting of museums in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

It has been a gradual process, constantly influenced by current trends in the geopolitical context directly and indirectly affecting the sector. The process emerged after the looting of the Iraqi National Museum and the lack of cultural policy within the coalition forces, which led to massive critique of the United States. It resulted in a change in the Department of State's funding policy directing more grants to rebuilding and securing Iraq's museum and heritage organisations (Luke and Kersel 2012, 78–87; Meskell 2020, 191). The process was further fuelled by the destruction of cultural heritage in Afghanistan and Syria. One interviewee, Professor of Classical Archaeology and curator in charge of the Mediterranean section of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Dr Brian Rose, remarked:

I think museums perceive themselves differently now than they did before the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They now see cultural heritage protection and conservation of cultural heritage in general as being part of their mission in a way that they didn't before.

The same tendency is reflected in the literature on 'securitisation' (a process where issues are framed in a security dimension and spoken of as demanding urgency and extraordinary measures) of cultural heritage (Russo and Giusti 2019). Here, it is emphasised how the attacks on cultural symbols by armed Islamic radicals in the Middle East and North Africa led to the discursive escalation of heritage protection as a security issue. A relation is established between the destruction of cultural heritage and 'cultural cleansing', 'war crimes' and 'crimes against civilisation', further linking the illicit trafficking of cultural property to terrorist financing and 'the war against terror'.⁹ These narrative threads created in the protection framework have been understood as a securitisation of cultural heritage where the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and Palmyra is described as 'turning points' in the creation of a security narrative in international heritage protection (Russo and Giusti 2019, 5; Christensen 2022, 3–9).

I would argue that since the recent conflicts in the Middle East, a handful of prominent western museums have incorporated into their mission the type of work that normally falls under the domain of security.

A present example is the partnership between The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative¹⁰ (SCRI) and the U.S. Army Civil Affairs, resulting in a training program in heritage protection for Army Reserve Civil Affairs Soldiers.¹¹ Especially, the SCRI with director Corine Wegener as a key figure has been an active and conscious museum actor working with a range of security issues, from creating 'no strike' lists for military actors to providing advice to the UN Security Council to collaborating with law enforcement (like the FBI) and the training of military actors and professionals with a view to protecting cultural heritage in conflict.¹²

Asked about SCRI's role, Wegener reflects:

We are engaged in that if you think about border security [...] we have also done some training with the FBI on evidence from war crimes tribunals and how that fits into when we're going to help with first aid for a museum or a cultural site [...] We (the cultural heritage professional field) have that role to provide advice and information to policy makers like the UN Security Council.

Another U.S. museum actor working very directly within the sphere of security is Penn Museum, who has been active in lobbying members of the U.S. Congress for stronger cultural heritage legislation, helping military actors with 'no strike' lists and mapping in Ninewa trying to identify cultural sites at risk or those massively damaged by ISIS operations.¹³ The Smithsonian Institute and Penn Museum must be regarded as frontrunners in the museum sector when working directly in a security dimension. Twelve of my interviewees pointed out that the main reason for this fact is that the drive for these initiatives revolves around individual people having an interest in it and pushing it forward within their organisation. One of the interviewees, Dr Patty Gerstenblith, Professor of Law, Center for Art, Museum & Cultural Heritage Law, DePaul College of Law and Secretary in the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, said:

In the United States, as far as I know, the museums have not been that involved, other than the Smithsonian, I mean, the Smithsonian is a different story. And that's mostly because of Cory [Corine Wegener] and because of Richard Kurin [...] the University of Pennsylvania Museum has been involved [...] But a lot of that is because of Brian [Brian Rose] also ... I mean it's really him [...] I would say, your typical US museum wouldn't be doing those things [...]. All of this is very personally driven in the US.

Vernon Rapley, Director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security, Victoria & Albert Museum, elaborated:

She [Corine Wegener] is involved in it, because she happened to be on a detachment in the military that went to Baghdad, and that changed her life. Why am I where I am now in the museum? Because I happened to have been selected [...] to run the Art and Antiques unit at Scotland Yard, and to have fallen into it at a time when Iraq fell, Afghanistan, the looting in those countries, just happened to be able to recover millions of pounds worth of it, and become known for that sort of recovery.

The fact that an organisation's actions depends on individual initiative and personal sets of values is described in the organisational legitimacy literature (e.g. Yang 2011; Brummette and Zoch 2016). Individual differences and values can be viewed as driving forces behind the motivation that a person places in an organisation (Yang 2011, 272–277; Brummette and Zoch 2016, 313–317). Also, in museums studies, the link between the private person and the museum worker in terms of individual and organisational values is recognised (Janes 2009, 31). So, it is not that strange that people with a history in the military or those with strong personal career attachments to the Middle East are involved in cultural heritage protection and that these involvements peaked in connection with the recent conflicts in Iraq and Syria. The same tendency is reflected in the variety of western-museum-driven initiatives centred on the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria. Initiatives that, in a more indirect way, work within the broader sphere of human security and peace agendas. The initiatives revolve around training programs for Iraqi and Syrian heritage experts to protect cultural heritage (e.g. *The Iraq Scheme* at the British Museum) and rebuild sites such as the Mosul Cultural Museum in a collaboration between SCRI and Musée du Louvre.¹⁴ The argument here is that the experiences and attachments to a specific area or collection felt by individuals and the museums in question heavily influence which areas are allocated heritage protection.

A broad range of western museums have also been active in the public debate concerning threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict, intentional destruction and systematic looting – whether on their websites, exhibitions or through conferences.¹⁵ Even though it generates attention to cultural heritage protection, the linkage between people's personal career and passions do also present a problem. The archaeological sites that people feel a personal attachment to – maybe because they did their fieldwork there or have researched objects from that region – is not always what people on the ground value or what is needed in a holistic protection strategy for the area's cultural heritage. A holistic strategy would view cultural heritage in a contemporary context, taking into account the values the local community attach to it and the benefits or problems it gives them – which of course requires more resources and a long-term horizon. For example, a training course is not helping in the long run if the local archaeologists cannot find sustainable employment, or if proper systems for storage of archaeological material are lacking. Likewise, a protection initiative might provide vehicles for the archaeological department, which might be sold on 3 months later due to corruption in the local government.¹⁶

The lack of holistic strategies also characterises the practices of the big museums of the global North, which have colonial ties and huge collections directly related to other countries. A state-funded museum like the British Museum, which holds a strong Iraqi collection (see e.Emberling et al. 2019) and where the government has a long colonial and political connection with Iraq (Bashkin 2015; Jawad 2021), is, I would argue, relatively more likely to receive further funding from

the British government for heritage protection initiatives in Iraq than funding for other areas of need.

The argument is that a disparity exists in how the attention and funding are oriented, depending on individual interest and political purposes. This makes one wonder if the general awareness of the museum sector's involvement in cultural heritage protection and human security politics is unwittingly relying on individuals, collections and political goodwill. This underlines the urgency for the museum sector to examine their own internally driven agendas (Janes 2009, 13) trying to accommodate this evolving role where some museums have stepped to the forefront of preservation and protection in areas of armed conflict. I would also argue that the lack of awareness of the sector's involvement is connected to the general lack of knowledge of the role of heritage protection in a broader peace and security agenda, a tendency which Sasan Aghlani describes as the heritage sector 'sleepwalking into militarisation of heritage in conflict'.¹⁷

Furthermore, the museum sectors' involvement in heritage protection in areas of armed conflicts is influenced by the absence of consistent heritage protection policy of international heritage-NGOs like UNESCO and ICOM to deliver key agreements despite launching a variety of statements and initiatives (Meskell 2020; McCafferty 2022).

The lack of capability of these intergovernmental organisations to outwit political and bureaucratic barriers and how this prevents sustainable long-term emergency action from being implemented has been discussed in studies of UNESCO's role in heritage protection in the Middle East (Meskell 2018, 2020; McCafferty 2022). The same problem is illustrated in a more general critique of the World Heritage Convention being a UN arena used as a proxy for other political negotiations rather than the finding solution on heritage preservation and protection (Meskell 2018).

