PLUNDERING THE PAST IN THE BIBLICAL WORLD: SEARCHING FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PANACEA WITH REFERENCE TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN EGYPT AND ISRAEL

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DEDICATION

In memory of my grandparents:

Opa Otto, Oma Gisela, Opa Hermann, Oma Mutti
I miss you more than words could ever express.

To my parents and siblings:

Papa, Mama, Andrea, Ingo
Thank you for your unwavering love and support. Thank you for giving me hope.

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

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Plundering the past in the biblical world: Searching for an interdisciplinary panacea with reference to archaeological heritage in Egypt and Israel

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

The plundering of archaeological heritage is an international phenomenon that drives the illicit trade in antiquities. In fact, the looting and destruction of tangible cultural resources has occurred since antiquity such as tomb robbing in pharaonic Egypt or the pillaging and destruction of ancient cities in the southern Levant, more specifically the 'Holy Land', due to incursions of the Israelites, Assyrians or Babylonians among many others. Today, it is still an ongoing problem that seems to be exacerbated the most in the region of the biblical world. While the plundering and vandalism of antiquities is also a reflection of past and present socio-economic and geopolitical circumstances, it actually causes a loss of data available for the study of Biblical Archaeology, thereby hindering the understanding of the people, places and events described in the biblical narrative. Therefore, it is imperative that a solution should be found, that at the very least offers the potential of curbing the degree to which the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage occurs in the present. Since this is a very complex issue and a single approach such as legislation alone does not appear to suffice in tackling it, a more multifaceted approach that targets these issues from different angles is necessary. Therefore, this thesis proposes an interdisciplinary four-pillar approach for addressing the plundering of the cultural heritage of the biblical world, which includes monitoring, documentation, public archaeology and physical and legal securitisation. In order to investigate the utility of this approach, the archaeological site of Tel Hazor in Israel is considered for the application of a pilot study.

Keywords: Plundering, looting, destruction, iconoclasm, godnapping, ancient Egypt, changes in burial architecture, Holy Land, tell sites, southern Levant, Tel Hazor, interdisciplinary four-pillar approach, monitoring, remote sensing, watchlists, documentation, digitisation, public archaeology, education, community engagement, tourism, physical and legal securitisation, international conventions, national legislation, situational awareness

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I have dedicated this thesis to my grandparents, Otto and Gisela Hoffmann, and Hermann and Trudi Rudolph, who lived through World War II. It was their ordeal during armed conflict and the destruction of cultural heritage sites due to the bombing of cities in Germany that inspired this doctoral study.

Last, but certainly not least, I am extremely grateful for the unwavering love, patience and support on this turbulent journey that I experienced from my parents, Ralf and Marlies Hoffmann, and my siblings, Andrea and Ingo Hoffmann, as well as my extended family. It is with you and in my faith that I find hope and courage. You gave me the strength to carry on and I can always depend on you. Without you, this daunting journey would not have been possible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
3D	Three-dimensional
ADCA	Archaeology Department of the Civil Administration (Israeli entity governing archaeological heritage in Area C of the West Bank)
AL 1978	Antiquities Law 5738-1978 (Israel)
AL 1989	Antiquities Authority Law 5749-1989 (Israel)
ALIPH Foundation	Alliance internationale pour la protection du patrimoine dans les zones en conflit
ALS	Airborne laser scanning
APAAME	Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology in the Middle East
BA (EBA/MBA/LBA)	Bronze Age (Early Bronze Age/Middle Bronze Age/Late Bronze Age)
BCE	Before Christian Era, also known as BC = Before Christ
CE	Christian Era, also known as AD = *Anno Domini*, which translates as 'in the Year of the Lord'
CHN	Climate Heritage Network
CPP	Cultural property protection
CRM	Cultural resource management
Da'esh/Daesh/IS/ISIS/ISIL	The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/the Levant
EAMENA	Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa
EO technologies	Earth observation technologies
FSA	Free Syrian Army
FTIR	Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy
GCET	Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
GIS	Geographic information systems

IA	Iron Age
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
ICA	International Council on Archives
ICAHM	ICOMOS International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Committee of Monuments and Sites
IFLA	International Federation of Library and Information Associations and Institutions
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMDb	Internet Movie Database
Interpol	The International Criminal Police Organisation
KV #	King's Valley /designation of a tomb in the Valley of the Kings, followed by a number
LiDAR	Light detection and ranging
MENA region	Middle East and North Africa region
OCE	Organisational, constructional and electronic (OCE) security measures
PA	Palestinian Authority
POI	Points of Interest
RADARSAT	Airborne thermal radiometry
RASHID International	Research, Assessment and Safeguarding of the Heritage of Iraq in Danger
SAR	Synthetic aperture radar
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHAP	Syrian Heritage Archive Project
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIDROIT	International Institute for the Unification of Private Law/ L'Institut international pour l'unification du droit privé
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation

WHL	World Heritage List
WHS	World Heritage Site
WMF	World Monuments Fund
XRF	X-ray Fluorescence

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The plundering of the past has been a plight since antiquity. While the looting and destruction of cultural heritage occurred in the past, the 'past' in the form of archaeological sites and artefacts is also being plundered in the present. The looting and destruction of archaeological heritage, and the exploitation thereof for profit by means of the illicit trade in antiquities, are closely interlinked issues. Therefore, this thesis refers to plundering as synonymous with the more cumbersome expression of 'looting and destruction to supply the illicit trade', since it implies all of these elements to varying extents. The aim of this thesis is to determine if there is a panacea that can be found to resolve the plundering of the past to some degree.

A panacea is a 'cure-all' or a remedy. However, finding a solution that completely settles all the issues concerning the plundering of archaeological heritage, especially within the context of the 'biblical world', is a monumental task that may prove impossible to achieve. In light of seemingly 'bigger problems', concerns for cultural heritage often take a backseat when there are more urgent issues that need to be dealt with, such as the provision of basic services, dealing with disasters and other concerns and crimes. Therefore, cultural heritage is frequently perceived as a luxury or as the domain of the privileged. However, despite these perceptions, culture forms part of the fundamental human rights of any society. Therefore, by analysing the ancient origins of the looting and destruction of cultural heritage and the present-day impact thereof, this thesis suggests an interdisciplinary approach in an attempt to control the plundering of archaeological sites occurring internationally, as well as its broader ripple effects, such as the illicit trade in antiquities.

With the 'biblical world' as the focal area of this study, it falls into the broader ambit of Biblical Archaeology.[1] The region where the biblical narrative is set comprises not only

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[1] The notion of the 'biblical world' has been criticised as a rather antiquated expression, that is at times considered to be problematic. However, in the absence of a better term that encompasses the region where the biblical narrative is set, and since this a study within the ambit of Biblical Archaeology, this term will be used throughout the thesis.

territories in the Fertile Crescent, but also extends into the Mediterranean. This is a very expansive region for a study that is limited by time and funds. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the focus was narrowed down to two main countries located within the Near East,[2] namely Egypt and Israel. While individual cases from neighbouring countries such as Syria and Iraq will also be mentioned for illustrative purposes, the focus is mainly on Egypt and Israel in terms of the archaeological and historical section of this thesis, as well as when analysing the present situation. Egypt and Israel are neighbouring countries, albeit located on two different continents, with each nation facing unique challenges.[3] Therefore, if a workable interdisciplinary approach can be determined within the limits of this thesis, it may be expanded for application elsewhere in the biblical world, as well as beyond, ideally for the universal application of the principles identified here at an international level.

With these parameters in mind, the following question remains: Is it possible to find a panacea for the plundering of cultural heritage in the biblical world? If there is no solution that could remedy this international phenomenon, are there at least ways that would aid in controlling or curbing the degree to which looting and destruction occur, as well as reducing the magnitude of the illicit trade in antiquities? Unfortunately, the phenomenon of plundering cultural heritage is deeply ingrained in human society. This is evident not only throughout history (Szopa 2004:57), but also in light of the fact that popular culture has long promoted the notion of archaeology as a thrilling and adventurous treasure hunt, where the hero or heroine searches for rare and lucrative objects. This is evident when considering the majority of popular fictional films and series, often based on literature or computer games which have featured archaeology as a form of grave robbing, such as the *Indiana Jones* movie franchise (1981, 1984, 1989, 2008, 2023), *Romancing the Stone* (1984), *The Jewel of the Nile* (1985), *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Relic Hunter* (1999-2002), *The Mummy* franchise (1999,

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[2] The 'Near East' and 'Middle East' generally denote the same geographical region, while 'Middle East' is a somewhat newer term that usually also includes the Arabian Peninsula, as well as territories such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The terms will be employed interchangeably in this thesis.

[3] The choice of Egypt and Israel as focal points for this study was consciously forced. It is not meant as a point by point comparison, but rather as a juxtaposition of different circumstances to identify if, for example, tomb-building developed differently due to different circumstances. Both are territories that are located at a crossroads and along important trade routes. As a result, they were fought over and at times conquered and occupied by external forces. However, they experienced conquest and state-building differently throughout history. Thus, this had different consequences for plundering and destruction. These differences extend into the present and are also evident with regard to the protection of cultural heritage. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to determine a more universal or workable interdisciplinary solution.

2001, 2008, 2017), the *Tomb Raider* movie franchise (2001, 2003, 2018), *The Librarian* franchise (2004, 2006, 2008, 2014-2018), *Sahara* (2005), *Fool's Gold* (2008), the *National Treasure* franchise (2004, 2007, 2022-2023), the *Daomu Biji* franchise (Chinese novel series translated as *Grave Robbers' Chronicles* and turned into a film series and movie franchise, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022) and the recent blockbuster movie *Uncharted* (2022). In their explorations, the protagonists often disregard scientific procedures by harshly extracting antiquities. In doing so, they destroy the entrances to tombs or damage entire historical monuments, while showing no consideration for the contexts from which these objects originate and the significance they would carry when studied carefully and sensitively. Only in rare cases is the time-consuming and meticulous work of archaeologists portrayed nostalgically or sincerely in fiction, as is the case in *Timeline* (2003) and *The Dig* (2021), or the more realistic and informative portrayals through documentaries (IMDb 1990-2023a).

In contrast to the nostalgic trend of representing archaeology as tomb robbing, the recent television series *Blood & Treasure* (2019-2022) features a storyline of an antiquities and legal expert and an art thief teaming up to catch a terrorist who has funded his operations by selling plundered or 'blood antiquities' (IMDb 1990-2023b). *White Collar* (2009-2014) is another television series that features the collaboration of a con artist and an FBI agent, who solve so-called white-collar crimes such as art heists, forgeries of art and antiquities and the like (IMDb 1990-2023c). These shows exemplify that the theft, looting and destruction of archaeological heritage is an international problem. More recently, these issues were also brought back to public attention when Da'esh, or the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/the Levant (IS/ISIS/ISIL), purposefully destroyed archaeological heritage in propagandised acts of iconoclasm and also plundered archaeological sites and museums in Syria to fund its terrorist activities (Mueller 2016:70-71; Kila 2019:655).

Popular culture can be very influential and has inadvertently promoted the notion of treasure hunting and the collecting of rare objects and antiquities as an adventurous, nostalgic and even romantic endeavour. In turn, it may have contributed to raising a false impression of archaeology by representing it as a form of 'scientific' grave robbing. In this context, this distorted representation through films, literature or computer games indirectly gives the impression of legitimising the looting and

destruction of archaeological heritage, which unfortunately completely disregards the detrimental ethical implications. Indeed, the widespread notion of archaeology as a form of treasure hunting as portrayed in fiction, compounded by other (social) media and news headlines which report numerous, more recent events of plundering cultural heritage, speak to a significantly greater international problem.[4]

In fact, the looting and illicit trade of artefacts and antiquities and the accompanying destruction of archaeological sites is by no means a new phenomenon. This is apparent from ancient written sources, such as the so-called 'grave robbery papyri', as well as archaeological evidence (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996; Weeks 1998; Szopa 2004:57; Porter 2009; Weeks 2016; Wong 2016). Hence, tomb robbing was a scourge in ancient Egypt and Israel, as was the pillaging and destruction of cultural heritage in urban areas in conjunction with conquest. Unfortunately, these widespread problems have persisted well into modern times. However, it seems as though this phenomenon is now occurring at a greater scale than ever before. Since the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage has often coincided with armed conflict,[5] studying the plundering of the past and of archaeological heritage in the present in the biblical world is timely and internationally relevant.

In most Near Eastern countries, archaeological heritage is publicly owned, which means that researchers need to apply for permits to be able to excavate or study a site (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:947-948). However, both illegal excavations and clandestine treasure hunting still occur, whereby artefacts are looted from archaeological sites. When this happens, the context associated with an artefact, or its provenience, is lost and at the same time a site is often damaged or destroyed during the plundering process. In addition, the theft of museum objects or privately owned art or collectables also occurs, in which case the antiquities lose their provenance, i.e. the record of their site of origin or ownership history (Brodie 2002:2;

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[4] Indeed, vandalism and the theft of cultural objects from cultural venues is also a problem experienced locally within South Africa. In recent years, the country has been targeted by heritage crime in its museums, art galleries and at heritage sites (Benson 2005; Benson 2010; Benson & Prinsloo 2013; Benson 2013; Benson & Fouché 2014; Roodt & Benson 2015; Smuts 2015; Heritage Monitoring Project 2017:14). However, the 'theft of and illicit trade in heritage objects is not specific to South Africa', but it is an international phenomenon that is not confined to a specific region or country (Benson 2010:140).

[5] Unfortunately, the region of the biblical world remains fraught with tensions as is evident in the recent past, as well as in the present. This includes events such as the Arab Spring, a series of revolutionary regime changes in the Arab world, the Syrian Civil War, and various ongoing struggles such as the recent escalation of the Near Eastern conflict in the form of the Israeli-Hamas War as of October 2023.

Bowman Balestrieri 2019:81-82). These illegally acquired artefacts are sold for profit, resulting in the illicit antiquities trade. This means that while archaeological objects retain their aesthetic value, they forfeit their scientific or historical significance and meaning (Conradie 2016:1-2).

However, while looting and illicit excavations do occur in times of peace, mainly due to economic hardships, these issues are especially pertinent during times of armed conflict (Newson & Young 2015). As mentioned above, Da'esh plundered archaeological sites and museums in Syria to supply antiquities to be traded on the black market to fund its military activities. Furthermore, the extremist organisation caused massive iconoclastic destruction to cultural heritage. The media coverage of these atrocities generated international awareness of the plight of cultural heritage due to looting and destruction (Mueller 2016:70-71; Terrill 2017; Turku 2018; Kila 2019:655; Tugendhaft 2020; Silwal 2023:214-215). In addition, the resurgence of the Near Eastern conflict in Israel since October 2023 illustrates the complexity of the troubles between Israeli and Palestinian factions, as well as the Hamas extremist organisation. The armed conflict not only results in numerous civilian casualties, but also causes widespread collateral damage to the cultural heritage of the people in the affected regions.[6] In this context, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) recently released a statement requesting a ceasefire and demanding that the states and non-states parties in the conflict should honour the *1954 Hague Convention* and its protocols, the *1970 UNESCO Convention* and the *1995 UNIDROIT Convention* due to the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in terms of the loss of human life and the destruction of cultural venues (ICOM 2023a).[7]

Among all the regions in the world, heritage crime, such as looting and iconoclasm, seems to be exacerbated the most in the Near East, which is broiling with ongoing conflicts as this region has become a melting pot of different cultures, languages and

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[6] Heritage destruction during times of war frequently goes hand-in-hand with the destruction of local socio-cultural identities or ethnic minorities. However, 'cultural heritage cannot be separated from people – it is people. When we protect one, we protect the other' (Clack 2022). Similarly, an attack on one equates to an attack on the other. Therefore, an attack on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of a population group is simultaneously an attack on their identity, a basic human right. As such, the systematic destruction of heritage sites and objects can be considered a form of cultural genocide or 'culturicide', even if it is a collateral of armed conflict (Clack 2022; Silwal 2023:214-215). Additionally, it results in the marginalisation of population groups from their heritage.

