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INTRODUCTION

Iconoclasm may be defined as ‘an attack against and often the destruction of a physical object… that is believed to have some kind of spiritual power or sacred significance and which is worshipped in the place of the “true” God’ (Noyes, 2016, pp. 3-4); the ‘motivated annihilation of any presence or power’, which is communicated by a symbol, ‘through the annihilation’ of that symbol (May, 2012, p. 6); or ‘the deliberate damage or destruction of images and objects’ (O’Neil *et al*, 2014, p. 377). It has been practised from revolutionary France to revolutionary China to revolutionary Ukraine. And the motivations for the practice have ranged from the imposition of monotheism and restoration of polytheism in ancient Egypt to the deposition of one autocratic regime and the consolidation of another in modern Egypt.

Not every breaking of an image is an act of *iconoclasm*. Even when art is “iconoclastic”, it is not “iconoclasm”. Not every act of iconoclasm involves the *breaking* of an image. Power can be destroyed through transformation, subordination and humiliation. Whether iconoclasts had limited theological concerns rather than intense emotional drives, or whether iconophiles negotiated limited interventions, some images from West Asia to South Asia were merely illustratively “killed” or simply used in profane ways, in order to show that they were not used in sacred ways (cf. Flood, 2002, pp. 646-7).

While, from ancient Assyria (cf. Shaudig, 2012, pp. 125-6) to medieval India (cf. Davis, 1997, pp. 62-6), idols have been appropriated and venerated, embodiments of gods have also been “deported” from their native lands and subjugated in the earthly domain of their conquerors, perhaps since the Uruk kingdom of the third millennium B.C.E. (cf. Woods, 2012, p. 36). Likewise, precisely orchestrated, parallel programmes of destruction and appropriation have been conducted at least since the Neo-Assyrian Empire of the early first millennium B.C.E. (cf. Richardson, 2012, pp. 235-42).

Sometimes, the images are not even touched. Iraq’s citizenry has been excluded from the fortified “Green Zone” of state institutions and foreign embassies in Baghdad since the overthrow of the Ba’athist regime in 2003. When citizens stormed the Green Zone and protested against corrupt and ineffective governance in 2016, some hit a portrait of President Fuad Masum with their shoes (Associated Press, 2016), as citizens had hit the statue of President Saddam Hussein with their shoes in 2003. Others stood opposite the presidential stand, posed like the famously toppled statue and “toppled” themselves into the water pool below (Mojon, 2016).

Icons are not only images of “false” idols, but also images of “true” gods, which humans do not have the right to represent or the capacity to imagine. Hence, sometimes, within the logic of religious iconoclasm, those who try to create images implicitly claim that they have the power of their god. And not only *images* are broken in acts of iconoclasm. The practice encompasses not

only the obliteration of idols, but the obliteration of other symbols and embodiments from books to buildings and even living persons (May, 2012, p. 3). Indeed, these ideologies and practices are so often so far from "image-breaking" "vandalism" that there is a move towards an understanding of "iconoclasm" as "sign transformation" (cf. Clay, 2007, p. 94). Nonetheless, here, the focus is on the mutilation and annihilation of art.

A NOTE ON IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICALITY

A great deal of energy has been expended on the "exposure" of the conduct of parallel programmes of destruction and trafficking by the territory-occupying, Wahhabi Salafi ideology-imposing terrorist Islamic State (Daesh), because it embodies an apparent contradiction between iconoclastic ideology and financial practicality. Yet it is a phenomenon that can be seen in genocides under Khmer Rouge Cambodia, the Nazi Empire, the Ottoman Empire… (cf. Hardy, 2015b). It is not exactly incorrect to note the contradiction, but it is not exactly correct either, and it is certainly not profound.

Iconoclasts at least *prioritise* the "purification" of space. They may *wish* to destroy all instances of objectionable symbols anywhere, but they will *begin* with those symbols that are within "their" territory. Hence, they will accept the expedient practice of "purification"-by-export instead of destruction, in the same way that commissioners of genocide will accept the expedient practice of ethnic cleansing instead of extermination.

Regardless of certain bizarre debates in contemporary British politics, there is no ultimate contradiction between Nazis' acceptance of Jewish emigration-under-duress and their "final solution" of Jewish extermination (cf. Schulze, 2016). Likewise, there is no ultimate contradiction between Nazis' orchestration of the export of "degenerate art" (and profit from that export) and their ultimate plan of annihilation of challenging art. And there is no ultimate contradiction between the Islamic State's orchestration of the export of "idols" and their ultimate plan of annihilation of iconography, especially since, like the Nazi Empire, the Islamic State's profiteering from cultural property finances their destruction of cultural property and even worse crimes. For instance, the Islamic State produced a propaganda video of their destruction of some of the exhibits in Mosul Museum, then 'blew a huge hole [through] the floor' and looted the museum vault (Wedeman, 2017).

So, while discussion of the religious and political motivations for destroying art necessitates discussion of other motivations for destroying art, those rationales are complementary considerations in complex strategies.

A NOTE ON IDEOLOGY AND INTERPRETATION

Similarly, it has been reported that the Islamic State has 'unknowingly destroy[ed] fake art' (Wedeman, 2017), as if it has been thwarted in its attempt to destroy genuine art, when the distinction between genuine and fake is *somewhat* irrelevant. While a distinction might be made between "genuine" targets of iconoclastic violence and "fake" victims of iconoclastic violence, that distinction would then implicitly recognise those genuine artworks *as* idols, when many would *never* have been idolised. Moreover, within the Islamic State's logic, whether the images are originals or replicas, they have been made; they exist; and they are revered.