Therefore, these intergovernmental organisations hold limited potential for causing a minimum of practical activities in the field and no institution or organisation is solely working with cultural heritage protection in armed conflicts (Rosén 2017).

The argument is that the lack of consistent heritage protection policy encourages certain museums like the Smithsonian and Penn Museum to engage in heritage protection in areas of armed conflicts.

Yet, as argued in this section, the involvement is driven by passionate key figures some of which have knowledge about their involvement in global security, while others are working indirectly and more unconsciously within a security dimension. Still, others in the sector are not yet informed of the sector's new position in the security sphere.

Politics and publicity

The slow realisation of the museum sector's involvement in human security is linked to the fact that aside from museum professionals with a personal drive or as part of political soft diplomacy, most parts of the sector assume protection of cultural heritage in areas affected by armed conflict to be 'outside their mission' (Corine Wegener). This reflects that a part of the sector is not aware of cultural heritage's position in human security politics and maybe not aware of how museum professionals, despite lacking in their job descriptions, are the ones engaging in heritage protection responses. In addition, the support for the sector getting involved is a political decision, which can depend on the political affiliation or direction of the board. As elaborated by Prof. Richard Leventhal, Director of the Penn Cultural Heritage Center, Penn Museum:

I think that war and conflict and terrorism [...] we are representing something else, whether it is a governmental perspective, because of the fear that we will go against donors.

Further, Leventhal reflects on the cautiousness with which museums and their boards tend to deal with this topic. The internal agenda of the individual museum to actively invest in cultural heritage protection depends – especially for the government- or partly government-funded museums – on national political tendencies. An institute like the Smithsonian, which has a very large budget, can more easily allocate funds without the risk of not getting it back, but other

museum organisations do not have those means. Furthermore, the Smithsonian has a very powerful board of regents consisting of the chief justice of the U.S, vice president of the USA, three Congress members, three senators and a variety of prominent individuals (Corine Wegener). One could speculate that the political direction of U.S. soft diplomacy is very compatible with rescuing and rebuilding cultural heritage in the Middle East following in line with U.S. military efforts in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan – and also Nepal and Haiti where SCRI has been active. Eight of the article's interviewees touch upon the way politicians tend to engage in cultural heritage protection mainly when it corresponds to their agenda. As the Director of Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, Stefan Weber formulated it:

There is this public attention politicians react to [...] a change of government or we have politicians which are looking for the next elections which is quite often the case.

Looking at the list of museum-driven initiatives and responses, it becomes clear that the museum sector has had timely public reactions – which peaked around 2015–2017 with ISIS destructions in the Middle East – where the sector in general was very supportive of heritage protection in areas affected by armed conflict. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, cultural heritage protection is again high on the media agenda and there is a new intensification of heritage protection responses directed at Ukraine.¹⁸ It is a known tendency that a hasty acceleration of national news coverage can increase levels of attention given to, e.g., humanitarian aid allocated to a crisis. The increased attention then triggers other institutions to get involved and put pressure on bureaucracies to announce additional funding (Scoot, Bunce and Wright 2022). Thus, publicity increases public awareness and places cultural heritage protection high on the agenda in a limited time span. However, the sector lacks a collective strategy for expanding into these new areas. Reading through the empirical data, it becomes clear that every actor or a handful of collaborating actors, has been focusing on their own projects often for a limited time period. As Dr Brian Rose, Director of Research and Programs for the Penn Cultural Heritage Center at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, elaborates:

They [museums professionals] wanted to get their picture and their museum in the newspaper or the magazines. And, so, people weren't cooperating with each other, everyone was working in a silo [...] it was a wake-up call for all of us, but we didn't learn how to work together because in the end we were thinking about the publicity that would come from our discovery of the solution.

Rose's answer echoes in the data material where six interviewees directly bring up how the general museums sector 'have timely reactions publicly' (Dr Christos Tsirogiannis, Associate Professor, Museum of Ancient Art, University of Aarhus) when it comes to supporting the protection of heritage in areas of armed conflict. Thus, the focus is on initiatives with potential for public display. It reflects the dilemma that heritage protection initiatives rely on funding, and funders want to show that they invest their money in productive ways. International donors want their funding to go along with their country's changing political agendas and interests. The result is that funding for heritage protection is fluctuating and the implementation of projects, programs and policies is sporadic.¹⁹ The consequence is that the museum sectors' involvement in cultural heritage protection is characterised by a low level of actual interventions and short-term planning, because the sector does not have the political support to invest in long-term preservation initiatives. The short-term planning is also manifested in the museum sector adopting short-term, money-focused business strategies as a result of marketplace ideology, which of course are sensitive to geopolitical changes (Janes 2009, 103–105). The museum sector – especially state-funded or partly state-funded museums – needs to tick-off the right boxes in terms of the interests of specific countries, of the involved institutions, and what each museum is willing to give money to in order to gain attention and attract donors. Cultural heritage threatened by flooding or urban development does not generate the same degree of funding as that threatened by ISIS or Russia.²⁰

Involvement in the sphere of security and peace lends a positive light to the museum sector. Especially, major Euro-American state-supported museums may use this 'positive light' to create an image that generates good-will, either because it is part of a 'compensation' from a collecting history

of unethical acquiring of artefacts or because it is fitting into a national political agenda of rescuing and rebuilding cultural heritage in the Middle East following U.S. and European military efforts.

Therefore, the museums sectors' engagement relies on the geopolitical setting around the destruction of cultural heritage. Despite the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage in various places around the world (Yemen, Ethiopia, China, etc.), there has been a very selective international outcry or action towards the destructions (Christensen 2022, 5).

Again, this point is underpinned by the massive attention the destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine has gained. One could argue that before the invasion and the international condemnation, Russia was too powerful in international politics and too important as a donor in international heritage organisations to receive critique for their attacks on Ukrainian heritage. Drawing on parallels to humanitarianism, it seems like there is a fundamental political hierarchy in which some areas of cultural heritage are prioritised over others and some causes are advocated over others, based on uneven geopolitical power relations (Fassin and Gomme 2012). As Dr Samuel Hardy, Head of Illicit Trade Research for the Heritage Management Organisation, Greece, explains:

Their [the heritage sector's] definition of conflict is limited as well, so they don't include Mexico, even though more people get killed in Mexico in a year than across some areas, like whole regions with conflict, that gets excluded because it is not politically convenient. So, even the definition of conflict is used to direct this money towards the places that prompted the concern in the first place.

This illustrates not only inequalities and unevenness in heritage protection but also how it is a pawn in the games of soft power and security politics. It also underlines how the museum sector reinforces and legitimises social differences within societies (Gray 2015) due to uneven geopolitical relations and hierarchy. This argument echoes in the data, as explained by former Director of Aleppo Museum Dr Youssef Kanjou:

I saw the situation in Ukraine: at the beginning it was as bad a situation as in Aleppo, as in Syria, but after days or a week there were many reactions, there was a lot of help, many organisations tried to help Ukrainian museums, there was already a lot of support.

When I asked Kanjou if the quicker help was a result of the museum sector having learned and structured first-aid to heritage at risk after the war in Syria or if it was the political situation dictating the help, he answered:

The political situation, which we have been suffering under until now in Syria, because the international community are thinking that the museum is connected to the regime. Nobody wants to help the regime and for that reason they don't support the museum or local operations with the museum.

Kanjou's statement underpins how heritage protection is affected by the agendas of the western political elite. It also emphasises how museums are organisations working in a politically charged environment that depend on changes in geopolitical contexts where multiple economic and political intentions impact the mission of the museum sector (Sandahl 2019). Museums and actors in the museums field are through initiatives and decisions not only mirrors of the 'the core political components of power, ideology and legitimacy' (Gray 2015; Gray and McCall 2020, 156) but also actors in human security. Summarising this, Richard Leventhal reflects:

I think that museums and cultural heritage is part of the chess game of politics in political security.