[7] Similarly, the ongoing conflict with regard to the Russian invasion of the Ukraine since 2022 should also be mentioned here as it is also of great concern, but due to its regional location it falls outside of the scope of this research.

religions in the past and present (Newson & Young 2015; Conradie 2016:9). Therefore, this study focuses on the regions and heritage sites in the biblical world that have been affected by looting and destruction. In this context, two countries on different continents, but in the midst of the Near East, stand out as the focal point for this research: Firstly, Egypt with its abundance of archaeological heritage sites, which are a focal point for tourism, is considered as a case study repeatedly owing to its longstanding history of grave robbing and more recent political unrest in connection with the so-called Arab Spring. Secondly, Israel as the 'Holy Land' has long been considered central to Biblical Archaeology and religious pilgrimages for different faiths. Due to its location in the southern Levant, the country has also long been fraught with tensions, more so owing to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has yet to be resolved. Therefore, it also remains a central focal point of this study.

Due to the continued civil unrest and armed conflict in the Near East, many regions have become off-limits for researchers and tourists. In turn, their archaeological sites and museums are also often unchecked and become either neglected or collateral damage in the face of 'more urgent' needs. This creates circumstances that are conducive to an increase in illegal activities such as the plundering of archaeological sites and the theft of artefacts from cultural institutions such as museums. Therefore, it is essential to find modern solutions to address these ongoing issues.

When these issues are considered in biblical times, the looting and destruction of cultural heritage have the potential to provide insight into the socio-economic circumstances and the geopolitical climate that were prevalent in antiquity. Hence, the plundering of the past in the biblical world allows for a better understanding of the events and the communities that lived in the places mentioned in the Bible. It offers a glimpse into the conditions that shaped past societies. It also continues to have a bearing in the present through the relevance of this cultural heritage in forging the identities of the people who currently live in the region. With the continuation of illegal excavations and the illicit antiquities trade in the present, the plundering of the past also offers social critique of present-day societies through the treatment or rather 'mistreatment' of their cultural heritage, which is a vital part of their identity and thus a basic human right.

Identifying methods to safeguard the cultural heritage of the biblical world may contribute to the preservation of a more intact archaeological record, which would enable a better interpretation of data and an improved comprehension of the Bible. After all, it is within the ambit of Biblical Archaeology to illuminate the Bible by studying the people, cultures, places and events mentioned in the biblical text. Finding a panacea to the plundering of the past, or at the very least determining ways to curb the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage would aid in achieving this goal.

Numerous researchers have studied either the looting or the destruction of archaeological heritage as separate issues. However, since the provenance of an object is eradicated when it is stolen from a museum or its provenience is lost once it is removed from its context during unscientific excavations at archaeological sites, these issues should rather be considered as closely related matters, which often occur together. In addition, during the process of looting, the perpetrators often use unscientific methods, thereby damaging or destroying the objects themselves and/or the environment they were retrieved from. At times, such vandalism occurs wantonly to enable the transportation of a stolen artefact by breaking it into smaller pieces or to 'make the object unrecognizable to law enforcement officials' (Szopa 2004:63). Moreover, there appear to be gaps in previous research: Most authors have only noted a single approach as a possible solution to the issue or one aspect that would contribute to the preservation and safeguarding of archaeological heritage, usually from a legal perspective. Only in rare cases have authors such as Sheftel (2012) and Conradie (2016) amongst others offered two or more suggestions to address both the issues of looting and destruction. In fact, Parcak, Gathings, Childs, Mumford and Cline (2016) mentioned three approaches, namely remote sensing, securitisation and public archaeology in the form of community engagement and tourism. Nevertheless, they were missing one aspect, namely, the documentation and digitisation of archaeological heritage to establish a thorough record for possible reconstruction and 3D rendering projects when sites have been damaged or destroyed.

Therefore, notably few authors have considered multifaceted approaches to offer a comprehensive solution and to work on the related issues from different angles as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive answer to a long-lasting problem. No single solution will suffice to address such a complex problem. By addressing only one

aspect of the problem in isolation, a single suggestion cannot be as effective as when a combination of factors are implemented. Different tactics need to be considered simultaneously when dealing with all or nearly all the elements of the problems. This has been left void in most literary sources which were consulted. Therefore, the four-pillared interdisciplinary approach, suggested as part of the hypothesis and proposed as part of the methodology of this thesis, may be a better way forward.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The looting and destruction of archaeological heritage poses a massive problem, which is aggravated in times of economic hardship and becomes especially pertinent during episodes of armed conflict and civil unrest (Brodie 2002:6; Rothfield 2008:xv; Marston 2013; Parcak et al 2016:188; Hanna 2013:371-372; Ikram & Hanna 2013:35-38). It is not a recent phenomenon, but rather a problem that has persisted since antiquity. In addition, looting stimulates and induces the illicit trade in antiquities. In the process of illegal excavations, the archaeological context of an object is destroyed, resulting in the loss of the provenience within which an artefact was found. In this regard, when archaeological heritage is exploited for commercial gain when it is robbed during non-scientific digs, smuggled out of its source region or country and sold, an artefact loses its scientific value and much of its cultural significance. Only its aesthetic and monetary value remains, but its significance to the broader field of Biblical Archaeology is also lost (Conradie 2016:iv, 1-2). Moreover, the apparent profitability of the black market and continued demand for antiquities threatens the remaining archaeological heritage in the regions from which the objects are sourced, condemning the survival of archaeological sites (Brodie 2002). Therefore, an appropriate response is necessary when attempting to counteract the erasure of cultural heritage.

Owing to the above-mentioned loss of archaeological heritage, the main research question considers whether a panacea to the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage in the biblical world can be found. In relation to this, a number of further research questions arise about the plundering of the past and the present in the biblical world:

- Considering the ancient origins of grave robbing, did ancient Egyptian and Israelite societies develop specific mechanisms to counter theft of valuables from tombs, and were these effective? Did architecture change in response to tomb robbing to account for the increased protection of sites? Were there ancient mechanisms or control measures in place to monitor heritage sites? Were any ancient forms of heritage management employed to look after and care for their cultural heritage resources? Did the architecture of buildings or tombs change to protect the valuables and interred human remains in the graves? Was there a notable absence of certain valuables and materials from burials in Egypt and the Levant?

- Which forms of iconoclasm were evident in antiquity and within which contexts did it occur in the Levant and in Egypt? What were the consequences of iconoclasm – how did it affect societies?

- Currently, how effective are legal tools used to control the looting and destruction of cultural heritage during times of peace and war? Do international agreements affect national legislation in the Near East? Is the prosecution of perpetrators of heritage crimes effective? Have legal tools adapted to present needs and challenges faced by cultural heritage in the biblical world?

- Can interdisciplinarity be considered as a way forward to curb the illicit trade in antiquities that flourishes as a result of illegal excavations and the theft at cultural venues? Is an interdisciplinary approach able to make a difference with regard to the destruction of archaeological sites or in the context of iconoclasm during armed conflict?

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

On the basis of the above-mentioned problems that were identified and the resulting questions, the main aim of this thesis is to study the problems that affect archaeological heritage located in the biblical world in the ancient past and in the present, and to find suitable, comprehensive approaches to address the plundering of the past. These problems include looting or theft and the resulting illicit trade of artefacts, as well as the vandalism, iconoclasm, damage and destruction of archaeological sites and antiquities. The looting and destruction of archaeological sites

is not a recent phenomenon. It has occurred since ancient times and many of these issues still persist.

- Therefore, one of the aims of this study is to identify the motivations for the plundering and iconoclasm of the biblical world in antiquity. Consequently, it would be necessary to identify how ancient authorities reacted to and dealt with these issues: Which protective measures did ancient Near Eastern societies implement, and which punitive actions were employed to prosecute wrongdoers? By identifying these methods and mechanisms to curb tomb robbing in antiquity, their effectiveness can be determined. Moreover, the aftermath of armed conflict in the form of plundering cultural heritage and iconoclasm must be analysed to identify the consequences this had for past societies.

- Another objective is to analyse the present situation in the Near East, especially in Egypt and in Israel, but also to refer to the more recent situation in Syria and Iraq.

- In this regard, it would also be relevant to identify, whether the problem of plundering the biblical world stems from the colonial roots, and to determine why it appears that legislation may have failed to protect archaeological heritage (Brodie 2010:267). Are there gaps in legislation? Are policies and legislation enforced successfully? Is the magnitude of the illicit trade in antiquities understood at all, and how does it compare to other black markets?

- In addition, it will be necessary to identify the reasons why these problems persist in present times in the light of the economic and socio-political climate of the Near East, which appears to create an environment conducive to the continued plundering and destruction of archaeological heritage.

- Once the reasons for the persisting problems are evident, it will be necessary to identify and analyse possible new approaches to assist with the safeguarding of archaeological heritage located in the Near East. These modern approaches need to be comprehensive in order to address the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage from multiple angles: A complex problem necessitates a multifaceted answer, as a single approach will not necessarily include all the aspects that need to be addressed.

- It is also necessary to identify a framework of solutions that can be implemented to curb the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage in the ancient Near East. However, these solutions need to be applicable internationally, since these issues are not restricted to the Near East.

- In order to find new or modern approaches to address the ongoing problem of looting and the destruction of archaeological heritage in the biblical world, archaeological sites located in Egypt and Israel, are employed to analyse existing issues within this regional focus, as well as references to other cases in different locations in the Near East. Finally, Tel Hazor in Israel as a major archaeological site is used to test the hypothesis below as a pilot study.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

From these issues and the open questions elucidated above, the following hypothesis can be constructed: New solutions need to be found to address the widespread international problem of the looting of archaeological heritage, which largely contributes to the illegal antiquities trade, and the iconoclastic destruction of cultural heritage to be able to preserve it for posterity for the communities that draw meaning from it, to maintain its historic significance and for the purpose of scientific research. By searching for a panacea to address the plundering of archaeological heritage, an interdisciplinary approach resting on 'four pillars' comes to mind. This *interdisciplinary four-pillar approach* should include the meticulous *documentation* of archaeological heritage and the digitisation of records, the continuous *monitoring* of archaeological sites with the aid of remote sensing, the legal and *physical protection* of archaeological heritage and the implementation of *public archaeological efforts* through community engagement, archaeological tourism and education. The looting and destruction of archaeological sites is a complex problem, which requires a composite solution as addressing only a single aspect of the multifaceted problem will not suffice. The preservation of archaeological heritage needs to be grounded in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary response, namely through the combination of these aforementioned 'four pillars'.

The *interdisciplinary approach* to safeguarding cultural heritage would undoubtedly make a large contribution to the study of biblical archaeology, as it affects the ability

to successfully engage in archaeological research in the future. The archaeological record, in general, is already fragmented due to the natural degeneration of materials over time. Hence, archaeologists only ever see a partial view of a site. When unrecorded artefacts are deliberately removed from sites to supply the illicit trade in antiquities, the context they were recovered from is also destroyed during clandestine excavations, and when purposeful iconoclasm destroys tangible remains, this further wrecks the archaeological heritage that researchers use in an attempt to interpret and gain an understanding of the past.

While analysing the plundering of cultural heritage in antiquity, it may provide insight into the circumstances faced by biblical societies. This could possibly include political instability as a result of armed conflict and a resulting economic downturn. When understanding the cultural history of ancient periods, this offers a better comprehension of the socio-cultural, economic, religious and political circumstances and their consequences on local populations. A rise in tomb robbing could be indicative of inherent societal problems. Since the looting and vandalism of archaeological heritage at cultural venues has persisted into the present, as well as the identity and ownership thereof remaining disputed, especially in the Levant, it adds relevance to the way in which archaeology is possibly used, or even misused, in the present.

Moreover, diverse approaches to safeguarding cultural heritage as a valuable source of knowledge about the past and as the universal inheritance of humanity should be considered. The archaeological record is already fragmentary in nature, owing to the natural degradation of organic matter. What remains is a puzzle that is missing many pieces and provides only a partial view into the lives of people in the past. When this is then further compounded with unscientific looting and the accompanying destruction of the archaeological context, it limits the ability of archaeologists to make reliable deductions about the past. This also affects the ability to successfully conduct archaeological research in the biblical world, which would illuminate the Bible.

1.5 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

1.5.1. Approach

First, this is a *qualitative study* that employs empirical, interpretation-based research methods that aid in understanding the phenomenon of the looting and destruction of the past. In this regard, focus is placed on evaluation through research and observation, and the implementation of findings, rather than quantifiable outcomes (Mouton 2001:161-162).

To achieve the aims of this study, an *interdisciplinary approach* needs to be employed, which combines aspects from numerous disciplines or fields of research including archaeology, history, legislation, geography, information technology, security and policing, tourism,[8] economics and education, as this approach needs to be based on the following 'four pillars':

- The digitisation of archaeological sites: It may be possible to create a (digital) record and to create an archive for the possible reconstruction or 3D modelling of destroyed or threatened sites.

- The use of remote sensing (satellite images, aerial or drone photography, Google Earth images): Threatened archaeological sites may be monitored from afar for occurrences of looting.

- By employing community engagement in the form of cultural tourism, education and public archaeology, it may be possible to generate awareness of the threats affecting non-renewable cultural resources such as archaeological sites. By interpreting their significance, communities may understand their intrinsic value and endeavour to protect archaeological sites and the artefacts exhibited in museums. This may curb the degree to which illicit trade occurs. Through cultural tourism, the development of sites as attractions may generate long-term economic benefits for invested stakeholders, which in turn may reduce looting.

- Issues of safety and security (i.e. physical protection) and the legal protection of archaeological sites and artefacts must also be addressed. Law enforcement

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[8] Tourism is not yet considered as a discipline in its own right, but rather as an interdisciplinary field of research (Tribe 1997; Hoffmann 2013).

which includes the strict prosecution of criminals needs to take place to show that looting is not profitable and has severe consequences.

Thus, this study proposes that it may only be possible to preserve and protect archaeological heritage when the combination of the four elements noted above is considered. These 'four pillars' need to work together as an inclusive and interdisciplinary solution to promote the sustainability and continued survival of archaeological heritage in the Near East.

When considering recent occurrences of looting and destruction of archaeological heritage, the problem at hand needs to be better understood. In this context, a *theoretical paradigm* known as the '*looting pyramid*' informs the research by explaining the economy behind the plundering of archaeological sites and museums. This paradigm discusses the hierarchy of the looters, middlemen, dealers and collectors involved in the illicit trade in antiquities (Sheftel 2012:31-34; Kersel 2006:57). In addition, the market that drives the illicit trade in antiquities and the motivations and economics behind the illicit trade will be analysed (Conradie 2016:89-98), as well as the perceived sense of disconnection and lack of awareness by local communities of their archaeological heritage (Sayej 2010:59; Hanna 2015:47). In addition, the political and religious motivations behind the destruction of archaeological heritage will be considered (Wong 2016:90, 92-93; Porter 2009:201). Both the looting pyramid paradigm and the background to iconoclasm will enable a better understanding of the reasoning behind the occurrences of the looting and destruction of archaeological sites.

Moreover, to consider the ability of *current legal tools* to protect archaeological sites from harm, international policy documents such as conventions and national legislation of Near Eastern countries will be examined to determine their success or if there are loopholes that circumvent the effectiveness thereof. Moreover, one should consider whether a code of ethics signed by heritage managers, archaeological practitioners and other stakeholders would make a marked difference.

To find modern solutions to the problem of the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage, a *cultural heritage management approach* is followed.

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Cultural heritage management 'deals with assessing the effects of development or other potentially harmful human activities on heritage sites, and takes steps to either protect sites or to allow their destruction' (Burke & Smith 2004:240). Therefore, owing to limited financial and human resources and time constraints, heritage practitioners need to make informed decisions, based on the cultural significance of a site, to assess whether it is worth preserving. This process involves consultation with relevant stakeholders, as well as identifying, documenting and assessing the level of significance of a site and establishing how to best protect it as part of a nation's archaeological record (Cleere 2000:10-11; Burke & Smith 2004:241-242). Once this has been established, a recommendation can be made by choosing an appropriate response and management strategy (Burke & Smith 2004:240-258). Therefore, heritage management necessitates an interdisciplinary approach that considers comprehensive solutions.