THE ETYMOLOGY AND GENEALOGY OF ABRAHAMIC ICONOCLASM

Iconoclasm in Islamic theology

Iconoclasm is popularly associated with current Islamic extremism. However, the word did not originate in the Islamic world. Indeed, the Islamic theology of iconoclasm is somewhat cryptic, as the Qur'an addresses the act of worship instead of the act of image-creating. It insists: 'your God is one God. There is no deity except him' (*al-Baqarah*, Surah 2, Verse 163). Depending upon the translation, it warns of divine retribution for those who 'take others besides Allah as rivals', 'take for themselves objects of worship besides Allah' or 'set up idols to rival God, and love them as if they are God' (*al-Baqarah*, Surah 2, Verse 165; cf. Abbas and Atwell, 2009a). Manifested most extremely in Wahhabi Islamic practice, Islamic theology forbids *shirk* (associationism, polytheism or idolatry) because, when worshippers fabricate images of Allah, intermediaries or other gods, they implicitly claim divine knowledge, claim the divine power of creation and/or deny the unity of God, by fabricating other divinely powerful beings (Noyes, 2016, pp. 6-7; 16-17).

The text of the Qur'an is understood in the context of the practice of the prophet Mohammed. When Mohammed conquered Mecca, in 630 C.E., he found pagan idols around the Ka'aba, gouged out their eyes and commanded their toppling and burning (Flood, 2002, pp. 644-5). According to Islamic legends that record the reported sayings of the prophet, Mohammed ordered his followers to 'demolish all idols' and to 'level all graves more than a palm's width high' (*Hadith*, Number 2115, cf. Philips, 2005, p. 214), to 'deface every statue or picture in houses and level all elevated graves' (*Hadith* 3212, cf. Philips, 2005:, pp. 214-15n45).

However, the Ka'aba (also transliterated as Kaaba and Ka'bah) was believed to be the remains of a sanctuary or temple, which had been rebuilt by Abraham (and others in the lineage, before and since), after it had been destroyed by the Flood, and which had originally been built by Adam and Eve (Glassé, 2002: 245). So, the iconoclasm was an albeit violent reclamation of space that was believed to belong to the People of the Book and their God, rather than spontaneous aggression towards idolaters.[1] There is further evidence that original Islamic iconoclasm was as much politically considered as religiously compelled: the Qur'an instructs Muslims not even to 'insult', 'abuse' or 'curse' idols, in case it causes idolaters to spitefully blaspheme against Allah (*al-Anaam*, Chapter 6, Verse 108; cf. Abbas and Atwell, 2009b). And there is no absolute prohibition of iconographic representation within Islam. For example, anthropomorphic as well as zoomorphic images were produced and protected in the early modern Shia Muslim Safavid Empire and the early modern Sunni Muslim Ottoman Empire. At least sometimes, even those who mimicked Mohammed and gouged out the eyes of human images were punished (Dankoff, 1990, pp. 294-7, cited by Flood, 2002, p. 645).

There was also purely political iconoclasm of religious buildings. Again in 630 C.E., a mosque in Quba (which became identified as the Mosque of Dissent or the Mosque of Opposition, Masjid al-Dirar) was established as a 'hostile stronghold' for rival Abu Amir, who was allegedly secretly allied with the Byzantine Empire against Mohammed, in an attempt to take control of the nascent Islamic state (Lecker, 1995, p. 86). In order to erase the site and symbol of resistance, Mohammed ordered the mosque to be burned down and its ruins to be desecrated through use as a dump for animal carcasses.

Iconoclasm in Christian theology

[1] Sasan Aghlani, pers. comm.: 16 April 2016.

In fact, the term "iconoclasm" was established in the wake of early modern Western Christian image-breaking in the early sixteenth-century Reformation of the Church. It was adapted from "iconoclasts", which had been borrowed from a rare and unrepresentative term for iconophobes during a medieval Eastern Christian struggle over images.

The Reformation of the Church, through a schism between established Catholic and emergent Protestant communities, encompassed a range of logics and practices. For instance, Huldrych Zwingli managed iconoclastic action, in order for it not to benefit iconophilic Catholic factions in Switzerland (van Asselt, 2007, pp. 303-5); Adriaan de Waal van Vronesteijn orchestrated piece-by-piece destruction of altars, images and books in certain churches in the Netherlands, in order to clear and claim those churches for the Protestant community (Staal, 2007, pp. 315-16).

Manifested most extremely in Calvinist Christian practice (and, post-Reformation, in the Puritan iconoclasm of the English parliament in its civil war with the king, cf. Spraggon, 2003, by the end of which perhaps 90 per cent of religious sculpture in England had been 'completely destroyed', cf. O'Neil *et al*, 2014, p. 379), Christian theology forbids image-making, because humans cannot comprehend or convey God's image and create idols when they try; a human image is a false representation of God's word; veneration is worship by another name; and the natural imagery of God's world is perfect, so human imagery implicitly presumes divine knowledge and power (Noyes, 2016, pp. 33-5; see also van Asselt, 2007, pp. 300-8). Yet Luther condemned image-breakings as well as image-makings, as wasteful efforts that should have been invested in helping those in need (van Asselt, 2007, pp. 302-3).

The "iconomachi" (struggle over images) constituted an official debate over iconic representation in the medieval Eastern Christian world between 726 and 842 C.E., which developed out of an even longer history of disagreement, in which images had been both destroyed as idols, for example by Bishop Serenus of Marseilles, and defended as sign language for illiterate worshippers, sources of divine inspiration and/or channels for communication (though not agents of communication), for example by Pope Gregory I, between 599 and 600 C.E. (Noble, 2009, p. 42).

Yet, during that original struggle, there was 'no wholesale destruction'; documented 'disputes over icons were few and far between'; perhaps only 20 or 25 specific images are known to have been disguised or destroyed in the course of more than a century (Noble, 2009, p. 70; 61; 69). Some image-breakings in Palestine were so respectful and minimal that they suggest a concession by iconophiles to satisfy iconophobic communities (Brubaker, 2009, p. 54). Hence, after centuries of controversy and negotiation between iconophiles and iconophobes, the century of struggle was one of eventual political 'consolidation' by factions who were iconophiles (or aligned with iconophiles) over those who were iconophobes (or aligned with iconophobes), rather than religious 'crisis' and persistent aggression by iconoclastic forces (Noble, 2009, p. 48).

Iconoclasm in (Christian and) Jewish theology

Furthermore, the scriptural prohibition on iconic representation emerged in ancient Jewish theology. Jewish (and Christian) theology commands: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth' (*Shemot* and *Exodus*, Chapter 20, Verse 3-5). Iconoclasm appears to be a demonstration of faith in God – and a way of precluding the possibility of betrayal.