The museum sector as an actor in human security

The previous analysis presents the museum sector's involvement in cultural heritage protection and human security as relying on individuals and geopolitics. It also shows how the intensity of involvement depends on public attention – often generated by national media – thus creating a disparity in the direction of the attention and funding. From the interviews, it is clear that it is the major Euro-American museums of the global North who are in the front of this movement. Among the interviewees, there is a consensus that the major

museums have a responsibility to contribute to the protection of cultural heritage in areas affected by armed conflict, as the Director of Mosul Museum Dr Zaid Ghani Saadallah formulates:

It's the duty of the global great museums to take the responsibility of bringing those destroyed museums back to life.

This responsibility is linked to colonial ties between the active museums of the global North and the countries where conflict is happening, especially when it comes to the recent conflicts in the Middle East. Museums like the British Museum and the Louvre, who have large collections based on artefacts unethically collected in Middle Eastern countries have 'the moral duty' to help with their protection, as one cultural heritage expert notes it.²¹ The moral duty is also an underlying thread in the discussion about restitutions in western museums and implemented in British legislation where museums may be able to return objects on the basis of a 'moral obligation' (Hicks 2020, 239). The curator in charge of Mesopotamian collections, Antiquities Department, Louvre, Ariane Thomas, gives thought to the sector's responsibility:

We [the Louvre] have somehow the power [...] it's not the core of our jobs, but for a big museum having collections that are directly related to other countries, so it is a collaboration always, and since it began, we were related to foreign affairs, so in a way it is logical that we can be part of that kind of project [The Mosul Cultural Museum Project].

Being responsible and able to act out of moral obligation intertwines the sector further with the sphere of security, forcing the museums to navigate in a global world as tools of soft power and actors in cultural diplomacy (Hicks 2020, 204). So, in contemporary museum practice, museums are obligated to think outside the traditional museum areas and responsibilities in order to remain relevant (Janes 2020, 25). This argument fits into the museological discussion about the social and humanitarian potential of museums, alongside viewing museums as political institutions (Sandahl 2019, 5–6; Gray and McCall 2020).

I would argue that the article's data underlines the politically charged functions as a core element in what museums are doing (Gray and McCall 2020, 156), as clearly expressed in the opening quote of the article. Here, Chuyeva compared the media reporting truthfully about the war to the obligation of the museum sector to be truthful and present facts. Speaking about not accepting neutrality or ignorance, Chuyeva emphasises that the museum sector has to be responsible and political when dealing with heritage protection and representation in areas affected by armed conflict. This argument fits in line with the expansion of the existing museology which embraces the sector's movement towards geopolitical issues and demands a more transparent approach to and awareness of the sector's transnational movements and the causes behind recognising the sector as a dynamic, politicised structure. Chuyeva emphasises this in her speech:

Our [Ukrainian] museum professionals do much more than professionals [...] they will all be crucial in the protection of cultural heritage and in the process of rebuilding and renovation of the institutions and our national memorial sites.

Director of the National Museum of the History of Ukraine, Dr Fedir Androshchuk, highlights the same issue speaking about how people in the museum sector must be informed about the responsibilities in times of crises to carry out work 'which is not specified in the collective agreement'. The point is that the museum sector has expanded its work areas and broken down the silos between museum work and human security. This process has been in the making for years with the sector being vocal about their contribution to peace, justice and mutual understanding, but lacking the recognition of the extents to which museums' 'modern forms are created by and focused on conflict' (Hill 2021, 8). This concerns not only their collections, repatriation policy and presentation of a specific narrative but also their involvement in heritage protection in conflict. The museum sector has been drawn into a security dimension, and the sector has to agree on how to react to it.²²

The implications for the sector

The sector being an actor in human security has potential implications. Reflecting on these implications, the most persistent problem seems to be the tendency for the sector to move into the field of security, in part, unknowingly, driven by personal passion, while at the same time intentionally proceeding with great caution due to political concerns. This gives rise to an ad hoc approach where each museum is working within its own sphere of agendas, networks and opportunities. This means that the functioning of one actor depends greatly on the intentions and efforts of others such as boards, local governments and political trends (Schapendonk 2018). This pattern is reflected in the interview data. In the words of Richard Leventhal, museums are acting ‘perhaps not as consciously or thoughtfully or as they need to’ and perhaps sometimes ‘unknowingly’. The museum sector is tiptoeing around being a tool in soft power, culture diplomacy and international relations. It is not new that the sector is hesitant to recognise that it is a political institution (Gray 2015; Gray and McCall 2020). Nevertheless, the sector is very much affected and intertwined with security and peace agendas on the national and geopolitical level. Thus, there is a need for the variety of actors who work in and around the museums to understand the implications for the sector. It is an ongoing process where the sector is gradually breaking down the walls of the traditional understanding of a museum. A main argument for the importance of this process is that cultural heritage should not be regarded as a ‘stand-alone issue’ but by an integrated and cross-cutting part of the government sector like gender, climate or social change. As emphasised in the *NATO and Cultural Property: A Hybrid Threat Perspective* report (2022), governments and organisations cannot work with stabilisation or reconciliation without including cultural heritage. The social power of cultural heritage and its strong relation to the construction of identities (Smith 2006) calls for an intersectional approach ideally allowing policymakers to tailor their heritage policy interventions as effective and equitable responses (Alber, Cahoon, and Röhr 2017). I would argue that when cultural heritage and the role of museums have emerged in international political awareness, the international humanitarian and military systems, then it would be easier to find long-term funding for holistic heritage protection and systematic incorporate protection within strategies.²³

The awareness of the museum being an actor in human security is desirable because the sector is in need of funding for this role and of being placed in an international system. This is mirrored in Director of the Odesa Fine Arts Museum Oleksandra Kovalchuk’s concern about future funding for the museum:

I understand that European funds will stop at some point, it will be difficult to attract funds from there, and America in this sense is strategically important. I understand that for our culture, cultural institutions will be at risk for a long time to come and at particular risk are the people who work at these institutions.²⁴

This reveals the importance that museums’ involvement in heritage protection becomes more systematised and institutionalised. The need for understanding the sector’s extension echoes in museum studies advocating for an expanding of the museal field (Morales Moreno 2019). Museologists are increasingly discussing the need for a more interdisciplinary and critical framework in museum studies, perhaps reclassifying it under the more cross-sectoral heritage studies (Lorente 2022, 21).

Conclusion

This article highlights the museum sector’s cross-sectoral moral responsibilities to act and think outside traditional museum areas, exposing how the sector has become an actor in human security. In this way, the article seeks to provide – in the words of Muthoni Thangwa – new knowledge and perspectives on the future role of the museum.

By demonstrating that the sector's new role in human security is not institutionalised – and largely depends on individual interest and political agendas affected by the media – the article draws attention to how the funding for heritage protection fluctuates and how the field is characterised by a low level of actual interventions and short-term planning. The lack of a systematic approach creates a disparity in the allocation of heritage protection responses and funding. It must be emphasised that the article is not a critique of the passionate individuals who contribute to this field with their experiences and networks connected to specific areas. Instead, it is a call for attention to the big overview of the sector and the need for protection responses in areas where these individuals do not have networks or accessibility. In general, the understanding and performance of this role is still underway, with the major Euro-American museums as frontrunners fully aware of this new role. The rest of the sector is not as aware, however, and are stepping into this expanding field unwittingly and somewhat unknowingly. This illustrates the need for the sector to be placed in an international system incorporating heritage protection in international humanitarian strategies and stabilisation work. Despite facing pragmatic realities and with the difficulties conceiving a universal methodology for heritage protection in armed conflicts, the article advocates a holistic heritage protection strategy forcing museums to examine their intentions and practices, demanding transparency and ownership of being political and social institutions.

