

Classics 191: Loot: Antiquity, Archaeology, and Crime, Professor Kathryn McDonnell

Capstone Seminar Winter Quarter 2016

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Office Hours: 1-2pm and by appt.

Course Description:

From the Persian sack of the Acropolis and Verres' plundering of Sicily to Elgin's purchase of the Parthenon marbles and the destruction of Palmyra by ISIS, material culture has been at the center of wars over culture and territory. Some objects and sites have been looted or destroyed as trophies, like the gold of Troy, others, like the Euphronios krater, have been looted and sold for millions of dollars. In this capstone seminar, we will examine both ancient and modern approaches to material culture and cultural heritage, examining the collecting ethics of modern museums and collectors as well as the practices of the Greeks and Romans.

Required Texts:

Jason Felch and Ralph Frammolino. *Chasing Aphrodite: The Hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum*. 2011.

Anne-Marie O' Connor. *The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*. 2015

Additional readings at: <http://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/16W-CLASSIC191-1>

Optional purchase: Cicero, *Selected Works*. (We will only read the speech against Verres.)

Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria:

- Attendance and Participation (20%) Participation in class discussion is crucial, and we will notice your absence.
- Class Reports (30%). In order to practice public presentations, you will choose a contested monument, site, or object to present to the class. You will also present one article report and one book report, each of which will require a two page outline of the work's thesis and main points.
- Research Paper (30%) and Class Presentation (20%)
The primary component of your grade in this course is your 10-15 page research paper and the 20 minute presentation of your research to the class. You will need to pick a topic for research

by the end of the second week and submit a one-paragraph topic description with bibliography in week three.

Academic Integrity (<http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/integrity.html>):

Please read UCLA's Code of Academic Integrity and abide by it. You should be aware that violations include cheating, fabrication, multiple submissions, and plagiarism. Familiarize yourself with their definitions. Work that violates Academic Integrity will be immediately reported to the Dean of Students for investigation, and may result in suspension or expulsion from UCLA, as well as a zero for the assignment.

Classics 191, Tentative Schedule of Assignments

Date Topic

- 5-Jan Introduction
- 12-Jan From Verres to the Fourth Crusade
- 19-Jan Rediscovering Antiquities: the Europeans Abroad
- 26-Jan Forming the Great Museums
- 2-Feb Paradigm Shift: World War II and Nazi Looting
(finish *The Lady in Gold* by this class)
- 9-Feb TBD.
- 16-Feb Twentieth Century Shenanigans
(Finish *Chasing Aphrodite* by this class)
- 23-Feb Ongoing Challenges: War, Smuggling, Enforcement
- 1-Mar Student Research Presentations
- 8-Mar Student Research Presentations, Concluding Discussion

Abstracts

Jessica Phoenix, "Nazi Looting and Legality Abstract"

This paper discusses the looting done by Nazis in WWII and the legality involved in the looting and in the restitution efforts that followed. The judicial cases of restitution of Nazi looted art is a difficult enterprise, due to the guise of legality utilized by the Nazis through their methods to obtain Jewish property. The Cassirer case is one of interest as it is ongoing, demonstrating the present effects of the plundering done by the Nazis. The Cassirer family were patrons of Impressionist art and even owned an art gallery. However, during the reign of the Reich, the Munich Currency Office forced the sale of various paintings from the family. One of the paintings, a Pissarro, eventually found its way to a museum in Spain. The ownership of this work of art is the focus of litigation between Spain and the Cassirer family. By analyzing legal documents, books, and articles, an assessment has been made in favor of the return of Nazi looted artworks to victims or their heirs as the pretext of legal documents and laws they were made under were declared void by the Allies at the end of the war. Throughout this research, it has become evident that one positive thing resulted from the atrocities committed by the Nazis, being the change in the view of war time looting. The Nazis' plundering of cultural heritage to such an extensive magnitude has demonstrated that cultural objects must be respected by everyone, as they are significant to local and international communities alike.

Georgina Orozco, "Indiana Jones: Archaeologist or Looter?"

Looting can be seen in many popular forms of media including fictional films, documentaries, and films based on historical events. More specifically the portrayal of archaeology in movies, particularly the Indiana Jones series, has a particular relevance for the field. One has to ask are there any consequences to this portrayal? Because Indiana Jones and many movies similar to this portray their main character's as looters, they normalize the idea of looting and make it seem as if it were a regular part of archaeology. They do this by showing mistreatment of artifacts, negative depictions of indigenous people, and close relationships between museums and private collectors. All these factors play a role in shaping the audience perception of looting as "archaeology." We can specifically see these factors playing a role in the Indiana Jones series, as he handles artifact with no care, his interactions with the indigenous people always show his superiority, and he is constantly acquiring and selling artifacts to museums and private collectors. While movies like these are meant to bring inspiration, awe, and magic to the field of archaeology they tend to do more harm than good in their construction of it.