Yet, beyond the Ten Commandments, the Torah (and the Old Testament of the Bible) directs: 'You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their

gods…; you shall tear down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim[2] with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their name out of that place' (*Re'eh* or *Deuteronomy*, Chapter 12, Verses 2-3, cited by Joyce, 2007, pp. 31-2). The apparently religious motivations were evidently also political and territorial. Sometimes, not only any alternative, but the very knowledge of the possibility of an alternative, needed to be destroyed.

Sometimes though, the definition of "destruction" shows that iconoclasm was limited to a demonstration of a lack of power and thus a lack of divinity. Specifically, Jewish theology explains: 'How does one nullify [an idol]? [If] he [*sic*] has cut off the tip of its ear, the tip of its nose, the tip of its finger, if he [has] battered it, even though he did not break off [any part of] it – he has nullified it' (*Abodah Zarah*, Chapter 4, Verse 5, cf. Goedegebuure, 2012, p. 424).

Furthermore, iconoclastic obligations were not accepted by all members of the religion. At least for a time, some Israelites continued to 'burn incense to the queen of heaven [Ishtar], and pour out libations to her, as [they] used to' (*Yirmiyahu* or *Jeremiah*, Chapter 44, Verse 17, cited by Joyce, 2007, p. 34). The first Christian Roman emperor, Constantine, may have destroyed a sanctuary to the pagan sex goddess Ishtar-Aphrodite in Baalbek-Heliopolis and replaced it with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Hahn, 2015, pp. 117-19); and a later Christian Roman emperor, Theodosius I, may have destroyed the Temple of Baal-Zeus and replaced it with a church (Emmel, Gotter and Hahn, 2008, p. 1). Yet "the queen of heaven" survived as an aspect of the Virgin Mary (cf. Marcovich, 1996, p. 48); and, at least in Cyprus into the twentieth century, the objects and practices of the cult of Ishtar-Aphrodite were preserved in veneration of Mary the All-Holy Lady of Aphrodite or the All-Holy Milk-Giving Virgin, Panayia Aphroditissa or Panayia Galaktariotissa (cf. Hadjisavvas, 1998, p. 684; Russell and Russell, 1971, p. 318). So, the struggles between religious communities were evidently also struggles within religious communities.

Iconoclasm as tradition and strategy

The story of the golden calf shows that the holy practice of iconoclasm was a formative act in the "Abrahamic" tradition, which is common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It teaches that, while the prophet Moses was away, receiving the Covenant from God, the doubting Israelites (re)turned to the worship of the Egyptian fertility deity Apis, which was an intermediary with the ultimate creator god (and which was depicted as a bull or a bull-headed being). Moses 'burn[ed]' the calf 'with fire, and ground it to powder', and made the idolaters drink the ashes in water, then killed 3,000 as an instructive punishment (*Shemot* or *Exodus*, Chapter 32, Verse 20; cf. Blidstein, 1973, p. 1; Noyes, 2016, p. 3-8).

Indeed, iconoclasm was a constituent element of the origins of Judaism (thence Christianity and Islam). Abraham is the first patriarch of Judaism and a prophet for Jews, Christians and Muslims. In Ur, according to Jewish legends that interpret the Torah, Abraham either 'broke all the idols' (*Bereshit Rabbah* or *Genesis Rabbah*, Chapter 38, Verse 13; cf. Katz and Schwartz, 2002, p. 50) or 'burned the house of idols…. burned everything in the house' (*Jubilees*, Chapter 12, Verse 12; cf. Katsumata, 2012, p. 44). According to Christian legends that interpret the Bible, Abraham either burned them or broke them or 'broke some idols and burned others' (for example, those told by George the Monk, cited by Adler, 1986-1987, p. 100-2). According to the Qur'an, Abraham tricked pagans into leaving their temple; 'struck', 'smit[ed]' or 'destroyed' all but one of their idols (*as-Saaffat*, Surah 37, Verse 93; cf. Abbas and Atwell, 2009d); then told the pagans that their remaining

[2] Asherim were idols for the worship of the fertility goddess Asherah.

idol had destroyed the others, in order to demonstrate both that their idols were false and that their relationship with their idols was empty.

As shown by Moses' force-feeding of idolaters with the already-destroyed idol in Jewish and Christian scripture and by Abraham's wilful preservation of the blamed idol in Islamic legend, religious iconoclasm is not motivated by an absolute religious imperative. As will be shown in some of the following examples, even when iconoclasm is interpreted as an absolute religious imperative, it is implemented as a situational strategy.

ICONOCLASM FROM NORTH AFRICA TO SOUTHERN EUROPE

In Egypt, in the late fourteenth century B.C.E., Amenhotep IV (who renamed himself Akhenaten) destroyed the cult statues of other gods, in order to impose monotheism. Intriguingly, in light of later monotheistic iconoclasm, Akhenaten's programme recognised the other gods' powers and was directed at those gods, rather than their worshippers. The other gods needed physical embodiments to act in the world. So, by depriving those gods of their earthly bodies, Akhenaten hoped to create a *practically* monotheistic world (Bryan, 2012, pp. 369-73).

In turn, in order to restore polytheism at the end of the fourteenth century B.C.E., Horemheb destroyed Akhenaten's statues, temples in Karnak and city of Akhet-Aten. Akhenaten had destroyed his rivals' statues in a calculated manner. In contrast, his own statues often had their eyes chiselled out (Bryan, 2012, p. 373).

Such damnation of memory (*damnatio memoriae*) is common practice for new or insecure ruling regimes and dominant communities. It manifests the thought that 'who controls the past… controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' (Orwell, 2004 [1949], p. 37). By destroying evidence of a past alternative, the dominant attempt to destroy the capacity of the dominated to assess the present in contrast with the past, to imagine a future alternative and even to believe in the possibility of change.

Symbolic targeting of bodily instruments can be seen in the treatment of dead bodies. In 43 B.C.E., when a dictatorial triumvirate had taken power in Rome, it killed the opponent orator and author Cicero, cut off his head and his hands, and displayed them in the Forum (Kristensen, 2015, p. 321). It can be seen in the treatment of statues, too.