Notes

1. In human security thinking the referent for security is the individual rather than traditional notions of national security and defence of a sovereign state, allowing a people-centred and multidisciplinary approach. The essence of human security is an ethical responsibility to protect rights relating to fundamental individual needs and identity (Newman 2010, 78).
2. UN: *A/HRC/17/38: Report on Access to Cultural Heritage as a Human Right* (2011).
3. UN: *A/71/317: Report on the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage as a Violation of Human Rights* (2016)
4. The 26th ICOM General Conference, 2022, panel discussion 'Purpose: Museums and the Civil Society'.
5. See the full definition: <https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-approves-a-new-museum-definition/> (08.09.22)
6. Positionality statement: I am a female researcher with a background in archaeology and conservation, living and working in a high-income northern European country. I have no personal or professional relations to any of the included museums in this study.
7. For the complete Declaration of Consent, see the end of the article.
8. Noce 2015. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2015/05/01/louvre-president-shows-solidarity-with-iraq-and-tunisia> (20.06.22)
9. Some quotes exemplifying this framing: 'UNESCO mobilises the international community to end cultural cleansing in Iraq' 2015a, 'The Director-General of UNESCO firmly condemns the destruction of the ancient temple of Baalshamin, an iconic part of the Syrian site of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage site' 2015b; 'Director-General Irina Bokova expresses consternation at the destruction of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra'.1.9. 2015 (Boz 2018).; Fighting the illicit trafficking of cultural property: a toolkit for European judiciary and law enforcement. UNESCO 2015c.
10. SCRI is an outreach program at the Smithsonian Institute dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage in crisis situations in the U.S. and abroad.
11. <https://culturalrescue.si.edu/what-we-do/resilience/military-training/> (08.09.22).
12. Information gathered from Corine Wegener.
13. Information gathered from Brian Rose.
14. To illustrate the variety of initiatives one could mention: *The Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria and Iraq Project (SHOSI)* – a consortium of Smithsonian Institute, the Penn Cultural Heritage Center at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the U.S. Institute of Peace (2013-); *The Iraq Scheme* at the British Museum (2015–2020); *The Mosul Cultural Museum Project* – a collaboration between the Musée du Louvre, the Smithsonian Institution, Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), World Monuments Fund (WMF), and the International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) (2018-); and *The Syrian Heritage Initiative* at the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (2013-). A more detailed graphic table of the range of initiatives and museum-driven programs in heritage protection is created by the autor and will be displayed in the final PhD Thesis.
15. To illustrate the variety of exhibitions and conferences: *Cultures in the Crossfire: Stories from Syria and Iraq*, University of Pennsylvania Museum (2017); *ETERNAL SITES. From Bamiyan to Palmyra A journey to the*

heart of universal heritage, Grand Palais/Louvre (2016–2017); Conference in Istanbul with Columbia University and Koç University about the crucial issues around cultural heritage preservation in Syria and Iraq, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2015). A more detailed graphic table of the range of initiatives and museum-driven programs in heritage protection is created by the author and will be displayed in the final PhD Thesis.

16. Interview with a British diplomat with a focus on stabilisation and security in Iraq.
17. Interview with Sasan Aghlani, Assistant Head of Policy at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, UK.
18. To illustrate the variety of initiatives one could mention: ‘Heritage Protection Responses in Ukraine’ ICOM 2022; ‘Museums Support Ukraine’ NEMO 2022; ‘Culture under fire: protecting Ukrainian heritage’ Canadian Museum for Human Rights, April 2022; ‘The Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (HERI)’, initiative of Ukrainian museum experts, Maidan Museum, 2022.
19. Interview with CEO of S&N Consultancy, Afghanistan, and former World Bank Employee, Nadia Hashimi.
20. Interview with Sasan Aghlani.
21. Interview with U.S. attorney, author of ‘The Destruction of Cultural Property as a Weapon of War’, Dr Helga Turku.
22. Interview with Associate Professor in Law, Maynooth University, UNESCO expert Dr Noelle Higgins.
23. Interview with Nadia Hashimi.
24. ‘Diary of WAR’ podcast (22 May 2022).

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Declaration of consent

This article is part of a PhD, which has been ethically approved by The Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen. The approval includes research method applied (semi-structured, qualitative interviews), amount of empirical data and informants.

All informants were informed of their involvement in the research project prior to the collection of data. Before the interview, each informant was asked to read and confirm that I would be recording the interview and that they needed to accept the Consent Form which I had provided. In the Consent Form, the informants confirmed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Further, they could decide if they wanted their contribution to be anonymised or not. The informants also accepted the use of the obtained data in scientific articles.

Finally, I would like to state that all the interviewees are adult professionals, from various countries, who are neither vulnerable individuals nor members of a vulnerable group.

All data are handled in compliance with the Danish Data Protection Act to ensure privacy.

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***“They all know which way the wind is blowing, which way the money is flowing”:
Museum actors’ perspectives on involvement in protection of cultural heritage in
armed conflict***

Introduction

The conditions for working with the protection and preservation of cultural heritage has changed massively in recent decades due to cultural heritage being used as a political, ideological and strategic symbol of identity in conflicts around the globe. This has led to an increased awareness of heritage sites and museums as targets in armed conflicts. The protection and preservation of cultural heritage has emerged as a new transnational cross-sectoral topic within a broader agenda of peace and human security.¹

This process is causing the migration of the cultural heritage sector to the security domain, a process which has been labelled the ‘heritage-security nexus’ referring to the increasing political interweaving of cultural heritage and security (Rosén 2022.)

In academia, the international protection of cultural heritage and the narrative threads created in the protection framework have been characterised as a securitization of cultural heritage – a process where issues are framed in a security dimension and spoken of as demanding urgent and extraordinary measures (Buzan 1991; Wæver 1995; Buzan/Wæver 1997; Wæver 1997; Russo and Giusti 2019). The securitization of cultural heritage and the heritage-security nexus brings forward the protection of cultural heritage as an issue connected to narratives about societal and cultural survival. It has established a politically acute platform where there is agreement to focus on the need and urgency for protection of cultural heritage during conflict.

¹ In human security thinking, the object for security is the individual rather than traditional notions of national security and defence of a sovereign state. This way of thinking allows a people-centred and multidisciplinary approach. The essence of human security is an ethical responsibility to protect rights relating to fundamental individual needs and *identity* (Newman 2010, 78).

Despite these political developments, institutionalized strategies for who is going to implement this protection lag behind. Governments which might be expected to act are presently not doing so. And no institution or organisation exists that solely works with cultural heritage protection in armed conflict (Rosén 2017), which means that the field is suffering from long-term management and permanent funding issues causing other actors to stand up and engage.

This combination of political focus and lack of capabilities and resources has pulled museum actors into a process of redefining and expanding their values and practices echoing in how large museums find themselves in a momentum of change where they have to reinterpret their traditional role to continue being relevant for audiences, society, and the latest ICOM-definition of a museum (Sandahl 2019; Morales Moreno 2019; Lorente 2022; ICOM 2022). The redefining and expanding has resulted in museums and museum workers acting outside their traditional institutional field of work, reacting to what is perceived as urgent threats to cultural heritage. The museum actors' involvement in heritage protection has thus created new professional challenges for the sector which, in addition to already dealing with complex political issues such as decolonisation, repatriation, unethical acquisition of artefacts and representation of identity (often shaped in a western image), now also has to navigate international security issues such as terrorism and armed conflict.

However, with the lack of a systematic approach to heritage protection in areas of armed conflict, a vacuum is created; a space and need for others to act. This lack of a formal framework creates opportunities for acting, setting your own agenda and investing time in it. The connection to the notion of security generates common morality and networks, but many of the actors still work against each other, which raises questions of representation, legitimacy and ownership. Thus, in the current situation, protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict becomes the responsibility and perhaps also the self-declared mission of individuals and workers within the museal field.

The aim of this article is therefore to explore how museum actors and associated practitioners perceive the process of securitization of their field and their own role in this.