Alec Heiner, "Who Owns the Bust of Nefertiti?"

This essay addresses the 'ownership' of the Bust of Nefertiti between Germany (who has the artifact) and Egypt (who wants it). The Bust of (Queen) Nefertiti, a 12th century BCE bust found in 1912 by German archaeologist Ludwig Borchardt (1863-1938) is currently held by the Neues Museum in Berlin Germany and since its arrival in Germany been contested by Egypt. Regarding the Egyptian claim to the artifact, this essay looks at two distinct arguments, one legal and one ethical, that the Egyptians use to claim the piece. The first is the easiest to dispel because the piece has a clear provenance, was legally taken from Egypt, and does not violate the UNESCO treaty. The ethical argument is far more complicated, as it deals with the ethics of countries in possession of cultural heritage/property. It is argued here that heritage cannot be owned by one entity, but rather owned as a collective species, and how making sole claim to cultural heritage combats cosmopolitanism, stifles diversity, and serves nationalistic agendas. Following a series of academics and news articles, we see how Egypt, by making sole claim to artifacts is merely serving a national rhetoric rather promoting universal learning and how

both Germany and Egypt have a right to the Bust of Nefertiti. Through examining this, we see the Egyptian argument is flawed and how Germany has both a legal and ethical right to keeping the Bust of Nefertiti.

Jessika Ruiz, "Urbicide and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of Syria"

This paper seeks to understand urbicide and cultural genocide and the nature of this phenomena, using existing academic analysis, recent examples of conflict zones, and the strategies and intentions of the perpetrators and the resulting consequences on the landscape and its inhabitants. Although not new to warfare, urbicide and cultural genocide have been practiced in both ancient and modern times, including the sacking of Carthage by the Romans (149 BC) and ethnic cleansing of Bosniak-Muslims by Serbs and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Balkans Wars (1990s). The use of violence of space and targeting of shared space (homes, schools) is intended to destroy human communities, thereby eliminating safe harbors for opposition forces and their supporters and the destruction of normalcy of civilian life. This strategy is also systematically used to target the collective heritage (archaeological sites, museums) and sense of place of communities, with the intent of removing their presence from the landscape. In Syria, such actions are also occurring and are being perpetrated by the Assad regime and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Through a detailed evaluation of similar historic actions and those occurring on the ground in Syria, similarities and differences in tactics can be identified and additional actions taken by the international community to limit and/or stop these state and non-state actors.

Natalia Kuvelas, "Bankers, pirates, emperors and museums: The Hunt for Hans Memling's 'Last Judgment'"

My study focuses on the ownership history of Hans Memling's "Last Judgment" as evidence that leads to more complete understanding its significance and to the political, economic and social scene of the period in question. This triptych, the "Last Judgment," has been looted several times though its history, from its creation in the 15th century and to Hitler's and Stalin's attempts to add it to their museum collections. Each case of changed ownership connects directly to the meaning of the piece in that era. My research addresses not just the work's aesthetic value, but also its relationship with changing social climates. The first change of ownership, an act of piracy, was a personal contest for power between two influential employees of the Medici bank, Angelo Tani and Tommaso Portinari in 1471. Possession of Memling's work was used to display ambition and wealth. Through the analysis of sophisticated narrative content it becomes possible to trace financial alliances in late-medieval Bruges, shifts in power and politics inside the Medici bank. The second shift is the work's ownership was a seizure by the Hanseatic League, a coalition of traders that captured "Last Judgment" in order to punish their competitors and mark its financial territory. Artwork as a part of an imperial museum examined in the last section: the Napoleon Musee, the Führermuseum (Linz), the Super Museum in Moscow. In this section the idea of a museum as an instrument of a state power and domination is explored (243 words).

Jeffrey McGrew, Ethiopia Abstract

This research examines the complex issue of looting as a consequence of war, and the evolution of the

laws against it. The events examined in this paper are the British expedition of Ethiopia, and the two subsequent invasions of Italy during the 19th and 20th century. These examples of events suffered by Ethiopia help highlight the ambiguity as to where courts draw the line between cultural heritage and art. Upon further examination of these events, it becomes apparent that the actions of the invading nations were based on imperial intentions. Their later arguments to keep the looted items in question until recent times are also exposed to be positioned on faulty terminology of what accounts as unjustifiable looting of cultural property. To convey these attempts properly the paper provides evidence of past attempts at the terminology used to interpret the legal obstacles of these issues.

By tracing the provenance of the most well documented items, this paper also examines examples of how once art is looted, it is then exploited for both state and individual gains. However, the overarching concern here is the task to define what is exclusively considered as cultural heritage and not merely art. In the end, the research focuses on one major example of looted cultural property in order to make readers more conscious and aware of these ongoing acts.