In order to impose Christian monotheism in Roman Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E., pagan idols were desecrated. Simultaneously reflecting and contradicting the understanding that '[idols] have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; neither is there any breath in their mouths' (*Tehillim* or *Psalms*, Chapter 135, Verses 16-17, cf. Kristensen, 2009, p. 226), iconoclasts disempowered the supposedly already powerless idols by gouging out their eyes, cutting off their earlobes, breaking their noses…

It might be argued that it was not theologically necessary for Christians to destroy those features, but it was theologically necessary for the pagans to understand that those idols were powerless. However, in the eighth-century Byzantine Empire, "brief historical notes" on sculpture averred, 'take care when you look at old statues, especially pagan ones' (*Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, cited in Kristensen, 2010, p. 160). Such cautions did not always reflect a fear of idols, however. Echoing ancient Egyptian beliefs about embodiments of gods, medieval Christians feared that demons could possess figures. Hence, they were motivated to disable those demons by breaking those bodies.

Sometimes, iconoclasm is motivated by a desire to very literally dismantle and reconstruct the architecture of power. In 325 C.E., the temple of Cronus was converted into the Church of Theonas

and the idol of Cronus was dismembered and reformed as a cross (Kristensen, 2010, p. 163).

Sometimes, it is simply an act of domination and humiliation. In the mid-fourth century C.E., Christians defaced a statue of legendary pagan commander Germanicus (though they may only have known that it was a representation of *a* pagan). They tried to cut off his head, then broke his nose, cut off an earlobe and "baptised" him by carving a cross into his forehead (Kristensen, 2009, pp. 229-31).

In ancient Egyptian myth, Osiris was overthrown by Set, then dismembered and dumped in the Nile, though he was reassembled by Isis and their child Horus then overthrew Set. In 392 C.E., the temple for Serapis (Serapeum) was destroyed and the idol of Serapis was "overthrown" by a church-and-state-backed mob in Alexandria, who demonstrated their intimate understanding of their target. His identifying grain measure was cut off his head, his head was cut off his body, his body was dismembered, then his parts were dispersed and burned, so that he could not be revived (Kristensen, 2009, p. 228; 2010, p. 166). Reaffirming the use of iconoclasm for ideological instruction more than ideological satisfaction, excavations revealed that much figural sculpture was not destroyed; even the head of a(nother) Serapis had suffered no violence (Kristensen, 2010, p. 166). In 415 C.E., idolaters themselves were destroyed. Hypatia was lynched by a mob; her body was dismembered, then her parts were dispersed and violated (Kristensen, 2009, p. 229).

At the very end of the fourth century C.E. or in the early fifth century C.E., Shenoute, a Coptic monk from the White Monastery, trespassed on the property of Gesios, an aristocrat. Yet again demonstrating iconoclasts' familiarity with, rather than ignorance of, iconophilic culture, Shenoute both identified the subjects of the iconic representations and realised Egyptian myth in his iconophobic reality. As Set had treated Osiris's body, so Shenoute dismembered the Egyptian 'demons' and dumped them in the river (Kristensen, 2009, p. 236).

Reaffirming the use of iconoclasm for ideological instruction, when a hidden group of idols was revealed in Menouthis in 489 C.E., patriarch Peter held a public "trial" in Alexandria, with a Christian "prosecutor" and a pagan "co-defendant", then burned the "guilty" idols (Kristensen, 2009, p. 237). Moreover, 'only the worthless wooden idols' were burned (Kristensen, 2010, p. 170). However, on another occasion, an ivory-and-gold leaf-inlaid wooden statue was disarticulated and burned (Kristensen, 2009, pp. 239-40).

Egypt has continued to constitute a microcosm of iconoclasm. Destruction of symbols of power has played a role in both the deposition and the consolidation of autocratic regimes in the present. For example, the headquarters of the National Democratic Party government were first burned by pro-democracy revolutionaries in January 2011, then demolished by the police state successor to the military coup regime in June 2015 (Ateyya, 2015; El-Tabei, 2015).

CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN CHINA

The "four times the Buddha was burned" (*sici huofo*) – four notorious historical episodes of iconoclasm in China – stretch back from the tenth century, through the ninth and sixth centuries, to the fifth century C.E. Although such episodes may have been defended as ideological Taoist acts against Buddhist power, they were only periodical and coincided with financial crises, so the political-religious motivation appears to have been a cover for an economic motivation.

The gold, silver, iron, bronze and copper were recovered from statues and recycled to finance the state. Meanwhile, the labour-power or human capital of the priests who were disrobed and prospective priests who were not ordained was returned to or retained by the market (Reinders,

2005, pp. 65-7). Such a cover might also be perceived in twentieth-century Communist iconoclasm, yet its conduct demonstrates a truly (anti-religious) political motive.

During the civil war between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Party, Communist iconoclasm was piecemeal and performed to extract or redistribute assets such as raw materials and land. Between 1949 and 1966, though, the state became more systematic and more targeted in its persecution. It persecuted Christians most intensively, but also Buddhists and others.

Despite the collapse in religious practice before the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76), during the cultural revolution, the state methodically targeted any component of the Four Old Things (old ideology, old culture, old customs and old habits), from antiquities and other cultural commodities to entire institutions, in order to consolidate the regime and its *new* ideology, culture, customs and habits.

Even the performance of the act of iconoclasm was controlled. Politically unacceptable persons were denied the opportunity to participate. At least on some occasions, when iconophiles pre-empted iconoclasts' demolitions, the iconoclasts (re)built symbols in order to have a target for their performance of revolution. And, paradoxically, considering the prohibited old things, many religious objects were protected by being rhetorically identified as cultural objects (Reinders, 2004, pp. 199-204).

When Buddhist and other icons were broken, they were treated – "tortured" and "killed" – like living "counterrevolutionaries". Red Guards bound and displayed them; the public were incited to curse them; they were ritually humiliated and paraded with objects such as dunce caps; then, they were "judged" and "shot to death" (Reinders, 2004, p. 192n1). Still, the Red Guards also plundered cultural property and sold it into the international art market, which served to cleanse the revolutionary territory while financing revolutionary activity (Hardy, 2015b, p. 27).