Through a series of qualitative individual interviews, I analyse the experiences of museum actors and associated practitioners and their intentions, motivations and agendas. Through a coding process, I identified several recurring themes relating to actors' motivation and

working conditions. I will identify and analyse a number of key themes that structures how the involvement in the protection of cultural heritage affect the people in the heritage sector. The identified themes are: *Lack of material resources, the hunt for publicity and political attention, heritage diplomacy, personal passion and the sense of a lack of action.*

The article draws on a Latourian approach and conceptual framework around the interaction between actors and their material and structural conditions in order to explore the museum actors' intentions, perceptions and interactions in heritage protection. In other words, tracing the influence and connection behind the sector's movement into heritage protection and the interaction between the actors involved.

Qualitative design and sampling technique

Studying how museum actors perceive the process of securitization in their field requires insiders' perspectives to understand the engagement and intention behind the individual's involvement in heritage protection in areas affected by armed conflict. Qualitative semi-structured interviews allowed the representation and different perspectives of the actors and associated practitioners within the museum sector to ensure an information-rich sample. My interviewees include four categories of heritage sector actors; experts (e.g. researchers, lawyers, diplomats) within the field of heritage protection in armed conflict; actors from university museums (professors, affiliated researchers); museum professionals (curators, managers) and museum directors (former and present).

A total of 37 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Furthermore, three public speeches with two directors and one deputy minister for culture were included in the analysis. Data was collected between March 2020 and August 2022 and all data transcribed verbatim.² The study was approved by The Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen. The approval included the research method applied (semi-structures interviews), and the informants included in the study. All informants were informed of their involvement in the research project prior to the collection of data. Before the interview, each informant was asked to read and accept a consent form which I had provided. In the consent form, the informants confirmed that their participation was voluntary

² Positionality statement: I am a female researcher with a background in archeology and conservation, living and working in a high-income northern European country. I have no personal or professional relations to any of the included museums in this study.

and that they could withdraw at any time. Further, they could decide if they wanted their contribution to be anonymized or not. The informants also accepted the use of the obtained data in scientific articles.³

In the process of including participants for the study, I identified the first participants from their high profiles within the work on heritage protection, which is mostly associated with major Euro-American state-funded or partly state-funded museums and university museums that are all active in heritage protection responses in areas of armed conflict. From then, snowball sampling was used, asking participants to assist with identifying actors active in the field and providing useful contacts to further the research (Bernd et al 2017). This was manageable since the field is relatively small, with a modest coalition of individuals as frontrunners with branched networks and connections. Thus, the limitation here is the reliance on personal networks and participants' recommendations. While I have thought to regulate this inherent limitation in my sample by reaching out each time, I came across a new person working within this sphere, my research remains centred on actors from Europe, the U.S. and the Middle East. However, since the major Euro-American museums are frontrunners in this specific field (Christensen 2023) I would argue that the sector is well represented, as it looks at the moment, thus sampling is relevant and information-rich.

Before the interviews, I formulated an interview guide with four research themes *a priori* formulated: the museums' engagement in society; museums' engagement in the discussion of threats to cultural heritage in armed conflict; intentional destruction and systematic looting; the securitization of cultural heritage and the new role of museums and involvement in security. Based on the themes, I entered a dialogue with the interviewees addressing questions on the sector's position as an actor in human security, thoughts on how the sector acts and navigates in the security sphere, along with the implications and forces behind it. The transcribed, empirical data was then coded using the themes from the interview guide, but thoroughly re-evaluated – and in some cases redefined – as the coding process evolved (Brooks et al., 2015).

Data has been rendered anonymous through identifying the actor's position as working directly in a museum, or associated with the museum sector. Yet in some cases – according to

³ For the complete Declaration of Consent, see the end of the article.

the accepted and signed consent form – information on the interviewee’s affiliation or nationality are provided if it underpins a statement.

The interaction between the actors

In trying to understand the museum actors’ intentions, perceptions and interactions in heritage protection the actor-network theory (ANT) is a suitable conceptual framework. It provides a way of thinking about how actors are interlinked in constantly shifting networks of relationships (Latour 2005). The approach focuses on tracing networks of associations between actors and investigating the movements and the chains of activities the actors follow (Tummons 2010; Pollack, J., K. Costello and S. Sankaran 2013). I follow Latour’s interpretation of ANT to analyse the complex chain of activities and networks of associations that have developed in the process of securitization of cultural heritage, and how museum actors’ involvement in heritage protection is generated (Latour 1999). The use of ANT in securitization theory has, in a recent study, precisely been used to consider the creation of connections between issues, publics and threats (Salter 2019)

“The action” of the museum actor – what Latour describes as a “conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies” (Latour 2005, 44) – has converted the securitization of cultural heritage into museums’ involvement in heritage protection. I refer to Latour’s understanding of an actor as “what *is made* to act by others” (Latour 2005, 46), which express an essential issue in understanding the museum actor’s action; namely, the *lack of action* by other actors and the discursive fuel provided by *other actors to act*.

One critique of the Latourian approach to my analysis of the networks of actors and the position of the individual is that the themes I have identified cannot be equated with humans or nonhumans/things. However, I find that ANT is a useful analytical model to map the action of the individual museum employees, their position in the network and the landscape they have to navigate in aiming to interpret the individual’s role in a complex network of associations. Thus, ANT refers to “*the summing up of interactions*” (Latour 1999, 17) and that nonhumans – or here, a network of associations – have agency which makes the actor act.

To be able to analyse the interactions of the museum actors, the concept of securitization has to be unfolded as a dynamic and fluent process, which is contingent upon the interaction

between the actors involved (Boas 2015, 4-10). The process includes the performative process where power position and the social identity of the actors who want something to become a security issue – and their relation to their audience – are important (Williams 2003; Balzacq, 2005; Floyd 2010; d'Appollonia 2015; Boas 2015; Guzzini 2015; Mitzen, 2016; Russo & Guisti 2019; Puskás 2019). The motives for securitization, the benefits of the process, have to be uncovered through an understanding of the context in which the process unfolds, and through the intentions of the actors involved (Floyd 2010, 2, 44, 192). It is here where the two conceptual frameworks – securitization and ANT – meet, providing a new way of looking at when the museum actor acts, who else is acting and how many agents are behind this action (Salter 2019).

Mapping the field: The process of securitization of cultural heritage

The leading actor in the securitization of cultural heritage has been identified as UNESCO, spearheaded by former Director-General Irina Bokova (Russo and Guisti 2019, 848). The narrative created by Bokova promoted a strong link between cultural heritage and security, interweaving the destruction of cultural heritage with armed attacks on populations and as a means in financing terrorism (Christensen 2022, 8-9). Bokova also framed the destructions as “war crimes” and “crimes against civilization” linking looting and trafficking of cultural heritage to “the war against terror” (Russo and Guisti 2019, 848).⁴ The constellation of security rhetoric in heritage protection increasingly infiltrated the language of other international officials and national elites. The most notable actors in this chain of activities and networks were the UN, NATO and The International Criminal Court (ICC).⁵ The conduct of these three actors caused a variety of NGOs to take measures through publicizing statements, providing project funding and creating awareness, all while reproducing the security narrative found in international heritage protection.⁶

⁴ Some quotes exemplifying this framing: “UNESCO mobilizes the international community to end cultural cleansing in Iraq” 11.3.15, “The Director-General of UNESCO firmly condemns the destruction of the ancient temple of Baalshamin, an iconic part of the Syrian site of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage site” 24.8.15; “Director-General Irina Bokova expresses consternation at the destruction of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra” 1.9. 2015; “Fighting the illicit trafficking of cultural property: a toolkit for European judiciary and law enforcement”(Boz 2018).

⁵ E.g. UN Security Council ‘Resolution 2199’ and ‘Resolution 2347’, the NATO working-group *NATO and Cultural Property*, the ICC draft *Policy on Cultural Heritage*.

⁶ E.g. The Blue Shield, ICOM, World Monuments Fund or international collaborations and networks such as Heritage for Peace, The Antiquities Coalition or the ALIPH Foundation.

