

# Antiquities Destruction and Illicit Sales: Key Sources of ISIS Funding

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been a major player in the international antiquities market for years. The group has looted and sold countless artifacts from archaeological sites in Iraq and Syria, using the proceeds to fund its operations.

The destruction of antiquities by ISIS is not just a cultural tragedy, but also a serious security threat. The sale of looted artifacts provides ISIS with a steady source of income, which it uses to purchase weapons, recruit fighters, and carry out terrorist attacks.



## Antiquities Destruction and Illicit Sales as Sources of ISIS Funding and Propaganda by G. Doug Davis

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In addition to looting and selling antiquities, ISIS has also been involved in the illicit trade of other cultural objects, such as paintings, sculptures, and manuscripts. The group has sold these objects to collectors and museums around the world, using the proceeds to fund its operations.

The illicit trade of antiquities is a major problem, and it is one that is only getting worse. As ISIS continues to loot and sell artifacts, the international community must take action to stop the flow of these objects into the illicit market.

## **The Scale of the Problem**

The scale of the problem of antiquities destruction and illicit sales by ISIS is staggering. The group has looted and sold artifacts from hundreds of archaeological sites in Iraq and Syria, including some of the most iconic sites in the world.

For example, ISIS looted the ancient city of Palmyra in Syria in 2015. The group destroyed the city's ancient temples, amphitheater, and other structures. ISIS also looted the Mosul Museum in Iraq in 2014. The group destroyed many of the museum's artifacts, including the famous Nergal Gate.

The sale of looted artifacts has provided ISIS with a steady source of income. The group has sold artifacts to collectors and museums around the world, using the proceeds to fund its operations.

## **The Impact of Antiquities Destruction**

The destruction of antiquities by ISIS has had a devastating impact on the cultural heritage of Iraq and Syria. The group has destroyed some of the most iconic sites in the world, and has looted and sold countless artifacts.

The destruction of antiquities has also had a negative impact on the local economy. The tourism industry in Iraq and Syria has been severely damaged, and many people have lost their jobs.

## **The Security Threat**

The sale of looted artifacts provides ISIS with a steady source of income, which it uses to purchase weapons, recruit fighters, and carry out terrorist attacks.

In 2015, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2199, which called on all countries to take action to prevent the illicit trade of antiquities from Iraq and Syria.

The resolution also called for countries to provide financial and technical assistance to Iraq and Syria to help them protect their cultural heritage.

## **What Can Be Done?**

There are a number of things that can be done to stop the illicit trade of antiquities and to protect the cultural heritage of Iraq and Syria.

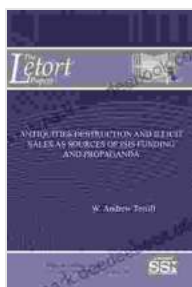
One important step is to increase awareness of the problem. The public needs to be aware of the dangers of buying looted artifacts, and they need to know how to report suspicious activity.

Another important step is to strengthen laws against the illicit trade of antiquities. Countries need to pass laws that make it illegal to buy or sell looted artifacts, and they need to enforce these laws.

Finally, countries need to provide financial and technical assistance to Iraq and Syria to help them protect their cultural heritage. This assistance can be used to train security personnel, to improve security at archaeological sites, and to restore damaged artifacts.

The destruction of antiquities and the illicit sale of cultural objects is a major problem. ISIS has used the proceeds from the sale of looted artifacts to fund its operations, and has used the destruction of antiquities to spread terror.

The international community must take action to stop the flow of looted artifacts into the illicit market. We must increase awareness of the problem, strengthen laws against the illicit trade of antiquities, and provide financial and technical assistance to Iraq and Syria to help them protect their cultural heritage.



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