ELIMINATING MARKERS OF MIXTURE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF DIFFERENCE

War on peace in South-Eastern Europe: the Eastern Mediterranean

While both the details of individual cases and the historical-geographical trends are contested, it is clear that destruction of cultural property has been an important component of the Cyprus Conflict (cf. Hardy, 2011, p. 152-200; 2014, p. 82-3). Since 1955, targets have encompassed graves; religious buildings such as churches, monasteries, mosques and tekkes; civilian properties such as homes and shops; social-political sites such as statues, cafes, public services, offices of trade unions and political parties… Such destruction is different from the breaking of religious idols, insofar as it is not committed to prove the powerlessness of totemic figures. The iconoclasts have not expected Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots to see that their religion or nation is "wrong" and convert themselves. However, they have tried to annihilate the presence and power of others through the annihilation of the symbols of those others. They have tried to create non-existent pasts in order to create desired futures.

There has been systematic destruction of symbols of the Turkish Cypriot community (cf. Hardy, 2011, p. 164n87), primarily driven by a Greek Cypriot ultranationalist paramilitary, whose 'invisible but real leader [atheato[s] alla pragmatik[os] archig[os]]' was Archbishop Makarios III (Christodoulou kai Mavros, 2008), who became first president of the bicommunal republic, then president of the Greek Cypriot administration. There has been 'institutionalised obliteration' of symbols of the Greek Cypriot community (Fielding, 1976a, p. 13), primarily driven by a Turkish

Cypriot ultranationalist paramilitary, which was led by Rauf Denktaş, who became first vice-president of the bicommunal republic, then president of the Turkish Cypriot administration.

Contradictorily, iconoclasts have even tried to teach their fabricated pasts through the very act of fabricating them. Amidst the ethno-religious cleansing of the territory, while president of the Turkish military-occupied Turkish Cypriot administration, Denktaş argued that the history of destruction taught that 'politically these two communities are incompatible' (Fielding, 1976b, p. 13). Manifestly, historically, the communities had been compatible, otherwise there would not have been so many mixed communities and multicultural landscapes for the ultranationalists to ethnically cleanse.

Ideological destruction that enables iconoclasts to conquer symbolic space may also be instrumental destruction that enables iconoclasts to conquer physical space. During intercommunal violence under colonial rule in 1958, the mosque in Morphou/Güzelyurt was stoned. For at least one of the youths who conducted the attack, the motivation was to prove his masculinity, group membership and status. For the Greek Cypriot ultranationalist paramilitary that ordered the attack, the motivation was intimidation – to give 'a threatening warning [mia apeilitiki proeidopoiisi]' to the Turkish Cypriot community (Georgiades, 2008). And the targets understood: what had been done to the symbols of the community would be done to the members of the community. Duly threatened, many evacuated (Patrick, 1976, p. 98n65).

While provocation is not a typical motivation for iconoclasm, it is one. Demonstrating the shared logic of iconoclasm and the shared strategy for violence, when the island recovered peace under independent democracy, the ultranationalists committed false flag attacks on their own symbols, in order to provoke a return to violence, without bearing responsibility for it. During the period of bicommunal rule before the descent into civil war, Turkish Cypriot ultranationalists bombed Bayraktar Mosque and Ömeriye Mosque; bombed the law office of their leader, Rauf Denktaş; stoned the Embassy of Turkey; and shot the statue of the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Gazioğlu ve Uludağ, 2005; Levent, 2008). Greek Cypriot ultranationalists burned one of their community's primary schools, in Ayios Kassianos; and bombed the statue of one of their heroes, Markos Drakos (Charalambous, 2008; Sunday Mail, 2008).

Iconoclasm can also constitute an act of resistance and negotiation by weak groups. At the archbishopric in Nicosia on the night of 1-2 September 2008, unknown persons threw paint over the statue of President Archbishop Makarios III and spray-painted the stones in front: 'For sale! Down with idols' (Leonidou, 2008, p. 1). Less articulately, the following morning, three unidentified young men threw beer over the statue and 'shouted abuse at priests' (Pissa, 2008). The paint-bombing, at least, was a striking act. It played on Christian theology to query the idolatry and exploitation of a religious and political figure who had been perceived as a 'saint' in life (to Greek Cypriots, while a 'monster' to Turkish Cypriots, cf. Time, 1964) and who had loomed over society (literally, in ten-metre-tall effigy) long after his death.

War on peace in South-Eastern Europe: the Balkans

In the Yugoslav Wars of 1991-2001, there was mass destruction. Inevitably, in often urban warfare, some strikes caused collateral damage. Nonetheless, many attacks constituted acts of targeted erasure. In the Croatian War of 1991-95, for example, 2,423 monuments were damaged or destroyed, of which 495 (20 per cent) were religious buildings. Indicating targeting for ethno-religious cleansing, 408 monuments were largely or completely destroyed, of which 164 (40 per

cent) were religious buildings and most of those were Roman Catholic buildings that served and symbolised the Croatian community, while many of the other destroyed monuments were civilian buildings and neighbourhoods that embodied the historical existence and presence of the Croatian community (Ukrainčik, 2001, p. 69-70).

In the Bosnian War of 1992-95, with regard to religious buildings, more than 1,200 mosques, 150 Roman Catholic churches, 15 Orthodox churches and 4 synagogues were harmed (Riedlmayer, 1996: 87-8). In total, 3,066 (52 per cent) of 5,896 "Bosniak" Muslim buildings were damaged or destroyed. Even more clearly demonstrating targeting, less than ten per cent of difficult-to-identify schools were attacked, yet more than 80 per cent of large mosques were attacked (Riedlmayer, 2002: 99 – table 1). It is difficult to infer differences in behaviour between armed forces, because they varied in each of size, territory and technology over the course of the war (cf. Hoare, 2010: 130), but 2,556 (83 per cent) of attacked Muslim buildings were attacked by Serb ultranationalists, while 510 (17 per cent) were attacked by Croat ultranationalists (Riedlmayer, 2002: 100 – table 2).