Critical studies of the international actors' motives behind the securitization have argued that the actors were affected by self-interest related to concerns about Western security, including fighting terrorism and 'the West against fundamentalists' as a political perspective (Barakat 2021). Further, using the narrative associated with "the war against terror" in an attempt to gain international legitimacy and cast donors in a positive light (Russo and Giusti 2019; Christensen 2022, 9).

The overall result is that the securitization of cultural heritage has been integrated into a range of political discourses and practices that advance an understanding of *the need* for protection of cultural heritage in conflict as an expression for a human security issue. I will argue that the exploitation of this need has caused heritage organisations and institutions to oversell an image as key players in heritage protection during armed conflict. This problematic has also been discussed in studies of UNESCO's role in heritage protection in the Middle East where the lack of staff and funding – as well as the inability to outwit intergovernmental organisations' political and bureaucratic barriers – has prevented sustainable long-term emergency action from being implemented (Meskell 2018; McCafferty 2022).

To understand how the absence of politically institutionalized actors acting systematically in the field effects the museum sector, we need to pay attention to museum actors' perspectives on the sector, navigating between heritage and security and how this affects them. In addition to understanding their navigation strategies, we need to look at which interests and intentions lie behind the involvement in heritage protection in armed conflict.

Actors' perspectives

To trace the influence, interests and connections behind the museum sectors' involvement in protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict, I propose that we see the global museum sector as a transnational network of organisations operating with geo-political and -cultural agendas. We also have to view the museum institution as a place of various stakeholders with diverging interests and a hierarchical structure working in a politically charged environment. In addition, the museum actors' assumptions and organisational self-knowledge is essential for the sector to consciously evolve (Janes 2009, 115) thus being aware that their actions are

not always performed under fully conscious control but instead are the result of a diffuse network of influences (Latour 2005, 44-45).

The next section will be an analysis of the experiences of museum actors and associated practitioners within the heritage sector and how they perceive the process of securitization of their field and their role in the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict. The analysis is based on the five themes I previously presented relating to actors' motivation and working conditions.

Theme 1). *Lack of material resources*

The interviewees emphasized the lack of institutional, systematic resources and engagement dedicated to the involvement in heritage protection in armed conflict as a recurring theme. The result is that heritage protection initiatives are characterized by short-term solutions.

This makes it difficult for the sector to take on new, permanent tasks demanding long-term strategic planning. Furthermore, the lack of funding and the fluctuating allocation of awareness is reflected in the general shift in the sector from permanent contracts to contractors. Thus, a situation of scarcity and competition is created, described by one interviewee as an: "*internally cannibalistic thing, where everyone is competing for contracts or for keeping their positions or for getting promoted into a position where they are less vulnerable*" (cultural heritage expert and former UNESCO employee). There is a lack of acknowledgment and credit for the contract museum worker who has to jump to the next project, fighting for funding without being able to advance higher up in the system.

The situation of having only a few, scattered permanent positions in this field is also echoed in "project-length" where funding is given by a government that wants it to pay out and produce results before they are out of power: "*as governments change their opinions or their policy, it can shift, you see those changes*" (former employee working in Department of Antiquities and Museums of Syria). This affects the museum actors working with heritage protection in armed conflict, as they will have to continue approaching things one crisis at the time, while often stalling in logistics and writing up the next application. It is clear that the lack of resources is not only a problem related to individual museum actors working with the securitization of cultural heritage but also an interorganisational problem caused by a lack of finances where museums are "a notoriously underfunded sector" (King 2003, Heal 2022). Further, museum workers in my interviews point out that the COVID pandemic has caused

the sector to redirect a lot of funding, as well as governments and donors having shifted their focus, a tendency which has been reinforced with the energy crisis in 2022 (Heal 2022). For museum actors working with heritage protection dealing with new professional challenges, the lack of systematic resources is comprehensive. From my interviews it becomes clear that getting involved in heritage protection is something that not all museums can afford. Consequently, it is the major Euro-American museums of the Global North who have the capacity to set up initiatives for getting involved. Yet even here, the level of engagement dedicated to this issue in comparison to other activities in general is low, both in terms of time, money and effort allocated: *“We don’t have adequate capacities for all the crises going on now in cultural heritage. And given we have been doing this now a staccato, we have fatigue setting in, I see a lot of fatigue, and we’re not adequately training new people for the field”* (program Manager of Heritage Stabilization Program, US). The quote is also underpinning the notion that the initiatives are largely driven by a small group of actors whose efforts stagnate due to lack of systematic funding and long-term planning. The same problem is emphasised by another interviewee: *“There is an international lack of funding and effort”* (director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security, large British museum). So, the action of museum actors in heritage protection are influenced by material resources and impacts, which constitute conditions for agency – “it provides actants with their action” (Latour 1999, 18). The financial network that the global museum sector is part of – including both macrostructures, like COVID and energy crises, but also the microstructures within the museum consisting of where and how to prioritize – is heavily influencing the behaviour of the museum actor.

Theme 2). *The quest for publicity and political attention*

One of the consequences of the lack of systematic resources is that the museum actor has to pursue timely public reactions – to get the right public and political attention – in order to secure awareness and funding. As one interview expressed it: *“The museums directly, and the people who are doing projects for museums or around museums, they all know which way the wind is blowing, which way the money is flowing”* (cultural heritage expert and former UNESCO employee). This theme reflects what Robert Janes describes as marketplace ideology being “the elephant in the room” (Janes 2009, 99) for museums. Here Janes writes about some museum work (like gift shops and product development) is subject to market

forces but that activities such as research and community engagements need to be at a safe distance from the marketplace (Janes 2009, 99). I would argue that the involvement in heritage protection is an example of a failure in creating that distance. The hunt for funding due to the lack of systematic resources allocated to heritage protection forces museum actors to use publicity to create awareness and communicate the necessity for action. They have to “earn” funding by placing the donors in a positive light both in the public and on the political stage.

By referring to the metaphor of the “marketplace” as a factor in the network of association for museum actors, I hope to illustrate that the sector cannot always select the most sustainable solution or get involved in all places of need around the world. They are bound by public and political awareness relying on the geopolitical setting around the destruction of cultural heritage: “[...] it is also a question of funding. The British Museum is reliant on public funding. So, if they're getting money from donors the donors might insist that they do an archaeological dig, because it is sexy. So, I think maybe these institutions would – if they could – do more work in building capacity for archaeological directors at local level museums, but there is just not enough money going into it from donors..” (British diplomat, Iraq).

The donor dictates the project and this results in short-termism. A tendency which is also illustrated in reconstruction initiatives where international actors manoeuvre in a system structured around a timeframe (Barakat 2010, 250-251).

Another way the dependence on public and political awareness shows itself is in how the hasty acceleration of national and international news coverage of heritage destruction places cultural heritage protection high on the agenda, putting pressure on governments and donors to announce additional funding. Here I will argue that the museum sector’s communication on involvement in heritage protection in armed conflict has experienced a post-2015 change. The performative and media-covered destruction carried out by ISIS in Syria and Iraq prompted museum actors to use heritage protection in the Middle East as a hook for getting donor attention. Being involved in the sphere of security and peace casts the museum in a positive donor light and fosters an image of them helping at geopolitical hotspots. *“There is always the need to kind of tick off the right boxes in terms of what countries are interested in, what institutions are interested in, and what they are willing to throw money at. And once you say ‘heritage is being threatened we need to protect it’, in a certain way, you’re more likely*

to get funding” (cultural heritage expert and consultant in the International Security Department at Chatham House). The quote emphasizes the networks of associations that have occurred in the process of securitization of cultural heritage. The problem it has generated is that a lot of the museum initiatives are centred on whichever crisis the international media landscape is paying most attention to and which way political tendencies are going. So, global media becomes another actor in the chain of activities causing the museum actors to take action.