Since archaeological heritage is 'managed in the public interest', it must be 'governed by legislation' (Cleere 2000:10). Once a decision has been made to protect a site, it is imperative that all land planning and construction projects are mitigated to minimise their negative impact on a heritage resource. Moreover, to protect sites from land grabbing, uncontrolled development, theft and destruction, legal remedies constitute an important component of the interdisciplinary approach towards ensuring the sustainability of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, it is important that a cultural heritage resource is 'managed and promoted for public enjoyment and edification' (Cleere 2000:13). Hence, archaeological heritage should be conserved and maintained 'out of respect to the monuments themselves as much as in the interests of their potential visitors' and to make the heritage physically and intellectually accessible to the public through the interpretation thereof (Cleere 2000:13, 14). Therefore, *heritage management* as a methodology is ideally suited for this study, since it not only protects and promotes cultural heritage for the enjoyment of external visitors, but also benefits the local communities that derive meaning and identity from these heritage places. Indeed, generating awareness of the significance of a site to its stakeholders within the local community and interpreting it to tourists may be vital to its survival. In many cases, local communities lack an understanding or awareness of archaeological heritage and

they do not grasp the need for its protection (Sayej 2010:58; Tantaleán 2014:47-48). Public education is seen as key to 'generate awareness of the need to protect archaeological heritage', especially in third world countries, to encourage the advocacy of local communities (Tantaleán 2014:38).

While the *touristic and interpretative value* of archaeological sites and museums is great, heritage managers and archaeologists have often viewed tourism as a 'necessary evil' in the past: the wear and tear caused by uncontrolled tourism may erode a site, but the income generated for conservation and educational purposes is essential to ensure its continued survival (Timothy 2011:158-160; 305; Srivastava 2015:31, 33). However, when carefully managed, the positive aspects of tourism and the associated economic benefits may enhance heritage management and bring about advantageous ripple effects such as employment and local investment. In this regard, archaeological tourism (or archaeotourism) as a special-interest niche of cultural tourism and a form of public archaeology needs to be examined as a relevant interdisciplinary contributor towards sustainability. This is a combination of archaeology and tourism, which encompasses the visitation of archaeological heritage. While tourism often places finite resources under increased stress, the visitors at archaeological heritage sites and museums need to be managed and regulated appropriately (Srivastava 2015:31-32).

Not all benefits of tourism are quantifiable and generating socio-cultural awareness of the significance of archaeology through community engagement, education and tourism (i.e. public archaeology) has often been underrated. Through the generation of awareness, visitors may be encouraged to travel to a site and local communities may want to become involved in its protection and development. This would create revenue or spending in the local economy. In this context, archaeotourism may generate positive ripple effects such as job creation and the emergence of local businesses to support the emerging tourism industry (Srivastava 2015:34-36). Thus, archaeological tourism may further prove to be a valuable approach to the study of the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage in the Near East. Through appropriate visitor management and the interpretation of cultural heritage to stakeholders and tourists alike, it may create an awareness of the issues that affect

the continued survival of archaeological resources, and it may promote the ambition of local communities to become involved in its protection at grassroots level.

Moreover, to address looting and the destruction of archaeological heritage, an *integrated approach using 'four pillars'* has been identified as a central aim of this study. The use of modern technologies such as digitisation and remote sensing, which have originated in neighbouring disciplines such as information technology and geology, are considered in combination with heritage management. In turn, this involves efforts to generate public education and awareness and the implementation of legislation and international policy frameworks to bring about the enhanced sustainability of archaeological heritage.

To apply the interdisciplinary theory of the proposed '*four-pillar*' *approach* in practice, the biblical site of Tel Hazor in Israel has been chosen as a pilot study. Hazor was chosen due to its importance as the largest tell site in Israel and its significance within the context of the biblical narrative, notably the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Moreover, it is a well-known archaeological terrain that has been declared a World Heritage Site. Tel Hazor also boasts a long history of archaeological excavations. For this purpose, it will be necessary to contact the archaeologists and heritage practitioners involved in the study and management of the site.[9] By means of consultation and correspondence, site-specific issues can be identified that may negatively affect the site (should they exist), as well as past problems and how they were dealt with. After verifying the presence or absence of heritage issues at Tel Hazor, the site would be employed as a pilot study to implement the four-pillar interdisciplinary approach. As mentioned before, this proposed method ideally uses digitisation to produce a complete archaeological record of the site and remote sensing to monitor it, as well as the legal and physical protection of the site and public archaeology in the form of community engagement and archaeological tourism.

1.5.2. Structure
- *Chapter Two: Evidence of Looting in Ancient Egypt* - This chapter reveals that the looting and destruction of archaeological sites in the Near East is not a

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[9] Ideally, the site should have been visited by me, as the author of this study, in person. However, due to financial, time and travel constraints, this was not possible.

recent, but rather an ancient and ongoing, problem. It considers evidence of looting and the theft of objects of value in ancient Egypt, a country that prominently featured in the biblical narrative and that has close ties to the 'Holy Land'. In this context, the changing architecture of burials from grave pits to *mastaba* tombs to pyramids and eventually to hidden tombs in the Valley of the Kings will be considered, thereby reflecting on the change from conspicuous gravesites to hidden ones. In addition to changes in tomb architecture, ancient mechanisms to monitor and protect tombs on the basis of physical evidence at archaeological sites and extra-biblical documents are also discussed here.

- *Chapter Three: Plundering the Levant in Antiquity* – This chapter considers the looting of burials outside of Egypt in the Near East. It also identifies other instances where looting occurred in the southern Levant, such as conquest, which resulted in the plundering of the cultural heritage of urban areas in antiquity. Similarly, the biblical narrative also mentions the pillaging of conquered cities, which is discussed in this chapter as well.

- *Chapter Four: Ancient Evidence of Destruction, Iconoclasm and Vandalism* – This chapter is concerned with the issues of vandalism and the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in antiquity, in the form of purposeful political and religiously-motivated iconoclasm. The diverse motivations for the purposeful destruction of cultural heritage in ancient Egypt, as well as evidence of iconoclasm as a means to subjugate conquered populations within the ancient Levant and Mesopotamia are discussed here, with reference to the Israelite iconoclasm mentioned in the Bible.

- *Chapter Five: Contemporary Regulatory Frameworks for Cultural Heritage in the Face of Conflict and Other Issues* – This chapter examines the origins of regulatory frameworks (policy and legislation) with respect to archaeological sites and artefacts in the present. Firstly, policy frameworks created by international organisations such as the UNESCO, ICOM or others will be considered, as well as national heritage legislation relevant to the Near East, which will be discussed to identify how these documents protect archaeological heritage. In addition, issues that affect the effectiveness of legal remedies are

considered with reference to recent cases of the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage as a result of socio-political and economic problems.[10]

- *Chapter Six: An Interdisciplinary Approach Based on Four Pillars to Deter Plundering and the Illicit Trade in Antiquities* – In this chapter a proposed four-pillar approach as an interdisciplinary solution is introduced to curb the current detrimental rate at which the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage is occurring. The multifaceted approach firstly considers the monitoring of archaeological heritage in the Near East by means of remote sensing and watchlists. Secondly, diligent documentation and digitisation play a vital roles in archaeological research, but reliable records are also relevant to the safeguarding of archaeological heritage. Thirdly, the aspect of public archaeology includes the generation of public awareness of the significance of biblical archaeological heritage and the need to protect it through tourism (and visitor management), educational efforts and community engagement. Therefore, not only the social responsibility of archaeologists to disseminate knowledge about their research, but also the economic benefits of cultural heritage for a region become evident. Finally, legal, physical and ethical measures need to be taken to protect archaeological sites and artefacts in museums from harm and damage.

- *Chapter Seven: The Heritage Situation in Israel and the Pilot Study of Tel Hazor* – This chapter is concerned with gaining a better understanding of the current heritage situation in Israel with the aftermath of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the outbreak of the Israeli-Hamas War in October 2023. Moreover, the misuse of archaeological heritage to promote placemaking efforts, the National Archaeological Parks System and the loopholes in Israeli heritage legislation are discussed. After considering the significance and history of archaeological

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[10] Chapter Five considers cases when policy and legislation were not effective in hindering the looting of archaeological sites and resulted in the theft and destruction of cultural heritage. This includes the plundering of the Baghdad Museum in Iraq and the destruction of archaeological sites as the result of the war, the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 or the so-called Arab Spring Revolution and its associated raid of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and the recent destruction caused by the so-called Islamic State at Palmyra and related sites in Syria. However, Israel is still one of the most fought-over areas and it is still plagued by continued unrest and conflict, especially the Gaza-Region and the West Bank. There is also civil unrest and war that persists in other regions of the Near East, such as the civil war in Yemen. Jordan has been largely spared from civil unrest, however looting of archaeological sites still occurs. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this thesis, only sites within Israel, Egypt, Iraq and Syria will be discussed.

research at Tel Hazor, the site is employed as a pilot study to analyse the proposed four-pillar interdisciplinary approach.

- *Chapter Eight: Conclusion* - The final chapter summarises the main findings of the research and identifies areas where further research would be necessary in the future.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The scope of research for this PhD study includes heritage crime in the form of the looting of archaeological sites and the illicit trade of antiquities. Moreover, the destruction of archaeological sites may accompany looting since the context of artefacts and features is ruined. Such destruction may range from graffiti and vandalism to deliberate demolition in the form of purposeful iconoclasm.

Looted objects often also form part of museum collections, which brings about issues of restitution. In addition, fakes and forgeries are periodically encountered in museums and archaeological collections. Due to the illicit trade in antiquities, they are laundered as a whole or in part. These fakes need to be identified by experts or by means of a scientific test as the falsification of antiquities and art brings may distort scientific data and scholarship when undetected (Brodie 2002:3). While this is an important related issue to the illicit trade in antiquities, issues of restitution (i.e. the return of artefacts and site features to their place or origin), as well as forgeries and fakes (i.e. falsified antiquities and artworks) fall outside the scope of this discussion. Similarly, metal detection as a form of hobby or recreational treasure hunting, unless actively employed as a tool by looters, and related topics, such as the Treasure Act or the Portable Antiquities Scheme and similar legal tools, also do not form part of the ambit of this research. These vast topics require more in-depth discussions on their own. To avoid veering off-course in the discussion of this research, these issues will only be referred to in passing, as part of the larger contingent of heritage or white-collar crime.

In addition, the looting of artefacts is not restricted to sites on shore, but also affects underwater cultural heritage. Since the advent of scuba diving in the 1950s, treasure hunters have explored shipwrecks located in shallow coastal waters of up to 50 metres in depth. To reach a ship's sunken loot, they plundered and destroyed many of the

wrecks in search of valuables. Legislation now protects shipwrecks and other underwater heritage located in territorial waters. Thus, by the 1980s, deep-water wrecks in international waters were targeted because of the availability of remotely operated submersibles by salvage operations (Brodie 2002:4-5). However, the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage* (2001) aims to better protect the sunken heritage. Nevertheless, although the plunder and destruction of shipwrecks is rife, the looting of underwater heritage also falls outside the scope of research for this thesis and needs to be explored in more detail in another study.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

To establish the extent of the problem of looting, the destruction of archaeological sites in the Near East and the illicit trade in antiquities, it is essential to conduct desktop research. By reviewing the existing literature published about the topic, it is possible to establish the way in which it has attracted academic attention and to detect where the current gaps in research exist. For this purpose, a number of primary, secondary and tertiary sources were consulted.

1.7.1. Primary sources

Artefacts originating from archaeological sites or landscapes in themselves and period texts constitute primary sources for research. This would also include excavation reports and the like. Therefore, on-site research and the consultation of museum and other institutional databases, as well as published research, are necessary to consult period texts, such as the so-called 'tomb robbery papyri'. Several such judicial documents dating to the Ramesside Period are available on the digital museum platforms of the respective institutions: the *Abbot Papyrus* is located at the British Museum (BM 10221), *Papyrus BM 10052*, *BM 10053*, *BM 10054*, *BM 10068, BM 10383* and *BM 10403* are also located at the British Museum. The *Papyri Mayer A* (M11162) and *Mayer B* (M11186) are located at the World Museum in Liverpool. Notably, the *Leopold-Amherst Papyrus* exists in two parts that match together. The upper part (*Leopold II*) is kept at the Musées Royaux d'Art in Brussels and the *Amherst* is found at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. In addition, the *Turin Strike Papyrus* (Cat.1880) from the Museo Egizio in Turin, Italy and the *Ambras Papyrus*

(Vienna No 30) located at the Vienna Museum in Austria also form part of the corpus of tomb robbery papyri. The vast majority of these papyri were collected by Peet (1930), who interpreted and classified them into categories, as is evident in the subsequent section concerning secondary sources. To date, his seminal volume remains the main body of information about the corpus of papyri collected to tomb robbing (Goelet 2016:459).

Numerous archaeological artefacts in the form of imagery depictions as contemporary records also act as primary extra-biblical sources and are referred to throughout the thesis. These include the *Lachish Reliefs* (museum number: 124908), which are located at the British Museum in London. As a prominent extra-biblical source, these wall panels document the siege at Lachish, where the Neo-Assyrian king Sennacherib conquered and destroyed the city in 701 BCE. This object in itself also bears evidence of iconoclasm or deliberate mutilation, as does the *Garden Scene* or *Banquet Scene* portraying Ashurbanipal and his queen. Originally from the North Palace at Nineveh, this panel (museum number: 124920) is also currently located at the British Museum. Similarly, the *alabaster relief of Sennacherib's South-West Palace at Nineveh* (VA 955), as well as a damaged *cult relief from the Temple of Ashur* (VA Ass 1358) and the smashed *cultic water basin from the Temple of Ashur* (VA Ass 1835), now reassembled and located at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin (which forms part of the larger umbrella of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), are also notable museum objects that not only document history, but also bear evidence of iconoclasm. Other museum objects that are indicative of both the dominance of conquering forces and deliberate destruction include examples of *decapitated Mesopotamian statues* (object numbers: VA Ass 2147 and VA Ass 2259) and *overturned pillars found at Ashur* (VA Ass 2015 and VA Ass 2016) located at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin.

Relevant present-day legal documents that currently regulate the archaeological heritage of a nation, as well as international policy frameworks such as conventions ratified by different nations, should also be considered primary literary sources. The following is a list of some relevant international legal tools that will be considered part of the research and that are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five of this thesis:

- The *Manual of the Laws and Customs of War*, more commonly known as the *Lieber Code* (1863)

- The *Ancient Monuments Bill* (1875)
- The *Principals of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings as Set Forth upon its Foundation* or the *SPAB Manifesto* (1877)
- The *Hague Regulations* of 1899 and 1907
- The *Athens Charter* of 1931
- The *Roerich Pact: Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments* (1935)
- The UNESCO *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, or the *Hague Convention* (1954) and the *Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention* (1999)
- The ICOMOS *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (1964) or the *Venice Charter*
- The UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970), also referred to as the *UNESCO Convention*
- The UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* or the *World Heritage Convention* (1972)
- The ICOMOS *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* (1990) or the *ICAHM Charter*
- The UNIDROIT *Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects* (1995) or the *UNIDROIT Convention*
- The ICOMOS *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* (1996)
- The UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage* (2001)
- The *Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* or the *Burra Charter* (1999)

Moreover, the current national heritage laws of Egypt and Israel, which are central to this thesis, are follows:
- Israel:
  - *Antiquities Law 5738-1978* (or *AL 1978*)
  - *Antiquities Authority Law 5749-1989* (*AL 1989*)

- *Amended Antiquities Law 5738-1978* (2002)
- Egypt:
  - *Antiquities' Protection Law* (Egypt, Law no. 117 of 1983, amended by Law no. 3 of 2010)

Moreover, relevant authorities such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), International Council on Museums (ICOM) or Interpol publish lists of objects that are at risk or that have been stolen from museums or known artefacts that have been looted from archaeological sites. These include, among others, the ICOM 'Red Lists', the Interpol 'Stolen Works of Art Database' and the alerts issued by the UNESCO and are also all considered as primary sources (Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property 2017; Stolen Works of Art Database 2019; Red Lists Database [sa]).

No study within the discipline of Biblical Archaeology could be complete without consulting the *Hebrew Bible* as an important primary textual source. The biblical text not only provides several mentions of looting and pillaging in the Bible, but also refers to places and events that could be referenced as part of this research project. In several instances, periods of armed conflict were recounted by the text, whereby conquering nations deliberately destroyed or looted the cultural heritage of the nation they aimed to subjugate (1 Sm 23:1; 1 Sm 30:26; Is 42:22-25). In addition, the most notable mention of tomb robbing in the Bible probably occurred in the New Testament of the biblical narrative, when Pilate had guards stationed at the rock-cut tomb of Jesus, fearing that the disciples would come to steal the body from the grave (Mt 27:62-66). This indicates that tomb robbing remained a valid concern during the Roman rule of Israel.