In the Kosovo War of 1998-99, Serb ultranationalists damaged or destroyed at least 207 (34 per cent) of its 609 mosques; 3 of its 4 historic Ottoman districts; more than 500 traditional Albanian houses; and a number of Islamic schools and libraries (Herscher and Riedlmayer, 2000, p. 112). In addition, 70,000 of the territory's 500,000 houses were destroyed (Herscher and Riedlmayer, 2000, p. 112). Subsequently, in postwar conflict between 1999 and 2004, Albanian ultranationalists damaged or destroyed 156 (11 per cent) of Kosovo's 1,400 Orthodox churches (Philp, 2007), as well as 730 Serb homes (United Nations Interim Administration Mission In Kosovo, 2005, p. 1).

The existence and significance of this ethno-religious cleansing is also visible in civilians' coping strategies. The identities of some residents, who fear becoming accidental victims of extremists within the dominant community, are now literally expressed through their buildings. Some doors and walls now state: "Albanian owner (pronar Shqiptar)"; "this house is Albanian-owned (Shtëpia e Shqiptarit pronarit)"; "this house is Albanian (shtëpi është Shqiptari)".

Yet the targets went beyond visual symbols of communities, to historical evidence of communities. Libraries were targeted with incendiary munitions, such as phosphorus shells, in order to ensure that the archives of their communities' histories were burned – for example, the Library of the Inter-University Center in Dubrovnik, Croatia, the National and University Library in Sarajevo, Bosnia, and the Central Historical Archive of the Islamic Community of Kosovo in Prishtina (Riedlmayer, 2007, p. 109; 110; 123).

In 1993, Croat forces explained that they had destroyed the Old Bridge (Stari Most) because it was 'not enough to clean Mostar of the Muslims'; 'the relics' of the presence of Muslims 'must also be removed' (cited by Block, 1993, p. 8). After an Albanian nationalist pogrom in Kosovo and a retaliatory Serb nationalist pogrom in Serbia in 2004, the mufti's son, Iman Mustafa Jusufspahic, explained the consequence of the destruction of the archives of the Islamic community of Belgrade: 'Our library is destroyed, all our records are destroyed, our seals are missing, our safe has been emptied, our computers are destroyed or stolen. As the Islamic community of Belgrade we no longer exist' (cited by Mracevich, 2004). The destruction of memory was the destruction of community and the destruction of the possibility of heterogeneity (cf. Coward, 2009).

War on peace in West Africa

Since the French colonial occupation of Mali in 1891, there have been ethnic and religious communal clashes, Tuareg rebellions, a popular revolution and military coups. During Mali's most recent troubles, the predominantly anti-extremist, Sufi Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) declared the independence of northern Mali. Rebels repeatedly

raided IHERIAB (the Ahmed Baba Institute of Higher Learning and Islamic Research), because they wanted to use it as their headquarters, though its staff resisted and no historical archives were harmed (le Monde, 2012; Sharpe, 2012).

To consolidate their position, they entered a tactical alliance with the extremist, Wahhabi Salafi Ansar Dine as the Transitional Council of the Islamic State of Azawad (though the MNLA planned an eventual return to secular rule). Immediately after their occupation of Timbuktu, following a strict interpretation of a vague injunction against "idle talk" or "pastime of discourse" that distracted from study of the Qur'an and worship of Allah (*Luqman*, Surah 31, Verse 6; cf. Abbas and Atwell, 2009c), Ansar Dine destroyed the tangible records of intangible heritage; they destroyed the musical archives of Radio Buktu (Human Rights Watch, 2012). They also invaded the tomb and burned the grave of saint Sidi Mahamoud Ben Omar Mohamed Aquit in Timbuktu, because they perceived local veneration of a holy person as local worship of a dead person with divine power (cited by BBC News, 2012).

Subsequently, Ansar Dine broke the agreement, allied with the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which was affiliated with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), then tried to conquer Mali and convert it into an Islamic state. Only then, Ansar Dine began the demolition of shrines. Explicitly rejecting the authority of UNESCO to judge the proper treatment of religious sites – perhaps more importantly, albeit implicitly, rejecting the authority of the state that had asked UNESCO to add the City of Timbuktu and the Tomb of Askia to the list of World Heritage in Danger – Ansar Dine declared that they would 'destroy every mausoleum in the city' (cited by France 24, 2012).

They began with the tomb of Sidi Mahamoud Ben Omar Mohamed Aquit, which they had invaded but left standing before, as well as the tombs of Sidi Mokhtar Ben Sidi Muhammad Ben Sheikh Alkabir and Alpha Moya on 30 June 2012, then the mausoleum of Sheikh el-Kebir on 1 July 2012. At the same time, they invaded the mosque of Sidi Yahya and opened the sealed gate, in order to denigrate the local legend that the gate would only be opened at the end of the world. Ansar Dine's leaders declared that the site was idolatrous, but at least some of its fighters told resident Haidrata that they were demolishing the building because they had been falsely accused of demolishing other sites and 'wanted to show what they were really capable of' (cited by Mark, 2012).

On 15 September 2012, MUJAO demolished the mausoleum of Cheikh el-Kebir, north of Gao. And, on 29 September 2012, Ansar Dine also destroyed the mausoleum of Alfa Mobo in Goundam (Middle East Online, 2012). On 18 October 2012, Ansar Dine demolished the mausoleums of Cheick Nouh, Cheick Ousmane el-Kabir and Cheick Mohamed Foulani Macina outside Timbuktu (Reuters, 2012). On 23 December 2012, the mausoleums of Al Hassan and the Al Houseyni twins were destroyed (United Nations, 2012).

As they were being ousted in January 2013 (notably, not before then), Ansar Dine burned more than 4,000 ancient manuscripts (Harding, 2013). Yet the community had secretly evacuated and protected almost 400,000 other documents (English, 2014).