It is a general problem in the heritage sector that funding for heritage protection initiatives and reconstruction very much depends on geopolitical trends, forcing them to act correspondently. Meskell (2018; 2020) illustrates this phenomenon in her demonstration of the power Member States have in UNESCO promoting their national interests. The problem is further elaborated by McCafferty (2022) who demonstrates how Member States use their power to negatively affect “weaker” states’ national interests. Likewise, in relation to UNESCO, McCafferty finds that “a high number of media statements does not necessarily translate to more action that is understood as *‘meaningful’*” (McCafferty 2022, 89). The consequence is that actors’ involvement in cultural heritage protection – being NGOs or museums – is characterized by a low level of actual interventions and short-term planning, lacking practical implementation on the ground. The combination of a lack of resources in general in the museum sector and the endless pursuit of project-funding results in: “*projects which are cheap but look like they have achieved something, because it is literally visible in photographs of meetings or whatever else*” (cultural heritage expert and former UNESCO employee).

The same concern is illustrated in the critique of the sector being more about saying the right things than actually implementing practical action: “*there is an awful lot of wringing of hands and trying to figure out what to do. A lot of publicity, but with not much action*” (director of Cultural Heritage Centre at a major US university). Each museum is working in a silo and each project is trying to be the most significant, the one that will receive the existing funding they are all competing for. Furthermore, the quest for funding contributes to securitization as museums hope to use the agenda to mobilise funds. So, securitization of cultural heritage becomes a means to generate funding, but no permanent financial resources have been allocated and no coordinated actions have taken place. Alas, it provides museum actors with intentionality – to act (Latour 1999, 18).

Theme 3). *Heritage diplomacy*

Besides the lack of systematic permanent funding and the ensuing hunt for public and political attention, other strategies include soft power and heritage diplomacy (Winter 2015). Especially decolonisation and the cultural politics of contemporary international relations – revolving around the destruction of cultural heritage in the Middle East – are present in my interviews. The focus is on how museums use heritage protection in certain areas to display ethical behaviour and political correctness. As one expert formulated it, museums are: *“trying to cleanse the reputation of this colonial, extractive, appalling institution [...] this sort of dirty pas; they are not only trying to rehabilitate themselves for that and the current crisis, but they are also trying to get their permits back at the same time”* (cultural heritage researcher and curator in the Middle East and Asia sections at a large US museum). The point is that the sector is using heritage protection responses to show the public that they are helping in countries where they have a collective history of unethical acquisition of artefacts. One could speculate on whether there is such thing as a heritage reconstruction for the sake of heritage, or if it mostly is in relation to public diplomacy. Indeed, the same response is used with the national political agenda of rescuing and rebuilding cultural heritage in North Africa following in line with U.S. and European military efforts in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan (Christensen 2023, 8).

The point is that museums – perhaps especially their boards – are using their actions to create an image. An image that generates goodwill, and distances them from associations with unethical acquisitions, while speaking to the narrative on “the fight against terror” and “rebuilding of the Middle East”, as one expert expressed it: *“they want to say, ‘oh my god, we are helping in Afghanistan’”* (cultural Resources Manager and Army Archaeologist, US). Furthermore, the diplomatic interest is also present in areas of conflict which are not of interest to the professionals, donors or governments. The definition of conflict itself is limited as well; e.g., there are no initiatives in Mexico, even though more people get killed in Mexico in a year than across some regions with persistent conflict, or in *“Somalia, where we know that there is looting there and that the looting was being directed by the warlords”* (cultural heritage expert and former UNESCO employee).

I will argue that these areas are excluded because it is not politically convenient. This underpins the notion of a very selective international outcry and/or actions taken towards the

destruction of cultural heritage around the world, and how heritage protection is subject to the agendas of the western political elite (Christensen 2022; Christensen 2023, 9). Furthermore, the heritage protection initiatives often serve to promote the national interests and political agendas of the donor country (Barakat 2010, 14-16). Since these interest and agendas keep changing, cultural heritage attention keeps changing as well.

I would argue that the heritage protection initiative is used as a kind of international currency and as a soft diplomacy tool. Speaking directly to the terminology of securitization, one interviewee spoke about what the museums *benefit* from being involved in heritage protection. The interviewee said: *“Not only is it good publicity and it is bang for your buck, it is defending themselves, because when we are criticised we can turn and say, but we do this work, we work with local communities, we work with Africa, we are charitable, we’re generous and we’re understanding”* (director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security, large British museum). It seems very difficult to find a single project which is not also about public diplomacy aimed at influencing the public opinion of another country in a positive way in order to promote its own interests. This view is echoed in studies looking at museums as instruments for achieving various goals of national, regional and international interests, and the proliferation of museums as an exercise in geo-cultural power (Giusti and Lamonica 2023).

In addition, decolonisation plays a role – being as it is a debate that runs through the whole sector – generating much public and political attention. It seems that the Syria and Iraq conflicts and the associated heritage destructions have created a renewed ethical wave of “compensation” from the major museums with colonial ties. In my interviews, particularly the British and the French museums are pointed out at as the “best at that game”: *“museums like the British Museum or like the Louvre, who have made money for centuries now[...] from colonisers if you will [...] They also have the, I think, the moral obligation to safeguard those”* (cultural heritage expert and attorney).

It is interesting that “moral obligation” is actually implemented in British legislation where museums may be able to return objects on the basis of moral duty (Hicks 2020, 239). This morality is in line with the museological discussion about the social and humanitarian potential of museums (Sandahl 2019, 5-6; Gray and McCall, 2020; Christensen 2023). From my interviews, it becomes clear that this morality-talk nudges major museums with colonial

ties to display an ethical responsibility. This is echoed in my responses from museum directors in Syria and Iraq: *“it’s the duty of the global great museums to take the responsibility of bringing those destroyed museums back to life”* (museum director, Iraq).

Theme 4). *Personal passion*

The individual actor plays an essential part in the museum sectors’ involvement in heritage protection. At the core of this lies personal drive, which can be seen as an *actantiality* – what Latour describes as a kind of facticity, “what it provides actants, with their actions, with their subjectivity, with their intentionality, with their morality” (Latour 1999, 18).

Twelve of my interviewees pointed out that heritage protection initiatives almost always revolve around individual people having a personal interest in it and pressing it forward within their organisation: *“it revolves around personalities and individual people having an interest in it and pushing it”* (Former member of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee of the U.S. State Department). Especially the major Euro-American museums – with The Smithsonian Institute and Penn Museum as frontrunners – are active with a handful of individual actors as drivers. The drivers are passionate individuals who react to the destruction of heritage in armed conflict out of frustration, calling for some kind of action: *“it was...historians, archaeologists, it was museum professionals who went in front of Congress and testified what was happening in Iraq and Syria [...] it wasn’t journalists, it wasn’t soldiers, it was museum professionals who were raising awareness and who directly impacted the laws that came out of the United States [...] And I think there was legal action because of the activism that the museum professionals showed”* (cultural heritage expert and attorney). This statement is underpinned by similar statements from my interviews with employees from University of Pennsylvania Museum and The Smithsonian Institute on elaborating on how museum actors were active in lobbying members of Congress for stronger cultural heritage legislation, testifying with the President’s Cultural Property Advisory Committee on stronger antiquities protection legislation, speaking at congressional hearings and commenting on issues dealing with cultural property protection.

The actors in these institutions often have a personal or academic attachment to a specific area, thus influencing which areas their institutions are then allocating heritage protection to: *“Corine Wegener is brilliant, and she is involved in it, and why is she involved in it, because*

she happened to be on a detachment in the military that went to Baghdad, and that changed her life” (director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security, large British museum). A similar story of personal engagement resonates when the same interviewee mentioned how the Culture in Crisis programme at the Victoria and Albert Museum was *“the brainchild of Martin Roth”* (the former director) who was focused on global responsibility for museums and – thinking outside the traditional museum areas and responsibilities – drove the museum to be *“more diverse and more inclusive of other disciplines”* (director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security, large British museum). Another participant emphasised that it really comes down to *“individual experts and their work in the field”* and this factor regulates how involved the museum is (museum professional, US).