Considering the biblical archaeological site of Tel Hazor in Israel, which serves as a pilot study for a desk-based application of the proposed four-pillared interdisciplinary approach proposed by this thesis, relevant archaeological experts were contacted via email correspondence for initial consultation. These individuals include Prof. Amnon Ben-Tor and Prof. Shlomit Bechar in their capacity as co-directors of The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin Institute of Archaeology in 2020. Sadly, Prof. Ben-Tor passed away in 2023, and Dr. Igor Kreimerman took over

as director in 2023. Moreover, Manuel Cimadevilla who has also been involved with research at the site through the Selz Foundation kindly shared image material from The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin for use in this PhD thesis in 2023. These specialists were consulted about general information to become more familiar with the site remotely, and they were consulted about its condition regarding possible occurrences or *in-situ* evidence of looting or vandalism in the present, general queries about research and excavations at the site and the engagement of archaeological volunteers, as well as tourists.

1.7.2. Secondary sources

One of the earlier mentions of tomb robbing in a published book is *The treasury of ancient Egypt: Miscellaneous chapters on ancient Egyptian history and archaeology* written by Weigall in 1911. Weigall served as the Inspector-General of Upper Egypt in the Department of Antiquities at the time and published prolifically on the subject of ancient Egypt and his travels. He recognises that the illegal excavations of artefacts and the illegal trade in antiquities was a lucrative business in Egypt at the time, and that it formed part of his duties to point out to the perpetrators that their activities were considered criminal acts (Weigall 1911:239). To raise awareness of the problem of looting, Weigall dedicated Chapter Ten of his 1911 book to address the topic of the 'Theban thieves' and briefly considers their motives for robbing antiquities (Weigall 1911:239-261). Furthermore, Weigall (1911:261) stresses the importance of the context in which an artefact is found, namely its provenience: if artefacts are removed from the context they are associated with, they may lose their scientific significance. Therefore, to be able to study human history, 'illegal excavation must be stopped' (Weigall 1911:261). In essence, to archaeologists, the value of an artefact lies in the information it provides about a site and any historical societies associated with that site, not so much in the material value of an object, but rather in the meaning and knowledge it represents about the past (Weigall 1911:261).

To analyse the occurrences of plundering in the biblical world in antiquity, numerous sources were consulted, some of which were specific to ancient Egypt. This includes another relatively early published source that considers looting in ancient Egypt by offering an interpretation of the aforementioned tomb robbery papyri (noted in the previous section under primary sources) and it is the seminal 1930 publication by Peet,

known as *The Great Tomb Robberies of the Twentieth Egyptian Dynasty: Being a Critical Study, with Translations and Commentaries, of the Papyri in which these Are Recorded*. This secondary study offers an interpretation of the contents of the tomb robbery papyri, considers them within their historical context and categorises them by noting similarities and differences.

With respect to tomb robbing in ancient times, several sources have considered the evolution of tomb architecture in ancient Egypt in an attempt to protect graves from looting. Such sources include *A history of ancient Egypt: From the first farmers to the Great Pyramid* by Romer (2012), *Ancient Egyptian tombs: The culture of life and death*, authored by Snape in 2011 and *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt* published by Ikram (2015). Moreover, Gates published the second edition of his book *Ancient cities: The archaeology of urban life in the ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece, and Rome* in 2011. This publication affirms that architectural change occurred in reaction to tomb robbing to better protect the tombs by no longer conveying 'visible signs that marked their graves', but rather separating the mortuary temple from the actual hidden burial in the Valley of the Kings (Gates 2011:113). With respect to the hidden tombs located in the Valley of the Kings, several authors have considered how the topography and hydrology served to conceal tombs in an attempt to protect them. Cross published 'Brief communications: The hydrology of the Valley of the Kings' in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* in 2008. In addition, a news article written by Jarus in December 2013 featured on *Live Science* and was entitled 'Mummy Mystery: Multiple Tombs Hidden in Egypt's Valley of the Kings'. Herein, the author mentions an ancient flood control system, which seems to have been intended to protect the tombs from flooding, but appears to have been neglected at some stage, thereby causing lower-lying tombs to be covered by debris from flash floods (Jarus 2013). This indicates that ancient heritage management mechanisms were in place in ancient Egypt. Such mechanisms need to be explored further to gain insight into the maintenance and protection of sites in the past. In addition, Dorn examined the same topic in 'The hydrology of the Valley of the Kings: Weather, rainfall, drainage patterns, and flood protection in antiquity' in *The Oxford handbook of the Valley of the Kings* in 2016.

Another chapter in *The Oxford handbook of the Valley of the Kings* is aptly titled 'Tomb Robberies in the Valley of the Kings' by Goelet (2016). It discusses various occurrences of looting in antiquity and refers to the restoration of tombs once a theft had been noticed (Goelet 2016:450-454). This topic, as well as references to the so-called 'tomb robbery papyri', also prominently features in *The Complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Egypt's Greatest Pharaohs*, which was published in 1996 by Reeves and Wilkinson. The authors maintain that defensive mechanisms occurred inside the tombs to protect them from robbers. This fact is corroborated in *The Lost Tomb*, written in 1998 by Weeks, and in the 2016 book chapter by the same author in *The Oxford handbook of the Valley of the Kings*, which explains 'The component parts of KV royal tombs'. These sources form a point of departure to commence research on looting in ancient times.

Considering the plundering of the past in the southern Levant, it was more challenging to find sources related to tomb robbing in antiquity. One source that was consulted to analyse burial practices and tombs was *The lives of Ordinary People in ancient Israel: Where archaeology and the Bible intersect* by Dever (2012), *Archäologie der biblischen Welt* by Vieweger (2012), *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the destruction of Solomon's Temple to the Muslim Conquest* by Magness (2012), *The Oxford handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant c. 8000-332 BCE* edited by Steiner and Killebrew (2014) and the book chapter titled *Death and Burial in Eighth-Century Judah* by Bloch-Smith (2018). While there is some evidence indicating the pillaging of graves in this region in antiquity, the evidence is not as abundant and compelling as it was in ancient Egypt. Instead, there appears to be more evidence of the looting of urban environments following a siege in this region in antiquity, as became evident in the same sources noted here.

In addition to tomb robbing, numerous scholars have studied the occurrence of iconoclasm in antiquity. Diverse forms of iconoclasm are evident, such as socio-cultural or religious and politically motivated destruction, as well as official proscription or *damnatio memoriae* and purposeful destruction of cultural heritage in relation to armed conflict and the subjugation of a conquered society. Porter emphasises the mutilation of bas-reliefs from the cities of Nineveh and Kalḫu, pointing towards the political iconoclasm of the oppressed people in response to the subjugation by the

Assyrians in the 2009 journal article 'Noseless in Nimrud: More Figurative Responses to Assyrian Domination', which was published in a special edition of *Studia Orientalia*. Other publications include the 2016 journal article 'Raze of Glory: Interpreting Iconoclasm at Edfu and Dendera' by Wong, published in the *Journal of Late Antiquity*, the book publication *Striking power: Iconoclasm in ancient Egypt* by Bleiberg and Weissberg (2019) in relation to a museum exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, *The sin of the calf: The rise of the Bible's negative attitude toward the Golden Calf* by Chung (2010), *Did God have a wife? Archaeology and folk religion in ancient Israel* by Dever (2005), the book chapter *Iconoclasm and text destruction in the ancient Near East* by May (2012), and the 2014 contribution in a publication of conference proceedings by the same author titled *'In order to make him completely dead': Annihilation of the power of images in Mesopotamia*.

In recent times, socio-cultural or religious iconoclasm has also been a very visible and notable form of heritage crime within the Near East, especially after it attracted public attention with the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban extremist group in 2001. The events leading up to this iconoclastic demolition are detailed in Bernbeck's 2010 chapter contribution titled 'Heritage politics: Learning from Mullah Omar?' in *Controlling the past, owning the future: The political uses of archaeology in the Middle East* edited by Boytner, Swartz Dodd and Parker (Bernbeck 2010:27-54), and in Pollock's 2005 book chapter 'Archaeology goes to war at the newsstand' published as part of the volume *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical perspectives* edited by Pollock and Bernbeck (Pollock 2005:78-96). According to Bernbeck (2010:35-36), the Taliban initially issued a decree in 1998 for the monitoring and protection of the Bamiyan Buddhas following damage caused by foreign forces, as they realised the potential of cultural heritage to generate an income through tourism. However, a few years later, the situation changed drastically. Numerous external factors such as the deterioration of foreign political relations with the West, but also with the Indian subcontinent, a lack of Western humanitarian aid in contrast to private investments into Afghanistan by Arab individuals, as well as increasing internal conflicts at domestic level led to a change in mindset over the continued protection of cultural heritage (Pollock 2005:87-90; Bernbeck 2010). As a result, the Taliban issued an edict in 2001 for the 'destruction of all human representations in Afghanistan' (Bernbeck 2010:27; Turku 2018:37). The resulting demolition of the two monumental

Buddha Statues in the Bamiyan Valley reinforced the notion that Islamic religion is 'hostile to anthropomorphic art' and in conflict with modernity or Western culture (Flood 2002:641). It was the topic of discussion in the 2002 journal article 'Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum', which was published by Flood in *The Art Bulletin*.

A similar situation is evident with regard to the civil war in Syria, whereby Da'esh/ISIS/ISIL destroyed and looted archaeological sites such as the ancient oasis of Palmyra. In fact, the extremist group sold looted artefacts on the black market to fund their terrorist activities. This was evident in the 2016 public article 'Plundering the Past: The illegal antiquities trade is booming, wreaking havoc on the world's archaeological heritage' by Mueller in the *National Geographic: Official Journal of the National Geographic Society*. As a result, the plundering of the past in the present needs to be analysed. As a result of such drastic occurrences, it is deemed prudent to gain a better understanding of issues faced at cultural heritage sites in the Near East in the present, including looting, iconoclasm, and the illicit trade in antiquities, as well as ongoing geopolitical unrest and events of armed conflict.

In his 2010 chapter 'Archaeological Looting and Economic Justice', which was published as part of the book titled *Cultural heritage management: A global perspective*, Brodie observes that the 'illegal and destructive appropriation and trade of archaeological heritage is a well-documented phenomenon' (Brodie 2010:261). Indeed, this issue was already the focal point of the earlier seminal work *Illicit Antiquities: The theft of culture and the extinction of archaeology*, edited by Brodie and Walker Tubb in 2002. It analyses the recent and current situation, which aligns the trafficking in artefacts with the looting of archaeological sites. In the introductory chapter, Brodie (2002:6-7) noted that cultural heritage often becomes collateral damage during times of armed conflict and that this situation is accompanied by the 'looting for saleable materials' which further aggravates the situation. The writings of Brodie (2002; 2010) are among the few instances, where it has been noted in the literature, that the destruction and looting of archaeological sites (and museums) are related problems.

Other authors who have discussed these phenomena in conjunction with one another include Rothfield's 2008 book *Antiquities under siege: Cultural heritage protection after the Iraq War* and Marston's 2013 Master's dissertation with the title 'Canting the cradle: The destruction of an ancient Mesopotamian civilization'. Both the book and the dissertation studied the looting of the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad and the destruction of archaeological sites that occurred as a result of the Iraq War of 2003, which are relevant case studies in the Syro-Levantine region as this event seems to have spurred looting of archaeological sites in the Near East. Since this is an ongoing issue, Rothfield (2008:xv) recognises that the archaeological sites in the country are being ransacked at an alarming rate. This indicates that there is a continued threat to the survival of archaeological heritage in the Near East that necessitates a solution within a post-war setting.

The looting of archaeological sites increasingly features in research. However, the problem has become particularly grave in Egypt. During the civil unrest of the 2011 Arab Spring Revolution, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo fell prey to plunderers. This event brought about severe vicissitudes and the intensity and magnitude of looting increased at a hitherto unprecedented rate (Parcak et al 2016:188; Ikram & Hanna 2013:38; Hanna 2013:372, 374). In fact, the current looting problem in Egypt is due primarily to the global economic crisis, which resulted in the economic downturn of the country since 2009. The Arab Spring may have drastically worsened the problem, but it is not the sole cause, as is evident by means of the progression of looting visible in satellite imagery. This was the focal point of the 2016 journal article 'Satellite evidence of archaeological site looting in Egypt: 2002-2013', published as a collaborative effort by Parcak, Gathings, Childs, Mumford and Cline in *Antiquity*. In Egypt, the problem of looting is further compounded by the illegal appropriation of land for development and construction projects. This is evident in Ikram and Hanna's 2013 article entitled 'Looting and land grabbing: The current situation in Egypt', which featured in the *Bulletin of the American Research Center in Egypt*. This issue is further apparent in the 2013 journal article 'What Has Happened to Egyptian Heritage after the 2011 Unfinished Revolution?' by Hanna, which was published in the *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*. With the rapid progression of looting evident in these publications, it is imperative to find a solution. This also makes Egypt a relevant setting as a case study for this research.

Numerous authors have studied and commented on the issues of looting and the destruction of archaeological sites, as well as the accompanying problem of the illicit trade in antiquities. However, few academics have proposed possible solutions and even fewer have considered approaching the phenomenon of plundering the past from different angles. Most authors have narrowed their focus to single aspects affecting archaeological sites, mostly from the perspective of heritage law and military intervention during armed conflict. However, approaching these complex heritage issues from only one angle may not be the best answer since this approach inadequately addresses the complexity of the problem. In this context, it becomes increasingly important to understand the motivations for the looting and destruction of cultural heritage and the complexities of the illicit trade in antiquities. Some authors have thus found that a combination of approaches may lead to more success than only a one-sided tactic.

The notable journal article 'Heritage for sale? A case study from Israel', which was published in the *Journal of Field Archaeology* in 2006 by Kersel and Kletter, examined the most prevalent loophole in Israeli national heritage legislation, which has been criticised for legalising the antiquities trade. To address the surge in looting this has effected, the possibility of engaging in a 'state-sponsored sale of "surplus" artifacts' and the opposing schools of thought with regard to legalising the antiquities trade were deliberated (Kersel & Kletter 2006:318, 321-325). By means of the 2012 paper 'Looting history: An analysis of the illicit antiquities trade in Israel' published in *The Journal of Art Crime*, Sheftel expands the argument and examines the options of a 'legitimate and supervised trade, or … banning the trade altogether' (Sheftel 2012:34). In addition to finding a legal solution, the author also considers the domain of public archaeology to add another dimension to address the complex problem. Through the creation of educational centres for tourism and interpretive purposes, the local community and the broader public may be encouraged and sensitised to take pride in, promote and protect their cultural heritage and abandon recreational or subsistence looting (Sheftel 2012:35).

In his 2016 Master's Dissertation, entitled 'Unknown provenance: The forgery, illicit trade and looting of ancient Near Eastern artefacts and antiquities', Conradie discusses the looting, illicit trade and forgery of archaeological heritage as related

issues and he makes suggestions to mitigate looting. He maintains that countries should become signatories of multilateral agreements during times of peace and war to limit looting on the demand side of the market (Conradie 2016:147). However, since looting is exacerbated by political instability, armed conflict and an economic downturn, establishing a policy framework as a code of conduct is not sufficient. Additional measures should be taken into account. Furthermore, Conradie mentions a 'public relations or media campaign' to gather support in the fight against looting, to establish or enhance existing task forces that tackle heritage crime, to 'create a coordinated international law-enforcement response', to govern the trade in antiquities by a strict set of rules and by ethical conduct, to 'enhance the cooperation between the cultural heritage community and law enforcement' and, lastly, to employ modern security technology to combat looting (Conradie 2016:147-150).

In accordance with the suggestion to use modern technology in the book *3D recording, documentation and management of cultural heritage* by Stylianidis and Remondino, the editors reported that 'documenting cultural heritage is a fundamental part of the process in its protection and suitable management' (Stylianidis & Remondino 2016:xi). New technologies are useful for the purpose of heritage conservation: to save and preserve cultural heritage, and to study and understand its significance. This is especially relevant in the face of increasing threats to archaeological heritage such as looting, illicit trade and destruction. This includes the creation of archaeological inventories to manage cultural heritage resources sustainably (Stylianidis & Remondino 2016:xi). Interdisciplinary training is necessary for archaeologists and other heritage practitioners to employ new technologies successfully for the digital recording and documentation of archaeological heritage and to render, for example, 3D models of objects and sites.