The head of Ansar Dine's *hesbah* ("manners brigade"), Ahmad al-Faqi al-Mahdi, has confessed to the destruction of nine[3]of Timbuktu's 16[4] mausoleums and damage to one[5] of its three[6] mosques

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[3] (1) Sidi Mahamoud Ben Omar Mohamed Aquit; (2) Sheikh Mohamed Mahmoud Al Arawani; (3) Sheikh Sidi Mokhtar Ben Sidi Muhammad Ben Sheikh Alkabir; (4) Alpha Moya; (5) Sheikh Sidi Ahmed Ben Amar Arragadi; (6) Sheikh Muhammad El Mikki; (7) Sheikh Abdoul Kassim Attouaty; (8) Ahmed Fulane; and (9) Bahaber Babadié

[4] (1) Sidi Mahmoud Ben Omar Mohamed Aquit; (2) Al Akib Ben Mahmoud Ben Omar Mouhamed Aquit Ben Omar Ben Ali Ben Yahia; (3) Cheick Alpha Moya; (4) Cheick Sidi Ahmed Ben Amar Arragadi; (5) Cheick Aboul Kassim Attouaty; (6) Cheick Mouhamad El Micky; (7) Cheick Mouhamed Tamba-Tamba; (8) Cheick Al Imam Saïd; (9) El Imam Ismaïl;

(cf. BBC, 2016; International Criminal Court, 2016). In the end, 15 of the mausoleums were destroyed; only the mausoleum of Al Imam Saïd survived (Direction Nationale de Patrimoine Culturel de la République du Mali, 2015, p. 3).

Protest in Iran and Afghanistan

In 1979, Iran's citizens were repressed, particularly its Islamist and Communist communities; despite significant economic as well as political enfranchisement, many were also still severely impoverished. During the revolution, Islamist militants 'smashed… statues' of secularist royalist Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and destroyed or otherwise removed 'almost every [other] sign of the Pahlavi dynasty' (Taheri, 1986, p. 240). Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali specifically commanded the burning of the pre-Islamic ancient city of Persepolis and the bulldozing of a partial modern reconstruction, which the Shah had had built in 1971, in order to host a feast for regime elites and international elites to celebrate the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire, thereby to identify himself with the founder of the Persian Empire, nationalist idol Cyrus the Great.

Yet Ayatollah Amir Mahallati organised resistance and local citizens drove the 'band of thugs' away from 'the oldest, strongest symbol' of their society (according to Ayatollah Amir Mahallati, paraphrased and quoted by Sciolino, 2000, p. 168). Now, preservation of pre-Islamic as well as Islamic cultural heritage is not only implemented as a means of sustainable economic development; preservation is implemented as a demonstration of the 'moderation and rationalism' of the Islamic Republic (Aghlani, 2016).

By the winter of 2000-2001, Afghanistan had already been devastated by years of wars, famines, droughts and earthquakes. The Taliban had 'virtually eliminated' the poppy industry, which provided a lot of the administration's finances, yet they were restricted by international sanctions for harbouring Osama bin Laden. And one million Afghans were at risk of starvation. Then foreign states and cultural heritage institutions – seemingly including the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Palace Museum of Taiwan, Iran, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Rathje, 2001) – 'offered to purchase' the figures (Flood, 2002, p. 651). When the Afghan religious council requested money to support malnourished children, the international diplomatic mission refused, because 'this money is only for statues' (Crossette, 2001).

The Taliban argued that, if they had wanted to destroy the Buddhas, they would have done it in 1998, when Mullah Mohammed Omar had actually prohibited the statues' demolition. Since the statues were 'harmless', they were left unharmed. However, *because* money was offered for the statues 'while children [were] dying of malnutrition next door', that *made* them 'harmful' and created a religious (as well as political) need to destroy them (according to Taliban envoy Sayed Rahmatullah Hashimi, cited by Crossette, 2001).

Provocation and extermination in Iraq and Syria

The Islamic State explains some of its motivations for iconoclasm in propaganda that advertises certain acts of iconoclasm and propaganda that advertises the organisation itself. For example,

(10) Sidi Mouhammad Boukkou; (11) Sidi El Wafi El Araouani; (12) Cheickh Mouhammad Sankoré le Peulh; (13) Cheickh Sidi Mokhtar Ben Sidi Mouhammad Ben Cheickh AlKabir; (14) Mouhammed Acqit; (15) El Hadj Ahmed; and (16) Aboul Abbas Ahmed Baba Ben Ahmed Ben Elhadji Ahmed Ben Omar Ben Mouhammad Aqit

[5] (1) Sidi Yahia

[6] (1) Sidi Yahya; (2) Sankoré; (3) Djingareyber

when it promoted its first showpiece of destruction of ancient pagan religion, its attack on Mosul Museum and the Nergal Gate Museum at Nineveh, one of its iconoclasts proclaimed: ‘Oh Muslims, these artifacts that are behind me were idols and gods worshipped…. instead of Allah…. gods for war, agriculture and rain to whom [Assyrians and Akkadians] offered sacrifices…. Our prophet ordered us to remove all these statues as his followers did when they conquered nations’ (translated by Salaheddin, 2015). ‘These statues and idols, these artifacts, if God has ordered its [*sic* – their] removal, they became [*sic* – become] worthless to us even if they are worth billions of dollars’ (translated by Shaheen, 2015).

In its multilingual advertising brochure for recruits and donors, *Dabiq*, the Islamic State has elaborated on its theology. Following the examples of Abraham in Ur and Mohammed in Mecca, the Islamic State (2015, p. 22) has ‘laid waste to the shirkī [polytheistic] legacy’ of societies that have ‘long passed from the face of the earth’, which is good in and of itself. It also ‘serve[s] to enrage the kuffār [unbeliever], a deed that in itself is beloved to Allah’, so even theologically-unnecessary destruction is good in and of itself, as long as it offends someone who is not a Muslim (in practice, due to its interpretation, someone who is not a member of the Islamic State).

Acceptance of a non-Islamic cultural heritage or a non-Islamist (specifically, ‘nationalist’) identity and/or agenda ‘dilutes’ Muslims’ ‘walā [loyalty]’ to Allah (Islamic State, 2015, p. 22). Yet the act of iconoclasm is also a fearful act of self-preservation, as ‘many nations of shirk [polytheism]’ have been ‘destroyed for… persisting upon their shirk’.