In addition, the actors typically have networks and collaborative relationships with organisations involved in this field such as Blue Shield, UNESCO or ICOM: *“it often tends to be individuals who show the initiative of wanting to be involved and it is often through their relationships to organisations like ICOM, or the ICC”* (director of major cultural rescue initiative, US). The museum worker is interacting in different networks of relationships, which has a starting point in the individual worker’s personal network, in the words of one of the interviewees: *“The museum is not a creature, it is the people behind the museum that make the agenda”* (cultural heritage expert and attorney).

In addition, the museum actor’s self-interest and career is also part of the personal drive, and here the heritage destructions in the Middle East and the media coverage generated thereafter has further provided agency for them to act: *“I think it [the conflicts in the Middle East] has, like, become a good deal for people, academics, NGO’s, institutions, governmental institutions, contractors...”* (cultural heritage researcher and curator in the Middle East and Asia sections at a large US museum). The dependency of following political winds, the competition and relocating of funding that pervades the whole heritage sector creates an internal scepticism toward the intentions for being involved in heritage protection in the Middle East. Within the field there is a critique of such engagement, being a way of promoting one’s self and one’s institution: *“We have colleagues who are pretending that they are advocating for cultural property, when it is really all about them trying to advance their career”* (Cultural Resources Manager and Army Archaeologist, U.S). The concern is also that some actors are trying to capture and be part of a stream of funding where the awareness

and funding window in a limited timespan is suddenly open: “*when people smell money, you get this burst of initiatives*” (cultural heritage expert and former UNESCO employee).

Listing museum individuals’ agendas for getting involved presents a picture of Latour’s conglomerate of many sets of agencies presenting a complex and muddy mixture of intentions. However, throughout my interview there is agreement on the fact that many professionals are genuinely concerned. The overall impression is that museum actors want to do what is possible and try to realise their professional responsibility in a difficult situation. But they don’t have power over donor agendas, or the ability to incorporate their help in bigger humanitarian aid programmes, and some of them don’t even think that they have a professional platform to address these things.

Theme 5). *The sense of a lack of action*

As described in the previous themes, the sector’s involvement in cultural heritage protection takes on an ad hoc approach where each museum is working within its own sphere of agendas, networks and opportunities. Yet, the lack of institutional framework and coordinated capacities on both national and international levels means that cultural heritage protection initiatives and expertise tend to follow personal passions and enterprises rather than policy and organisational functions. This renders the cultural heritage protection capacities vulnerable to ebbs and flows in the tide of human resources, including rotation of personnel and internal affairs of the organisations. The point is that there is no consistency in the policy concerning heritage, there is no consistency with what the museums and the NGOs are doing, and the allocation of help fluctuates, following political tendencies and public awareness: “*OK now it’s North Africa, but it’s not cohesive, it’s bits and pieces*” (cultural heritage expert and attorney).

The lack of politically institutionalized action is also present in areas of conflict where museum actors are finding themselves working very much outside their job descriptions, as explained by the former director of the Aleppo Museum: “*during the conflict we tried to stay in the museum the whole time, not only the guards, but also the curators. The reason was because we were dealing with the military, the curator can better converse than the guards with either the anti-government military or the Syrian regime military or whoever will come*

to the museum, then the curators can speak with them better, to protect the museum. For that reason, all the staff was sleeping there for a long time during the conflict. We saved the collection completely, there are no damages, but our staff was injured and had some accidents because they are going to the museum every day or every week” (former museum director, Syria). The director of the National Museum of the History of Ukraine confirms this tendency: *“I believe that people taking jobs in museums need to be informed about their responsibilities of some work which is not specified in their collective agreements [...] Devoted people are an essential thing in saving heritage in times of crises and nonstandard circumstances”* (museum director, Ukraine). From the interviews, it appears that the reason for this is the lack of governmental interest in the protection of museum collections. Often, it is not even on the domestic policy priority list, where there is no clear instruction concerning preventative measures, in combination with politicians trying to deny the crisis. Illustrated by the director of The National Museum of the History of Ukraine: *“it needs to be said that many disasters could have been avoided if the Ukrainian politicians could have paid a little more attention to the cultural institutions in general”* (museum director, Ukraine).

Further, I would argue that the need for devoted museum actors is also caused by the failure of consistent heritage protection policy from international heritage-NGOs – like UNESCO and ICOM – to deliver on key agreements (Meskell 2020; McCafferty 2022). This lack of action fuels others to act.

Thus, heritage protection becomes a national issue; and since heritage protection is very low on most nations’ financial list of priorities, combined with the incoherence in international strategies, the initiative to help seems to fall back on individuals. The position of personal engagement makes creating a policy similar to protection issues – such as gender, children and armed conflict, protection of civilians, human trafficking, etc. – difficult. The individual actor and associated networks become part of the narrative of cultural heritage protection which paints a muddy picture based on emotional rhetoric and lack of an identifiable and tangible strategy for actors in the human security framework – such as, e.g., international development, international aid, and NATO – to incorporate cultural heritage protection in a broader operational strategy.

This perspective resonates in the conversations with my interviewees, where eight of the participants from institutions covering the U.S., Europe and the Middle East directly touch

upon how coherent international institutions and continuous financial support are needed in long-term heritage protection initiatives in armed conflicts: *“It cannot be only personal; it must be an international institute. There must be official engagement in this issue”* (former museum director, Syria).

Conclusion

Through a Latourian approach, I use ANT as an analytical model to map and analyse the position of museum actors in the network of the process of securitization of cultural heritage and how this has created a new role with new professional challenges for the museum actors. The analysis of the actions of the individual actor shows how a conglomerate of agencies (Latour 2005) influences how the actors act. These agencies consist of a complex network of associations where the most significant is the lack of material resources, the general underfunding of the heritage sector and the resulting lack of systematic funding allocated for heritage protection. This lack makes it difficult for the sector to create a systematic approach. Without permanent funding, the museum actors have used the securitization of cultural heritage and the narrative created therein as an agency to pursue funding and generate awareness from the public and politicians. Initiatives on heritage protection therefore often promote national interests and political agendas. The actors are interacting in a network of geopolitical trends in Europe and the U.S., exposing how their action is influenced by diplomatic interests.

This is illustrated in which areas of conflict are of interest to professionals, donors or governments. Further, the sector is using its involvement in heritage protection, and the associations it generates, to (in certain areas) put their ethical behaviour and political correctness on display.

The result is that each museum is working in a silo, competing over being the most significant in the field, while individuals are competing for contracts and retaining their positions.

Consequently, such a situation creates short-term solutions with no consistency within the role of heritage protection in armed conflict. As shown throughout the article, museum actors are made to act by a network of associations linked to a lack of material resources and policies, to publicity, political trends, diplomacy, personal relationships, personal engagement and concern, career opportunities, and the sense of a lack of action taken by officials rather than managed by policy and organisational functions.

By exposing the actions taken by the museum actors and the mixture of agencies behind such goings-on, the article advocates for the necessity of coherent international strategies and the political support for permanent funding in heritage protection in armed conflict placing heritage protection as a humanitarian concern.

Declaration of consent:

This article is part of a PhD, which has been ethically approved by The Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen. The approval includes research method applied (semi-structured, qualitative interviews), size of empirical data and informants.

All informants were informed of their involvement in the research project prior to the collection of data. Before the interview, each informant was asked to read and confirm that I would be recording the interview and that they needed to accept the Consent Form which I had provided. In the Consent Form, the informants confirmed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Further, they could decide if they wanted their contribution to be anonymised or not. The informants also accepted the use of the obtained data in scientific articles. Finally, I would like to state that all of the interviewees are adult professionals, from various countries, who are neither vulnerable individuals, nor members of a vulnerable group.

All data is handled in compliance with the Danish Data Protection Act to ensure privacy, and stored for at least 5 years at the University of Copenhagen, following the end of the project, under the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

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