To trace evidence of looting and to monitor heritage sites, remote sensing is becoming increasingly relevant, especially in the case of places that are physically inaccessible due to armed conflict. At various heritage sites in the Near East, high-resolution images have been analysed to identify looting, as well as the destruction of archaeological sites, thereby revealing great potential for the use of this type of technology. These studies include the 2014 journal article by Casana and Panahipour, called 'Satellite-based monitoring of looting and damage to archaeological sites in

Syria' which was published in the *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*. Furthermore, the paper 'Satellite imagery-based analysis of archaeological looting in Syria' by Casana and the journal article by Stone, entitled 'An update on the looting of archaeological sites in Iraq', were both published in *Near Eastern Archaeology* in 2015. In addition, the aforementioned journal article titled 'Satellite evidence of archaeological site looting in Egypt: 2002-2013' was published in *Antiquity* by Parcak, Gathings, Childs, Mumford and Cline (2016:190-193). This reflects on a recent large-scale study that used remote sensing in the form of Google Earth Pro data. The authors assessed whether Egyptian archaeological sites are affected by looting and encroaching developments, and determined to what extent damage has already occurred (Parcak et al 2016:190-193). A comparison of these aerial or satellite images over a period from 2002 to 2013 traced a slight increase in looting in the early years between 2002 and 2008.

However, with the economic recession, the fall of tourism and the increase in unemployment, looting events doubled between 2009 and 2010. Following the Arab Spring Revolution of January 2011, which commenced in Tunisia before moving on to countries such as Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain, with protests and demonstrations also in other Middle Eastern countries, and owing to the resulting political instability and changes, another sharp upwards trend occurred in the appearance of looting pits on satellite imagery, which provided evidence of an unprecedented increase in the plundering of archaeological sites (Parcak et al 2016:193-198). Thus, remote sensing in combination with diligent archaeological records about archaeological sites, and placing these in relation to historical events, were able to contribute to a better understanding of the heritage situation in Egypt. The authors then concluded that 'war, terrorism and crime as driving forces' are not the only factors that cause an increase in site looting, but also that 'other economic and political events … have destabilising social consequences' (Parcak et al 2016:198). As a result, monitoring sites by employing remote sensing has established itself as a useful heritage management tool, which is applicable for the purposes of this study.

Another factor amplifying this problem is the fact that archaeological sites often lack security services such as police protection. This means they need to rely on 'unarmed

guards [who can] do little against armed looters' (Parcak et al 2016:189). Therefore, security, law enforcement and the legal protection of archaeological sites is a valid concern. The authors suggest that when considering the type and time period of the site, the types of materials that looters have retrieved during unsanctioned digs can be predicted and international agencies such as Interpol may be notified to be on the lookout for certain types of artefacts on the black market or with regard to international shipping (Parcak et al 2016:203). In addition, military intervention during periods of armed conflict also brings about unique challenges at heritage sites and the needs of local communities. Therefore, military personnel should receive adequate training to be sensitised about the significance of archaeological sites and the appropriate procedures to be followed to protect cultural venues as prescribed by international conventions and local legislation (Rush 2010a; Rush 2010b; Rush 2010c; Rush 2015).

Given that the looting and destruction of archaeological sites seem to be directly related to the economic downturn of a country, resulting in 'significant spikes in looting', it seems as though local populations in dire straits become subsistence looters to be able to survive in their current economic climate (Parcak et al 2016:188, 189).[11] Therefore, a successful tourism industry may stabilise the local economy and lead to job creation for the local community. Community members may be trained for site monitoring, such as heritage managers, security officials or as providers of tourism services, such as interpreting the value of the sites to visitors. Therefore, public archaeology, community engagement and tourism may serve as long-term sustainable solutions to curb the problem of looting, since the local community would protect a resource from which it may derive economic gain (Parcak et al 2016:200-203). However, it is imperative to monitor tourism carefully, as it may be a double-edged sword: On the one hand, tourism stabilises the economy and brings about employment and other positive ripple effects (Parcak et al 2016:193-198). On the other hand, as mentioned in the 2011 book by Timothy *Cultural heritage and tourism: An introduction*, the carrying capacity of a site should not be exceeded. This would erode a site, as is the case with mass tourism (Timothy 2011:158-160). Therefore, cultural tourism at archaeological heritage sites and museums needs to be carefully monitored

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[11] In addition to an economic downturn furthering looting, other economic market factors such as a consumer-driven illicit trade in antiquities or the continued demand for illegally excavated artefacts is also a factor that promotes the plundering of archaeological sites. This was mentioned earlier in relation to Brodie (2002), Kersel (2006), Sheftel (2012) and Conradie (2016).

and sustainably managed. Moreover, visitor management measures should be in place to ensure that tourists do not cause vandalism or cause a site to deteriorate because of harmful behaviour.

Evidently, it is essential to combine a variety of factors to properly safeguard cultural heritage. To test the hypothesis of this study, Tel Hazor was selected for the pilot study. As a prominent site within the context of Biblical Archaeology located in the 'Holy Land', it has featured in various publications to date, some of which include the following:

- *Hazor: The rediscovery of a great citadel of the Bible* by Yadin (1975)
- The chapter 'Hazor' by Yadin (1993) in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Volume 2), edited by Stern, Lewinson-Gilboa and Aviram
- The chapter titled 'Hazor' by Ben-Tor (1993) in Volume 2 of *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, which was edited by Stern, Lewinson-Gilboa and Aviram
- The chapter 'Hazor: An update to Vol. 2, pp. 594-606' by Ben-Tor (2008) published in Supplementary Volume 5 of *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, which was edited by Stern, Geva and Aviram
- *Hazor: Canaanite metropolis, Israelite city* by Ben-Tor (2016)
- *From Dan to Beersheba: An archaeological tour through ancient Israel* by Scheepers and Scheffler (2000)

1.8   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THESIS

The looting and resulting destruction of archaeological sites (including iconoclasm) and the illicit trade in art and antiquities at times of war, as well as also during periods of peace, is something that occurs at an international scale. Therefore, the study is timely and relevant.

Archaeological evidence has always been fragmentary in nature. Researchers only gain a partial glimpse into the past as they excavate features that comprise of ruins or they excavate parts of sites, but seldom excavate a site as a whole (Richelle 2018:57-

59). The context within which a site features and artefacts are found, therefore, provides information about a past era and society. Hence, valuable insight is gained from stratigraphic layers or artefacts that are found *in situ*, such as dating evidence for a site (Magness 2012:9). However, when a site is looted, destroyed or excavated unscientifically, the contextual evidence and provenance are not recorded and are instead lost. As a result, an excavated object's scientific value becomes void. Henceforth, its value can be measured only in monetary or aesthetic terms as an object that supplies the illicit trade in antiquities (Conradie 2016:1). Unless specific records exist and an object was stolen only after it was documented, the relevance and connection of an artefact to a specific archaeological site can also only be assumed and no longer proven – after all, illegal excavations and artefacts gleaned from looting pits are seldom recorded and therefore they lose their historical and scientific meaning. This poses a major problem within archaeology in general, but it is especially pertinent in the region of the Near East owing to the ongoing conflicts occurring there. According to Conradie (2016:9), this occurs predominantly in the Middle East where looting is rampant and 'running out of control'. The unprecedented rate of looting and the accompanying destruction of archaeological sites apparent in the Near East, which has been considered as the cradle of civilization, makes it imperative that a solution be found.

Therefore, the contribution of this study to the discipline of Biblical Archaeology lies in the preservation of archaeological heritage located in the Fertile Crescent. In this author's opinion, the main aim of Biblical Archaeology is not to prove or disprove the veracity of the biblical narrative, but rather to study the places, events and communities mentioned in the Bible to gain a better understanding of the lives of past societies. Hence, the protection of these sites from looting and destruction is essential for the benefit of enabling future research. By preserving the context in which archaeological artefacts are found, they retain their scientific and historic interpretive value. Moreover, safeguarding archaeological sites and objects is in the interest of posterity, so that the cultural heritage of the Near East remains accessible to the public.

In this context, new methods and technologies may help to improve the situation. Since it is unlikely that a single approach will bear fruit, a comprehensive and

multifaceted approach is necessary. On the basis of on the aforementioned four-pillar heritage management approach as an integrated and interdisciplinary solution, implementing modern technologies such as remote sensing and digitisation together with security measures and law enforcement and public archaeology by means of community engagement and archaeological tourism, may help to curb the degree to which the looting and destruction of archaeological sites occurs.

1.9 GLOSSARY OF SOME CONCEPTUAL TERMS

Artefacts and antiquities: An 'artefact' can be defined as a human-made object and it comprises the 'basic [component] of material culture' (Darvill 2003:25; my inclusion). The term 'antiquity' is used 'to refer to historic or prehistoric monuments and ruins, or objects of great age, or objects used in conjunction with ancient rituals or … religious practice' (Darvill 2003:17). For the most part, antiquities or artefacts imply movable objects, either excavated or of ancient origin. These terms will be used interchangeably during the course of the study. Large, immovable structures at archaeological sites would rather be termed buildings or architectural features.

Biblical Archaeology: This is a subdivision of the greater umbrella of archaeology, which is centred mainly on the region of Syria-Palestine, but which 'focuses primarily on the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods' since most of the events that occurred in the Bible took place during these periods (Currid 1999:20). Hence, biblical archaeology can be defined as 'an application of the science of archaeology to the field of biblical studies', which studies the tangible remains associated with the places and people mentioned in the Bible (Price & House 2017:17).

Destruction of archaeological heritage: This affects artefacts, only a section of a site or the entire premises. It includes the deliberate, goal-orientated wrecking of sites such as iconoclasm or vandalism, or as part of development projects (Tantaleán 2014:45).

Fertile Crescent: This term was coined by James Breasted in 1914/1916 and it refers to a geographical area ranging from the fertile Nile Valley to Syria-Palestine (also referred to as the Levant) to southern Anatolia and then eastwards along the Tigris

and Euphrates Rivers to the Persian Gulf. It is roughly crescent shaped and the local conditions were ideal for farming to emerge in ancient times (Darvill 2003:143; Vieweger 2012:35, 77).

Iconoclasm: This is the destruction or obliteration of architectural buildings or monuments, artefacts and literature, as well as icons or anthropomorphic images at cultural heritage sites 'in the name of any ideology' (Flood 2002:641; Conradie 2016:137).

Illegal excavations: These are illegal, unsanctioned and unscientific excavations or digs, which constitute a form of looting of archaeological heritage sites, without having received a permit or licence to allow research to take place. They usually take place in a clandestine and haphazard manner without (proper) documentation, and with the intention of supplying the illicit trade in antiquities (Brodie 2002:1-2).

Illicit trade or antiquities trafficking: This major international threat to archaeological heritage is the sale of illegally acquired artefacts and antiquities on the black market. It generally encompasses the trade or smuggling of stolen or looted artefacts and antiquities (O'Keefe 2010:257).

Looting: This is the plundering of archaeological sites in search of valuable materials without scientific documentation of the finds; therefore, it encompasses the loss of the archaeological record of the objects. In the process of a clandestine excavation, artefacts are frequently damaged and their context is often destroyed. Objects that are broken, or that are perceived to have 'little or no commercial value' are habitually discarded (O'Keefe 2010:257). In this regard, it is a major threat and 'one of the most widespread activities affecting archaeological heritage, near large cities, towns and in rural areas' and it is mostly performed by the people affected by poverty in 'lower social classes' to supplement an income (Brodie 2010:262-263; Tantaleán 2014:43). In this context, it is known as subsistence digging or subsistence looting. This criminal activity is closely linked to the illicit trade in antiquities as it supplies artefacts for the trade (Tantaleán 2014:43).

Provenience/provenance: Provenience refers to the findspot or archaeological context within which an object is found, excavated or associated with. Information about the exact place where an artefact was found contributes to its archaeological knowledge or documentation. Provenance denotes the site where an object was found, or its history or record of ownership (Darvill 2003:342; Brodie 2002:2). Without provenience or provenance, an artefact loses its scientific and historical significance/meaning. The terms are often used interchangeably.

Repatriation/restitution: The return of cultural property to a site, museum or to its country of origin after it was removed or exported during colonialism, looted or stolen and, as a result, became detached from its origins (Darvill 2003:356). These terms will be used interchangeably where applicable during the research.

Tel/tell (terms to be used interchangeably in the context of this thesis): This is not a single-period or single occupation site, but rather a city or town that was occupied repeatedly over 'thousands of years' when successive cultures and ages built on top of one another, with archaeologists uncovering numerous occupation levels reflecting 'a great variety of materials' present at a single site (Currid 1999:37-38). Hence, it is a 'mound consisting of debris from cities built on top of one another on the same site' (Currid 1999:42). Therefore, it resembles a 'small hill as a result of successive habitation layers deposited through destruction', whereby a new city was built over an older site that had previously been destroyed due to natural disasters or manmade effects (Price & House 2017:31-32).

Vandalism: This phenomenon is usually carried out by the local community or by tourists. They cause harm to archaeological heritage by climbing on and damaging walls or by scribbling graffiti on them. Vandalism may occur not only because of the lack of monitoring at a site, but also because of to the lack of education on the part of the visitors (Tantaleán 2014:45-46).

CHAPTER TWO
EVIDENCE OF LOOTING IN ANCIENT EGYPT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Significant events of the biblical narrative were set within ancient Egypt. Hence, the country has always been firmly located as part of the biblical world. In the Old Testament, Egypt is mentioned as both a place of refuge and oppression. This is evident in the story of Abraham (Gn 12), as well as Joseph's enslavement and subsequent journey from Canaan into Egypt, which is noted in Genesis (notably Gn 37, 39, 42-44, 50). Moreover, the biblical story of Moses, the Israelite enslavement in Goshen (within Egypt), the plagues and the Exodus of the Israelites through the Sinai desert and their conquest of Canaan is noted in great detail throughout the book of Exodus (Ex), as well as the book of Joshua (Jos). Egypt is further mentioned with respect to the reign of Solomon (1 Ki 3:1; 1 Ki 11:40), the invasion of the Egyptian pharaoh Shishak during the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chr 12:2), it is also mentioned in 2 Kings 25 and the book of Jeremiah (Jr 40). Similarly, the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament again refers to Egypt as a place of refuge and protection for the Holy Family during their flight from Herod I (Mt 2:13-23); during this period Egypt was a Roman province. Thus, ancient Egypt features prominently in the biblical narrative. Consequently, the research performed at archaeological heritage sites located there contribute to a better understanding of the societies, places and events mentioned in the Bible and play an important role in Biblical Archaeology.

Extra-biblical documentary sources reinforce the close connection between ancient Egypt and the southern Levant by pointing towards trade and diplomatic relations, as well as episodes of conquest and the subjugation of vassal states. Contemporary textual documents are very useful as they enhance biblical archaeological research by adding information about the time periods and circumstances in question. In this context, the famed *Amarna Letters* comprise an archive of textual correspondence between Egyptian pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty and their vassal states located in the Syro-Palestine region, including Canaanite kingdoms such as Hazor (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:88-89, 341; Cooney 2011:3-4; Bourke 2018:134; Grant 1984:17; Dever 2012:60; Ben-Tor 2016:13; Le Roux 2018:4-5). Moreover, the *Merneptah Stele*, also

referred to as the *Israel Stele* and located at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, documents the successful military campaigns of the 19th Dynasty pharaoh Merneptah (also known as Merenptah) to Nubia and the southern Levant. It is known as the only Egyptian textual document found to date that makes direct reference to the tribe of 'Israel' (Isbouts 2016:117; Vieweger 2012:80; Wilson 2019:106-107, 165; Currid 2020:111-112).[12]

In addition, significant evidence at archaeological heritage sites also reinforces the close ties between ancient Egypt and the southern Levant. The necropolis of Beni Hasan in Egypt is the location of numerous rock-cut tombs of provincial governors or 'nomarchs' of the Middle Kingdom, dating mainly to the 11th and 12th Dynasties. These burials are famous for their murals and inscriptions (Shaw 2003:117; Snape 2011:151-156). One such mural, located on the northern wall of the tomb of Khnumhotep II, depicts a visiting delegation of people of Asiatic or Syro-Palestinian origin visiting Egypt. The people are depicted with bearded faces and colourful robes and they appear to be led by a person with a West Semitic name of 'Ab-sha', as noted in the accompanying inscription. The tomb owner deemed this event especially notable, so much so that it was immortalised on the tomb wall (Snape 2011:155-156; Mazar 1992:166, 169, 187).