In an almost archaeological turn, the Islamic State (2015, p. 23) instructs Muslims ‘to take a lesson from those disbelieving nations that came before us and avoid what led to their destruction, as opposed to unearthing and preserving their statues and putting them on display for people to admire’. So, in theory (if not in practice, because almost any act could be justified in order to “enrage the kuffār”), these objects would not have been destroyed, they could have been preserved, if they had been denigrated, if they had been ‘look[ed] at… with disgust and hatred [and]… fear’ (Islamic State, 2015, p. 24).

The conduct of the warring parties in Syria and Iraq has exemplified sign transformation without physical transformation, as well as material destruction. During their first occupation of Palmyra in Syria in 2015, the Islamic State beheaded the ancient city’s Muslim former site director Khaled al-Asaad outside Palmyra Museum (where they also executed other civilians) and ritually displayed his body in the ancient city, because they defined the archaeologist as an ‘apostate’ who preserved ‘idols’ and consorted with ‘infidels’ (BBC News, 2015; see also Shaheen and Black, 2015). Thereby, they defiled the symbolic places that he had tried to protect as well as his body. Furthermore, they destroyed the polytheistic Canaanite Temple of Baal-Shamin, the polytheistic Mesopotamian Temple of Bel and the Victory Arch of pagan Roman Emperor Septimius Severus.

To celebrate the “liberation” of the ancient city, when Assad regime forces and Russian armed forces temporarily dislodged the Islamic State, Russia’s Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra performed a victory concert in the Roman theatre (John, 2016), which the Islamic State had previously used as a stage for mass executions of enemy soldiers (Dearden, 2017). Thereby, they tried to achieve the symbolic ‘revival of Palmyra as cultural heritage of humanity’, as opposed to a platform for jihadi terrorism (according to the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, cited by RT, 2016).

They also wished to imprint a memory of the ‘rescue of modern civilization’ by the Assad regime and the Russian Federation (according to the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, cited by RT, 2016), which ‘equal[led]’ the Soviet Union’s contribution to the defeat of the Nazi Empire (Sputnik News, 2016), instead of the memory of the Russian Federation-assisted Assad regime’s notorious torture dungeon in the neighbouring modern city, Tadmor prison, which the

Islamic State had destroyed before any of the place's ancient buildings. Torture survivors condemned that 'demoli[tion of] a historic symbol', because '[t]he destruction of a prison that was the symbol of our slavery [was] the destruction of our freedom' (Ali Aboudehn and Yassin Haj Saleh, cited by Daghastani, 2015).

During their second occupation in 2016, the Islamic State destroyed a monumental Roman tetrapylon, which marked crossroads, as well as parts of the Roman theatre, including the façade and the stage (Shaheen, 2017). Since they did not obliterate this piece of material evidence of the society's non-Islamic history, it suggests that the comparatively limited destruction was an attempt to erase the symbol of their defeat and the restitution of "Christian principles" (as had been proclaimed by the Russian Foreign Ministry Commissioner for Human Rights, Konstantin Dolgov, cited by RT, 2016).

The theologically-grounded arguments only address some of the Islamic State's motivations for iconoclasm. For instance, if its primary concern had been the elimination of idolatry, it would not have waited months to attack Mosul Museum and Nergal Gate Museum. In fact, the Islamic State did not only bide its time to perform the act, it performed structurally-meaningless destruction in the act for the sake of the propaganda video.

Furthermore, although the machinations around the events are murky, the Islamic State *never* attacked the mausoleum of Suleyman Shah, the grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire, even though it had surrounded the site for months. In fact, it released the video of its iconoclasm in Iraq immediately after Turkey had invaded Syria, passed through Islamic State territory, removed Suleyman Shah's remains and pre-emptively destroyed the mausoleum (Hardy, 2015a; 2016).

The Islamic State also looted iconic antiquities from Mosul Museum before it broke the other images on camera. So, though they were not worth billions of dollars, they were worth *something* to the Islamic State in financial terms and the economic motive was prioritised over the religious motive. Since the economic benefit served the advancement of the movement, rather than the enrichment of the participants, it was itself ultimately a political motivation.

Moreover, in the same way that trafficking complements destruction, destruction complements trafficking. Destruction advertises the existence of the commodity; increases its scarcity value; and excuses the commission of unethical and even illegal acts (on top of the immediate act of buying stolen property), by the supposedly ethical buyer, for the purpose of "rescuing" the antiquities (Hardy, under review).

Alongside these nuanced readings of the acts, there are also very simple motives: to displace people who might otherwise disrupt or actively resist, which also increases the financial burden and social tensions in enemy territory; to intimidate residents into acquiescence; and to provoke reactions from their enemies, whether expressions of fetishistic concern for archaeological sites by Western powers or military intervention by the sectarian allies of their victims, which then provoke service from their own sectarian supporters. Beyond any readings of acts that are also exploited for propaganda, the Islamic State has demonstrated its ideological commitment to extermination through its unadvertised genocide of the supposedly "polytheistic" Yezidi community.

CONCLUSION

Hostile destruction of significant objects has existed for thousands of years. Indeed, some individual religious logics for destruction have been debated and developed over thousands of years. Yet even political practices of destruction may reflect an intimate understanding of the

history and psychology of the other. Beyond universally understandable acts such as the toppling of statues, some practices of iconoclasm involve acts that have been established within communities of understanding over hundreds of years.

Iconoclasm may be a means of establishing power relations amongst coexisting communities, as it was in the Ancient Near East. It may be a means of demonstrating one's faith and furthering one's cause, as it has been in movements from Judaism, Christianity and Islam in West Asia to Communism in East Asia. It may be a means of claiming and purifying territory, as it was for zealots in medieval Western Europe and nationalists in modern South-Eastern Europe. It may be an act of resistance to local power or protest in international politics. And it may be an early warning sign for and constituent element of genocide. Particularly as some acts of iconoclasm may be peaceful, celebratory and popular, such as the breaking down of the Berlin Wall, it may indeed help to think of iconoclasm as transforming signs instead of breaking images. However it is conceived, it will persist as a fundamental component of social action.

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