While the mural at Beni Hasan depicts peaceful interactions, the elaborate 20th Dynasty mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu boasts abundant relief carvings that document the pharaoh's military campaigns. Among others, the famous scene of the naval battle between the Egyptians and the Sea Peoples is depicted on the north wall in the first court of the main temple. The inscriptions that accompany the battle scene mention the 'Peleset', which are assumed to denote the Philistines (Shaw 2003:212; Wilkinson 2000: 197-199). Ramesses' victory over the Sea Peoples has not only been celebrated as a temple mural, but was also noted in the *Great Harris Papyrus,* which formed part of the archives of the mortuary temple, now located at the British Museum in London (Wilkinson 2000:199).

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[12] The *Merneptah Stele* or *Israel Stele* remains disputed by archaeologists due to differing interpretations. However, the majority of researchers have transliterated the group of hieroglyphs as 'Isrir', which has commonly been interpreted as 'Israel' (Wilson 2019:106-107, 165).

The close historical ties between Egypt and the remainder of the Near East, which have been illustrated above, remain significant for the context of this study about looting and the accompanying destruction of cultural heritage in antiquity, since this offers insight into the socio-economic and geopolitical conditions prevalent in the biblical world in the ancient past. Thus, it provides insight into the circumstances that have shaped ancient Egyptian and the broader Near Eastern society.

This research further encompasses the broader context of Biblical Archaeology in terms of the safeguarding of archaeological data within its original context, which in turn informs research. However, the plundering of ancient sites is a phenomenon that appears to have been synonymous with Egypt for centuries (Fagan 2004:9). Looting has caused the fragmentation of the archaeological remains available for study. In his capacity as inspector-general of Upper Egypt within the Department of Antiquities, during a period when Egypt was under British occupation, Weigall (1911)[13] took note of the frequent exposure of archaeological sites to illegal excavations during the late colonial era. Unscientific digging, which served to plunder artefacts to supply the illicit trade in antiquities, caused extensive damage to archaeological sites. Thus, the severity of looting has reportedly led to a loss of knowledge about the past (Weigall 1911:239-261).

The foreign occupation (and colonialism) of Egypt was evident during the Intermediate periods that interspersed pharaonic rule. Moreover, during the Late period the central pharaonic regime declined, leading to periods of Persian rule, followed by the Ptolemaic era, and later the Roman occupation of Egypt, when the state turned into a Roman province (Fagan 2004:6). During these times, early Greek and Roman travellers toured Egypt, exploring the wonders of the ancient world. One of these travellers was the Greek historian Herodotus. In his famous work *Histories*, he recorded amongst others his travels of the ancient world, including the time he spent in Egypt from approximately 460 to 455 BCE. Many other classical visitors followed suit, travelling to explore Egypt and other parts of North Africa and the Near East (Fagan 2004:14-19). These early travellers left graffiti behind on ancient monuments. They entered pharaonic tombs that had already been exposed and plundered

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[13] During the period from 1882 to 1952 CE Egypt was under British occupation (Golia 2022:161).

according to contemporary reports, and they looted Egyptian sculptures and obelisks (Fagan 2004:20-24). With the advent of Coptic Christianity, the ancient Egyptian religion declined further and was no longer practiced. Moreover, the effects of the new religious zeal were detrimental and iconoclastic to the cultural heritage of ancient Egypt (Fagan 2004:24-26; Van der Spek 2011:57; Wong 2016; Bleiberg 2019; Connor 2019; Golia 2022:105).[14] With the ancient structures no longer in use and apparently redundant, local Egyptians reused the readily available stones. Hence, ancient structures became quarries for new buildings. Alternatively, they allowed nature to reclaim many of the structures, causing them to be buried in the desert sands. With the spread of Islam into Egypt from the seventh century CE onwards and the later Mamluk rule (1250-1517 CE), there was also a notable decline in European travellers. Regardless, the temples and tombs continued to be quarried for their stone or explored in the hopes of finding treasure (Fagan 2004:27-31; Golia 2022:105-112, 136).

In 1517 CE the Ottoman Empire took power over Egypt and reestablished some diplomatic ties with Europe, which reopened Egypt for travel. As a result, travellers sought to obtain curiosities such as mummies or other souvenirs, which were readily available in markets (Fagan 2004:33; Golia 2022:143). The advent of the European Renaissance and increasing interest in science were also accompanied by a surge in scholars and antiquarians, merchants and diplomats travelling to Egypt, often in search of exotic artefacts. This eventually sparked a passion for serious collecting and a lucrative market in antiquities commenced, so much so that by the 1700s the 'demand for Egyptian antiquities inevitably outstripped the supply' (Fagan 2004:41-42). It was also around this time that European nations commenced establishing their national museums as repositories for collections of not only the cultural heritage from their own countries, but also that of foreign states. The demand for antiquities and the trend of collecting antiquities caused a surge of treasure hunting in Egypt, whereby travellers were able to obtain permits from the Ottoman authorities to dig for treasure at tombs and temples (Fagan 2004:42). By the 18th century, Egypt had become more well-known as a travel destination and European nations and the United States of America sent research expeditions to explore the ancient Egyptian monuments. Moreover, the strategic position of Egypt *en route* to India became increasingly

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[14] This aspect of purposeful destruction is explored in greater detail in Chapter Four.

significant. When Napoléon Bonaparte invaded Egypt between 1798 and 1801 CE, he brought not only an army, but also scientists to study the country's past and to analyse its contemporary situation. However, the campaign was doomed and the French were forced to surrender to British forces in 1801, and the defeated army returned to France 'carrying crates of priceless antiquities' (Fagan 2004:9, 46-54; Golia 2022:161). Owing to the capitulation of the French, the British successfully claimed many of the artefacts and specimens that had been collected in the course of the French expedition. More importantly, in addition to the collections, the knowledge gained from the French expedition and the resulting multiple volume publication known as the *Description de l'Égypte* on the one hand generated public appreciation and became a 'catalyst for further study of ancient Egypt', and on the other hand 'fuelled a frenzied scramble for Egyptian antiquities' (Fagan 2004:56; Golia 2022:161-162).

Instead of annexing Egypt, the British left it to be ruled by the Ottoman Turks. However, the Turkish Empire had little interest in the territory and Muhammad Ali, who had risen through the ranks of the Turkish army, took power to govern Egypt from 1805 CE until his death in 1849 CE as an independent ruler. Under his leadership, which has often been described as harsh and authoritarian towards his subjects, the country opened up further to attract not only diplomats and merchants, but also tourists and antiquities dealers (Fagan 2004:56-58; Golia 2022:165-166). As described by Fagan (2004:57), 'to a despotic ruler interested in international power and foreign capital, the monuments of ancient Egypt were of little interest except as a diplomatic lever or a way of keeping powerful visitors with strange hobbies interested in Egypt'. Basically, he used the ancient relics as bargaining chips to attract Western technology and to secure investments (Golia 2022:10, 165-166). During this period, adventurers or explorers such as Giovanni Belzoni, Henry Salt and Bernardino Drovetti also became interested in ancient Egypt. While their priority was that of making a commercial gain, they rediscovered some important sites, which they then ruthlessly excavated and exploited, plundering the antiquities to move them to European museums (Fagan 2004:65-150). Soon thereafter, many other amateur antiquarians, collectors and tourists followed in their footsteps, plundering the archaeological remains of Egypt. Simultaneously, serious scientific interest in Egyptology emerged and scholars such as Jean-François Champollion started advocating for the protection of the

archaeological sites from looting and destruction.[15] Eventually, by 1835 Muhammad Ali published a government ordinance to protect archaeological monuments and to forbid the 'exportation of antiquities', and it brought about the founding of a museum in Cairo to house Egypt's own collections of antiquities (Fagan 2004:170). This trend continued when Egypt again became an occupied state following an army revolt in 1881, this time by the British. The country gained its complete independence from foreign rule only in 1952 (Golia 2022:161; Fagan 204:250). During this period of continued upheaval Egypt remained a popular destination for travellers, but also for the research of foreign scientific missions led mainly by British, French, German and American archaeologists (Fagan 2004:246). It was only during this modern era that Egyptian archaeologists emerged to research and protect the history of their own country in their own right. As stated by Fagan (2004:250), the 'Egyptians gained full independence and complete control over their past in the 1950s'.

Evidently, with the marvels of the ancient monuments and the lure of buried riches, there was a downright craze to travel to Egypt during the colonial era – and to return home with mummies and other ancient treasures. Therefore, the looting of antiquities was inevitable. However, it is also true that 'most of the royal treasures vanished long before the antiquarians and archaeologists came to Thebes and completed the work of destruction' (Fagan 2004:5). This statement indicates that the looting of heritage sites is a problem that predates colonialism by far. It is not a recent phenomenon at all, but one that has persisted since antiquity.

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[15] The commencement of Egyptology as a scientific archaeological endeavour can be traced back to the translation of hieroglyphic writing by Champollion in 1822 (Golia 2022:166).
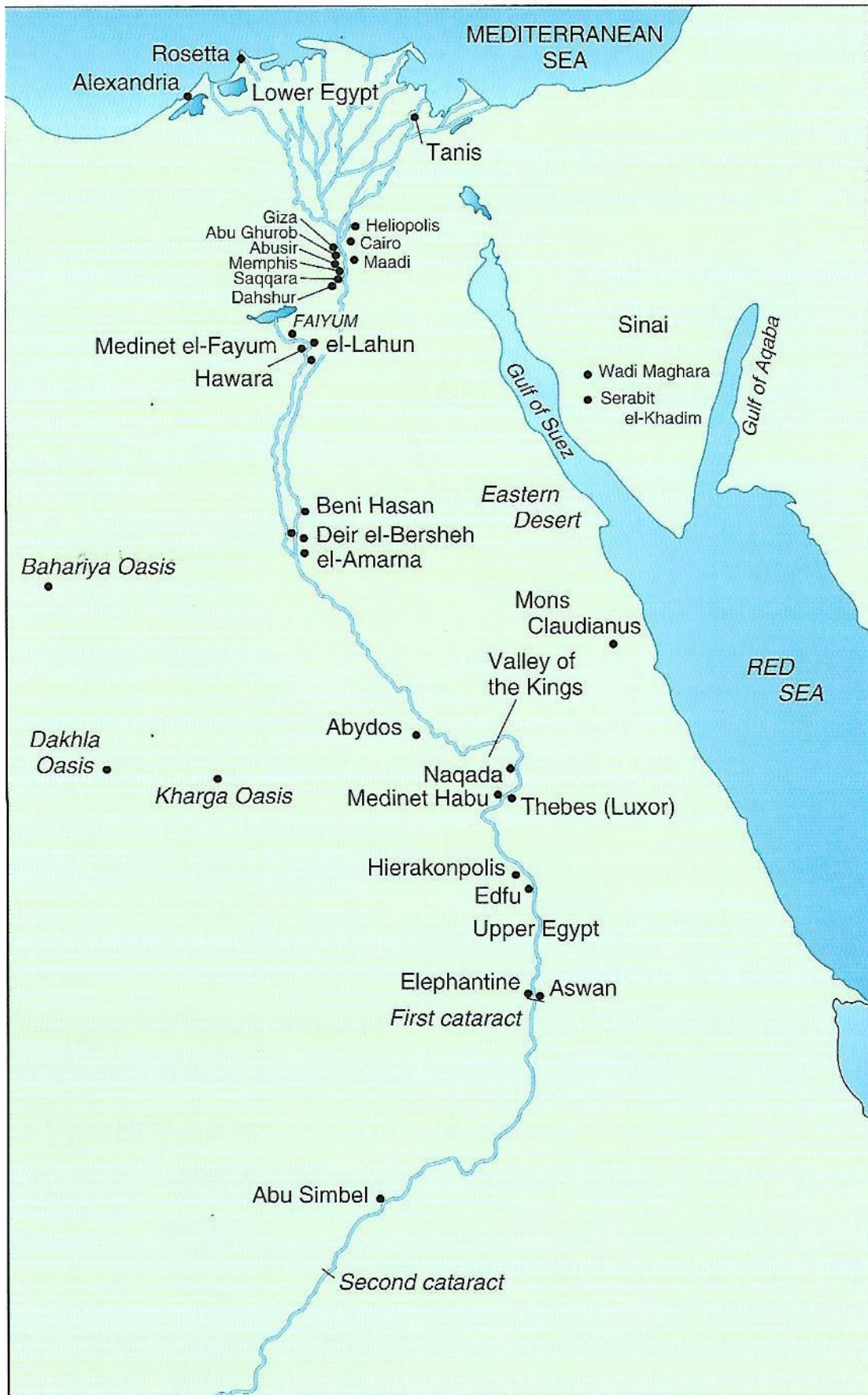
Figure 2.1: Map showing some of the major archaeological sites in Egypt mentioned in this chapter (Shaw 2003:2)

Therefore, this chapter considers the origins of tomb robbing by examining the evolution of elite and royal tomb architecture in ancient Egypt, as well as other archaeological evidence such as the absence of material evidence or grave goods in tombs and the destruction caused by their looting and ransacking in antiquity. Moreover, ancient written records known as the 'tomb robbery papyri' provide insight into ancient criminal proceedings and record events of looting in antiquity. This chapter further aims to identify archaeological evidence pertaining to ancient mechanisms to monitor and protect the Valley of the Kings and possible reasons for looting in ancient times, as this may have affected continued practices in the present day. By analysing the evidence, it is possible not only to identify the origins of looting practices in antiquity, but also to prove that plundering the cultural heritage of the biblical world has remained a persistent problem despite policing and other ancient mechanisms that were in place. The map of modern Egypt in Figure 2.1 above shows some of the major archaeological sites, which are mentioned throughout this chapter.

2.2   TOMB ARCHITECTURE IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Tomb architecture in ancient Egypt has developed continually, from small, shallow graves covered with tumuli to much more elaborate and decorated, even multi-chambered tombs, which were either cut into the rockface or bedrock or free-standing burial constructions. The 'House for Eternity' usually comprised of two vital elements: 'the offering place or decorated tomb-chapel, where the cult for the deceased was celebrated, located above ground, and the burial chamber, where the body was interred, located below ground' (Ikram 2015:139).

In most cases, tombs and larger cemeteries or necropoles were located on the western side of the Nile River, opposite a settlement on the eastern side of the river that they were associated with. 'This corresponds to the metaphor of human life as parallel to the path of the sun: rising in the east and setting [dying] in the west' (Ikram 2015:140-141). The cemeteries were separated from the settlements for various reasons: in practical terms, it was better suited for the practical land use and it was more hygienic. Moreover, scavenging animals frequently roamed around areas where burials occurred, so it was also a safety measure for the population that the cemeteries were not located directly adjacent to the area where the communities lived. In addition,

there was also a religious reason for the separation of the necropolis from the settlement: 'a distance from a cemetery was thought to deter the meddling of restless or mischievous spirits in human affairs' (Ikram 2015:141).

Burials were meant to protect the human remains interred inside so that these would last. According to the ancient Egyptian belief system, the physical survival of the physical body was essential since it was 'crucial to a continued existence in the hereafter, especially the *ka* and the *ba* … needed to be periodically reunited with it if they were to survive' (Ikram 2015:23). Ancient Egyptians believed that a person was made of different parts in addition to the physical body,[16] which together constituted a complete person: '*ren*, the name; *shuyet*, the shadow; *ka*, the double or life-force; *ba*, the personality or soul; *akh*, the spirit' (Ikram 2015:24).

As the life-force that animated the body, the *ka* survived after death. This 'self' or 'double' continued roaming around, but it needed to be able to return to the body that served as its home base. However, if the body did not survive, a statue or another representation of the human could also serve as a substitute, as long as it was clearly identified as a representation of that person through written identification and activated as a vessel by means of the 'Opening of the Mouth' ritual (Gates 2011:89). Therefore, the survival of the actual human body or of a statue resembling the deceased person to some degree were essential parts of burials that needed to remain complete so that the *ka* and the other components, such as the *ba* noted above, would be able to recognise the deceased in the afterlife. As a result, mummification was a central part of the burial process because of the need to preserve the body intact. In turn, the tombs were aimed at housing and protecting the human remains as intactly as possible, while simultaneously serving as a 'House for the Ka' (Snape 2011:21).

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[16] There were different terms for the human body: the body of a living human was known as *khet*, while a deceased corpse was termed *khat*. In addition, the mummified body was known as *sah*. The heart was considered as the most important organ and 'this was where the soul, spirit, personality, and the very essence of an individual were supposed to reside' (Ikram 2015:24). Upon mummification, all other organs were removed, but the heart remained inside of the body. It was believed that when a person was judged in the Afterlife, their heart was weighed against *maat*, which was the concept of justice, truth and cosmic order as depicted by means of a feather. If the heart was deemed too heavy, i.e. heavier than the feather, then the person was considered to have committed misdeeds in life and would not be able to enter the Afterlife. Instead, the person would be consumed by the goddess Ammut. On the other hand, if the person had led a good life, the heart would be in balance with the feather and the person would be able to enter the Afterlife (Ikram 2015:24; Wilkinson 2017:150, 218).

However, 'thieves could disrupt this well-planned journey' (Gates 2011:83). Owing to the above-mentioned sanctity of human remains, tomb robbing was considered a heinous act. Burials were essentially defensive structures that aimed at protecting the deceased and their wealth, while simultaneously representing their social status. As a result, the evolution of tomb design in ancient Egypt could be regarded as a continuous attempt to better secure human remains and the materials they were interred with (Gates 2011:83; Golia 2022:8). Therefore, the tomb architecture in ancient Egypt has changed over time: as the needs of the ancient Egyptian society changed, the burial design was adapted. These changes in the burial architecture of ancient Egypt are especially apparent when considering elite and royal tombs, which 'evolved separately from their non-royal counterparts' (Ikram 2015:151). Therefore, social differentiation will also be considered from Predynastic to Dynastic times, to identify the commencement of a visible distinction between the graves of commoners and the apex of ancient Egyptian society.

2.2.1 Predynastic graves

Only limited evidence of Predynastic and early dynastic burials is available at a time when significant changes occurred, whereby ancient Egyptians transitioned from a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle to farming and the advent of ancient Egyptian state formation and consolidation. There is a scarcity of information about this early period. While sites dating to this era are usually found in marginal locations, many have been ruined in the course of excavations performed by early researchers, who have deemed the finds as 'unexciting material' (Kuhrt 1995:130).

The earliest settlement seems to have occurred at Lake Faiyum in Upper Egypt. Fayum A dates from approximately ca. 4600 to 4000 BCE, but may reach as far back as 5000 BCE (Kuhrt 1995:130-132). Initially, these Neolithic people appeared to have lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, mainly pursuing a hunter-gatherer lifestyle that eventually transitioned into farming (Kuhrt 1995:132). While remains of settlements at these sites have been found, cemeteries have yet to be discovered. To date, only some individual graves have been recovered (Romer 2012:6-9, 24, 27).

In Lower Egypt, one of the earliest sites is found at Merimde (or Merimda, ca. 4300-3800 BCE). Located on the western side of the Nile delta, this settlement comprised a village of 'small family units engaged in farming' (Kuhrt 1995:132). Another site known as El-Omari (from ca. 3500 BCE) encompasses several smaller sites where simple farming communities lived. However, despite the rather long continuation of this farming culture into the Early Dynastic period, according to Kuhrt (1995:132) there is 'very little evidence of structural change'. Notably, the sites in Lower Egypt appear to be distinct from one another and there is no indication of the development of social complexity.

In contrast, the early sites in Upper Egypt are indicative of much more uniformity and interconnections, which eventually led to the beginnings of social stratification. Hence, there was a 'distinct cultural divide between Lower and Upper Egypt' (Kuhrt 1995:130-132). The Badarian culture in Upper Egypt (ca. 4400-4000 BCE) mainly comprised early Nile farmers and herders. With the availability of surplus food stored in grain bins, they seem to have settled more permanently, thereby changing their lifestyles into ones dedicated to cultivating food and adapting to the annual Nile floods (Romer 2012:37, 39-40; Kuhrt 1995:130). Possibly owing to this sedentary nature, they started burying their dead with considerable care in individual graves. Burials of predynastic Egypt[17] typically comprised shallow oval pits 'dug into the desert sand and gravel, marked with a pile of stone and sand, forming a *tumulus*' where people were buried in a flexed position (Snape 2011:7; Ikram 2015:151). Usually, the bodies were wrapped in animal skins, leathers or a fine cloth such as linen or covered with a mat. In addition, they were accompanied by grave goods such as items of pottery, 'cosmetics, clothes and jewellery, domestic utensils and hunting gear', among others (Gates 2011:84; Snape 2011:7; Romer 2012:54-55). In fact, these early Badarian graves mark 'the beginning of a millennial process of funerary presentation and definition that would be undertaken by the people of the Nile with impressive dedication and extraordinary effect' (Romer 2012:55). Indeed, while burials encompassed individual grave pits, they formed part of large cemeteries located at the desert-edge 'beyond the zone of cultivation' such as at Abydos and Saqqara (Gates 2011:83; Snape 2011:7; Romer 2012:38, 54-55). However, neither the layout of these early cemeteries, nor the

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[17] Predynastic Egypt is typically considered as the 'period before the unification of Egypt at c. 3050 BC' (Snape 2011:7).

architecture of the individual graves provide any distinctive indication of the commencement of definitive social stratification within the population (Kuhrt 1995:130; Ikram 2015:151).

The Badarian culture was succeeded by the Naqadan culture, which is usually divided into the Amratian culture (after the site of El Amrah, also known as Naqada I, or the early Naqadan period, dating from approximately 4000/3800-3500 BCE) and the Gerzean culture. The latter comprises both Naqada II (or middle Naqadan period, from ca. 3500-3300 BCE) and Naqada III (or late Naqadan period, from ca. 3300-3100/3000 BCE), whereby distinctions are made on the basis of pottery typology (Romer 2012:58; Kuhrt 1995:130). The early Naqadan culture displayed 'strong cultural continuities' with the Badarian burial customs and pottery, hence there appears to be some overlap (Romer 2012:57; Kuhrt 1995:130). Naqadan culture appears to have established itself in three main areas, namely the town of Naqada, where it was originally discovered, and at Abydos and Hierakonpolis (Romer 2012:64-65). In the early Amratian phase, the cultural assemblage became more sophisticated with respect to stone-tool working and pottery.[18] This extension of the previously limited range of artefacts suggests that there was 'the emergence of an élite group' (Kuhrt 1995:130; Romer 2012:60). More elaborate pottery decorations also possibly marked the beginning of ancient Egyptian visual art and culture (Kuhrt 1995:130; Snape 2011:8; Romer 2012:57-59, 72). In addition, more settlements and cemeteries came about throughout a larger geographical area (Romer 2012:64).[19]

Initially, owing to the shallow grave pits that were marked by tumuli, the bodies of the deceased were exposed to the hot desert sand, which naturally preserved them. At some stage after the burial, the bodies may have become uncovered either with the wind eroding the cover layer or due to scavenging animals. Through exposure and accidental discovery of these preserved bodies, the ancient Egyptians likely gained the notion that they needed to artificially preserve the bodies for the afterlife (Gates 2011:83; Ikram 2015:49-50). However, with the start of more elaborate burials, the

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[18] During later periods of the Amratian phase, cultural assemblages also started to include items such as 'animal-shaped slate palettes (for grinding eye-paint) and disc-shaped mace-heads', as well as ivory combs and hairpins with decorative animal-shaped heads (Romer 2012:59-63; Kuhrt 1995:130). This possibly points towards the commencement of elitism with the availability of items that were indicative of a difference in social status.

[19] While early Naqadan graves were very similar to those of the Badarian period, there is 'some degree of differentiation based on the size of the grave and the number and quality of its contents' (Snape 2011:8).

human remains were no longer directly preserved by the sand with its desiccating properties, which would have hastened their decay. This, in turn, led to the commencement of mummification practices, whereby the bodies were artificially preserved using resins or embalmment and wrappings (Gates 2011:83; Ikram 2015:49-50).

Recent research has indicated that the origins of the practice of mummification dates back far earlier than previously assumed, namely to the Naqada II period (Ikram 2015:50). Moreover, Naqada II burials paid less attention to the orientation of the buried bodies than earlier graves did, whereas animal skins typically used in earlier burials were replaced by woven mats or linen. In richer graves, the first basket or wooden coffins were introduced and the substructure of the graves slowly became more complex (Snape 2011:8; Ikram 2015:151-152). At Hierakonpolis the first archaeological evidence of an oval-shaped courtyard in the centre of the settlement was found, which appears to have been enclosed by a mudbrick and stone wall and surrounded by numerous structures, one of which was a larger structure comprising three rooms. This is indicative of a more complex social hierarchy within Naqadan society (Romer 2012:73-75). Therefore, it is no coincidence that more elaborate burial practices emerged during this period as well. The first truly remarkable Predynastic tomb was discovered at Hierakonpolis and dates to the Naqada II period. The mud-plastered tomb was 'painted with scenes of fighting, hunting, and river travel' and subsequently became known as the 'Painted Tomb' (Snape 2011:8; Ikram 2015:152). This elaborate early burial was certainly meant for a person of elite social status and can be considered the forerunner of the royal tombs of the First Dynasty (Snape 2011:8; Ikram 2015:152).

Afterwards, in the Naqada III period, the distinction between graves of the elite and common people became more pronounced. This indicates that social status started playing an increasingly important role as there were 'small numbers of large and well-provisioned tombs and a majority of much less impressive graves' (Snape 2011:8; Ikram 2015:152). However, despite the commencement of social stratification, there

is not yet much conclusive evidence about looting or the robbing of graves at this early stage.[20]

2.2.2 From early tombs to *mastabas*

During the early formative period of the ancient Egyptian civilisation, burial customs slowly 'became more elaborate' (Gates 2011:84). At Tarkhan, a site located approximately 60 kilometres south of Cairo, more complex Predynastic burials were discovered. The body of the deceased was interred in a shallow oval pit and accompanied by a few grave goods. This pit was surrounded by a rectangular mudbrick wall that seems to have been filled with rubble after the burial, creating a solid box that was approximately a metre in height, enclosing and protecting the remains. Attached to the rectangular mudbrick square, or *mastaba*, was another small room that contained storage jars made from pottery and other food containers. The outer room and the enclosed *mastaba* shared a wall, which had slits inside – probably to be able to offer food to the deceased, who in turn was orientated in such a way that the body faced the small annex. In this regard, there seems to have been a distinction between the enclosed burial chamber and the offering room with the food, which was accessible from the outside. This is one of the first examples of a more complex two-chamber tomb or bipartite burial (Snape 2011:11-13). This tomb seems to exemplify the start of the importance of the provision of food for the afterlife. This further shows that there seems to have been a connection between the person who had been buried and the people who visited the grave to offer food (Snape 2011:13).

As mentioned above, the two-chamber or bipartite tomb model comprised of a burial chamber and an offering chapel. The burial chamber was meant to be the secure final resting place of the deceased person. The intention was that the human body should be laid to rest and not disturbed, but 'left in peace' (Snape 2011:19). In contrast, the offering chapel, which would later evolve into a mortuary temple, was aimed at the public commemoration of the dead and it was designed to be accessible to receive the food offerings from the living for the dead person. These two basic, but essential

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[20] The presence of grave goods identified through archaeological research would infer that at least some early burials were found in more intact conditions to be able to draw conclusions about the sophistication and status of the people who were buried.

elements became exemplary for most Egyptian burials and shaped Egyptian tomb design for millennia afterwards (Snape 2011:19).

The Predynastic period ended with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by ca. 3100 BCE (Knapp 1988:108). From the First Dynasty (ca. 3000 – 2890 BCE) onwards, elitism seems to have started playing an increasingly important role in early Egyptian society. This was also expressed in the burial culture. Initially, the burial chamber, which was sunken several metres into the ground, was rather modest. The body of the elite deceased was wrapped. Together with grave goods, either objects of value or those that appear to have carried meaning for the deceased, it was placed into the sunken pit or burial chamber (Snape 2011:14-15). This burial pit and 'any adjacent rooms were covered and protected first by a low mound of earth, and then by a *mastaba*, a low, flat, rectangular structure made of mud brick, a series of compartments covered by a single roof' (Gates 2011:84). Sometimes this sunken substructure consisted of several rooms with the burial chamber usually located in the centre, while in other instances the substructure was first covered by a wooden roof before being covered with a mound, which was then capped by bricks (Snape 2011:15-17). In some cases, the latter substructure was accessible via a shaft or staircase (Snape 2011:17). In essence, the *mastaba* superstructure consisted of a series of closed cells or rooms made of mudbrick walls, which functioned as storage rooms containing foodstuffs, storage jars and the like (see Figure 2.2). The mudbrick structure covering the burial chamber was clad with decorative brickwork on the outside to resemble the palace façade architecture of early royal buildings. These buildings often reached massive proportions intended to reflect the status of the person interred in the tomb (Snape 2011:14-15; Ikram 2015:152-153).

Mastaba tombs are primarily found at Abydos and Saqqara. According to Gates (2011:86), the *mastaba* tombs at Abydos, located within a funerary enclosure, are probably the location for the royal burials of the First (ca. 3000-2890 BCE) and Second Dynasties (ca. 2890-2686 BCE). While the early *mastaba* tombs at Saqqara appear to be 'larger and grander than those at Abydos', most of these have been associated with high-ranking officials (Gates 2011:87). However, this judgement remains controversial because of the close proximity of Saqqara with the then capital of Memphis. However, during the Third Dynasty (ca. 2686-2613 BCE), the focus of royal

burials seems to have shifted to Saqqara and it became the primary necropolis of the Old Kingdom (Gates 2011:87).
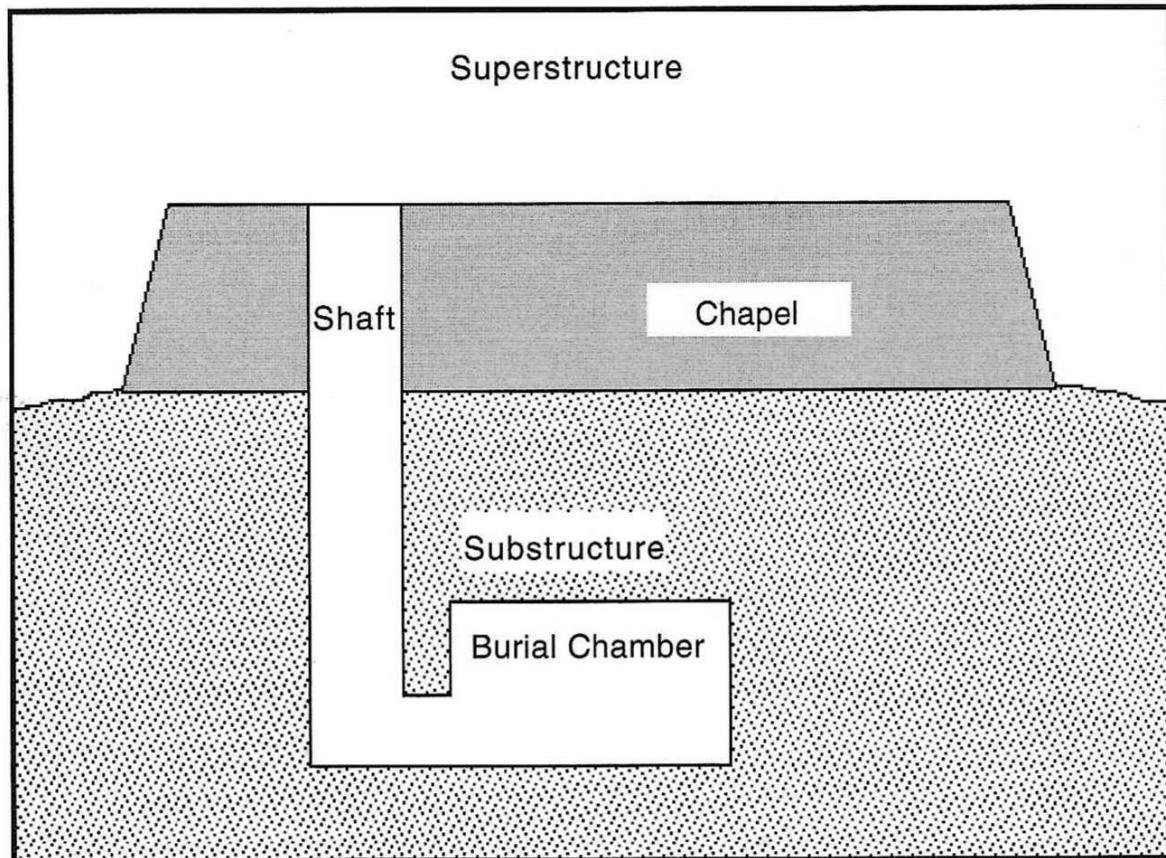
Figure 2.2: Internal structure of a free-standing *mastaba* tomb (Ikram 2015:144)

Mastabas were often surrounded by 'simple graves for servants and craftsmen buried with the tools of their particular trades' (Gates 2011:84). During later dynasties, stand-in models and figures for servants, known as *shabtis*, and everyday life scenes were painted on the tomb walls to accompany the deceased into the afterlife. By the Middle Kingdom, elaborate texts were also added to the tomb walls. In addition, the *mastaba* tombs at Abydos were surrounded by enclosure walls that were constructed from mud-brick. In contrast, the enclosures for the royal tombs at Saqqara were built from stone (Gates 2011:84-85; Ikram 2015:152-153).

Even though the burial chamber was sealed underneath the *mastaba*, some of the First and Second Dynasty graves were already prone to tomb robbing (Snape 2011:15). In essence, a *mastaba* could be considered as 'a warehouse for afterlife

supplies' with the boxy mud-brick chambers situated in the superstructure above the sunken burial chamber (Golia 2022:18). Given the wealth of materials that supplied the deceased for their afterlife, as demanded by ancient Egyptian religious tradition, it is not surprising that the graves were robbed of their treasures. As stated by Golia (2022:13), 'tomb-raiding would not have begun had tombs contained nothing worth stealing'.[21] As a result, tombs were probably robbed 'ever since they were built' (Fagan 2004:9). Therefore, the ancient Egyptians felt that a more secure type of tomb was needed. In fact, looting can be considered as a significant reason why the burial architecture changed; and thus, the *mastaba* tomb was an important step towards the development of pyramid building.

2.2.3 From the Step Pyramid to the true pyramid

Located at Saqqara and constructed during the Third Dynasty (ca. 2686-2613 BCE), the famous Step Pyramid of Djoser marks a 'transition for royal burials from the earlier *mastaba* tombs to the smooth-sided pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty and later' (Gates 2011:87). During the reign of pharaoh Djoser (2667-2648 BCE), the architect Imhotep employed stone for the first time as a building material at the Step Pyramid, which replaced mudbrick that, until then, had been commonly used in the construction of *mastaba* tombs (Knapp 1988:115; Gates 2011:87-88; Snape 2011:29-30).

The Step Pyramid dominated the landscape. It was surrounded by an enclosure wall, a mortuary temple and an elaborate complex of funerary buildings (Gates 2011:87) (see Figure 2.3 below). The tomb itself seems to have initially been intended as a square *mastaba* design. However, the plan deviated here. The square formed the basis of the architectural design, eventually consisting of six steps or levels, each decreasing in size towards the top, thereby creating the rough shape of a stepped pyramid of approximately 60 metres in height. Limestone was used to clad the rough rubble of stone in the centre. The burial chamber located inside the Step Pyramid, accessible from the north via a corridor,[22] was lined with sturdy granite to bear the

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[21] The wealthier the deceased person had been, the more likely they would have been supplied with a greater number of grave goods. Hence, the graves of the elite were more likely to be plundered for buried treasure, while the burials of the poor were much simpler and often remained untouched by robbers (Golia 2022:13).

[22] The entrance to most pyramids was located on the northern side with the corridor leading into the pyramid towards the burial chamber, which was situated in the centre of the structure at ground level or sunken into the bedrock (Ikram 2015:155).

weight of the structure. It was located 'below the pyramid at the bottom of a shaft 29m deep, in the middle of a large complex of corridors and rooms perhaps intended as an underground version of a royal palace' (Gates 2011:88). However, despite the innovative construction and the inclusion of protective measures such as the labyrinthian layout of passages and the underground burial chamber, 'the grave was robbed, probably [already] during the First Intermediate period' (Gates 2011:88; my inclusion).
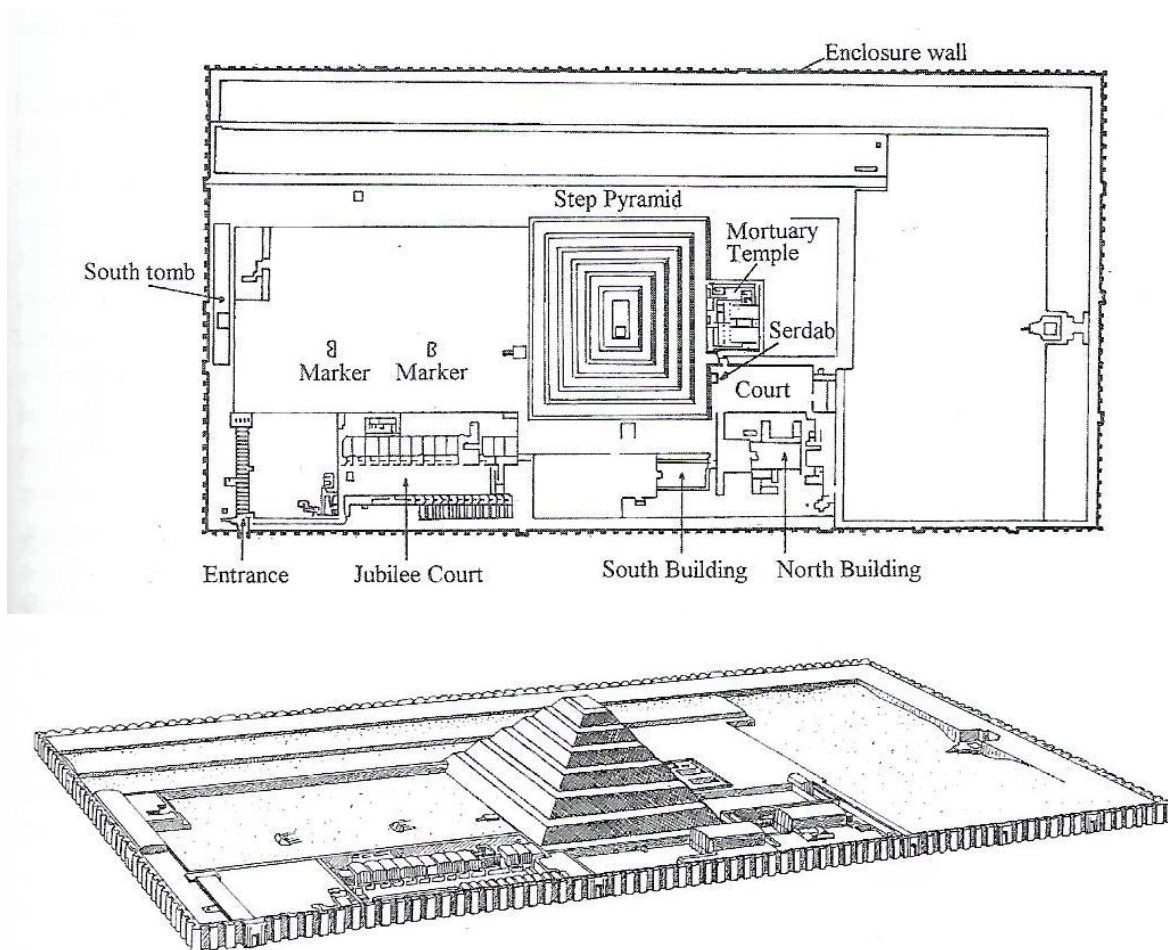
Figure 2.3: The Step Pyramid Complex (Gates 2011:87)

From the Step Pyramid, the transition into a true pyramid form was another significant development. While the purpose of the pyramid shape remains a mystery, it would have provided the deceased ruler buried there with a 'ramp to heaven' (Ikram 2015:155). Hence, the pyramid shape heavily influenced tomb architecture:

> Whatever its meaning, the form developed smoothly from previous funerary architecture. From the mound heaped over early burials, to the *mastaba* that encased a mound, to Djoser's Step Pyramid, an elaboration enclosing a *mastaba* and rising from

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it. … The change to the true pyramid, that is, a pyramid with smooth sides, took place at the end of the Third and the beginning of the Fourth Dynasties (Gates 2011:89-90).

Following the reign of Djoser, Sneferu (or Snefru, 2613-2589 BCE) became the next significant pyramid builder during the Fourth Dynasty (ca. 2613-2494 BCE). His long reign resulted in 'architectural innovation' (Romer 2012:364). It seems that the construction of his stepped pyramid commenced at Maidum, but stopped during the fourteenth year of his reign, when the court moved to Dahshur (Romer 2012:337, 339, 357). Soon pyramid building commenced at Dahshur, resulting in two pyramids with smooth sides known as the 'Bent Pyramid'[23] and the 'Red Pyramid', the latter becoming the first 'true pyramid' (see Figure 2.4 below) (Romer 2012:357; Ikram 2015:154). Both pyramids were much larger in scale than any of the pyramids previously built. After their completion, the Maidum stepped pyramid was enlarged and altered into a smooth-sided pyramid, becoming the 'first classically proportioned pyramid' (Romer 2012:357-358, 365-366).

In addition, mortuary temples were added to the pyramids, which were connected to the pyramids via a covered and decorated causeway (Romer 2012:364; Ikram 2015:154-155). Thus, the graves were directly accessible for public veneration. It is presumed that upon the death of the pharaoh, Sneferu's remains were interred inside the Red Pyramid at Dahshur, which became known as the 'second largest pyramid that the Egyptians would ever build' (Romer 2012:366). Until the end of the Third Dynasty, mortuary temples were located on the northern side of the pyramid, orientated towards the North Star. With the commencement of the Fourth Dynasty, this alignment changed to the east towards the rising sun, which symbolised rebirth (Ikram 2015:153-155).

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[23] The Bent Pyramid is an example of an initially failed construction. The original plan of the pyramid was very steep. Construction had to be abandoned, as the underlying geology could not support the weight of the rock piled on top of it, causing it to sink, crack and shift. As a result, the labyrinth of rooms and corridors built into the interior had to be filled with rubble and supported with wooden beams in an attempt to salvage the pyramid. However, the pyramid builders were unsuccessful, and the project was abandoned after fifteen years, as the pyramid would not be able to securely bear the pharaoh's remains. Construction relocated northwards and Sneferu's second pyramid was built with an altered plan: the base was even larger than that of the Bent Pyramid, but the angle was significantly lower. Once the first 'true pyramid' known as the Red Pyramid was completed, the pyramid builders had gained experience and knowledge and were able to go back to the previous one that they had left unfinished to rectify the errors made there initially. Construction at the Bent Pyramid resumed at an altered angle, in essence building another pyramid on top of the one below, but at a lower angle. Additionally, the base was stabilised and 'controlled tensions' were built in to make the tomb structurally sound (Romer 2012:359-364).

Figure 2.4: Bent Pyramid (top) and Red Pyramid (bottom) (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Owing to the prolific building projects of Sneferu's reign, his successor, Khufu inherited 'a workforce and a state-wide building machine such as the world had never known' (Romer 2012:366). Due to this, Khufu (also known as Cheops, 2589-2566 BCE) was

able to become credited with building the largest and most perfect of all pyramids, namely the Great Pyramid of Giza (Romer 2012:377). On the basis of the previous accumulated experience of the pyramid builders, the building techniques were applied to the Great Pyramid of Giza. Firstly, the location of the Giza Plateau was chosen with care, as the bedrock on which the pyramid was built was of solid limestone that could support considerable weight. In this way, the previous errors made with the Bent Pyramid were eliminated (Romer 2012:378-380). Secondly, the knowledge acquired from previous pyramid building schemes during Sneferu's reign were applied at Giza and perfected. Additionally, the scale of the building project was grander than ever before (Romer 2012:377, 381, 383-385).

Eventually, three Fourth Dynasty (ca. 2613-2494 BCE) royal burials found their home at the Giza Funerary Complex (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6 below) and currently dominate the landscape, namely the pyramids of the pharaohs Khufu (2589-2566 BCE), Khafre (2558-2532 BCE) and Menkaure (2532-2503 BCE) (Shaw 2003:63, 266). These three monumental pyramids were accompanied by 'smaller pyramids for queens, temples devoted to the funerary cults, and a large number of *mastaba* tombs, set out in rows, belonging to high officials and their families' (Gates 2011:90-91; Shaw 2003:66). In addition, the Great Sphinx and its adjacent Sphinx Temple are also located there, as well as a village comprising the houses of the workforce of the pyramid builders and their families (Shaw 2003:63-66).
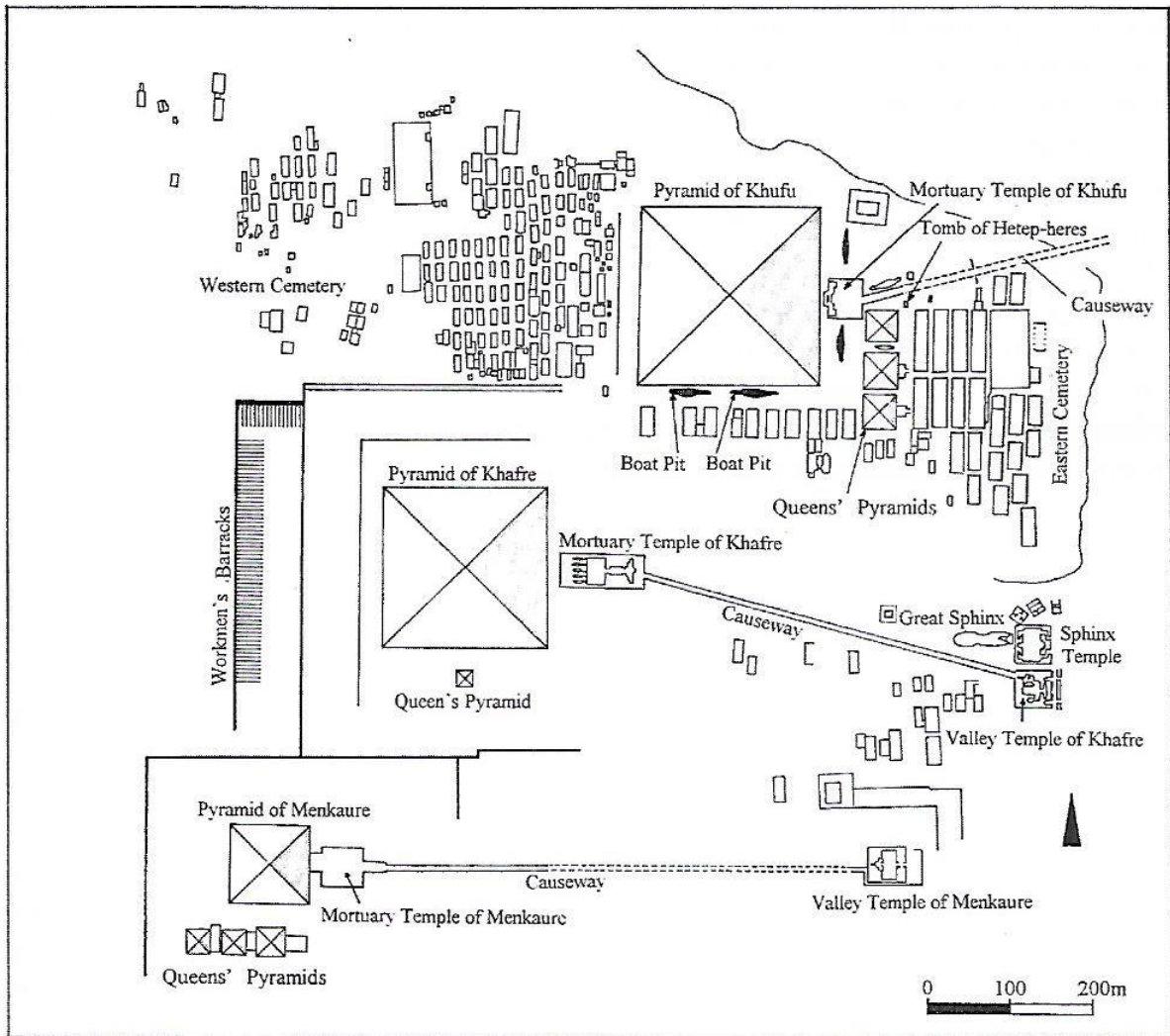
Figure 2.5: The Giza Necropolis (Gates 2011:91)

After the bedrock was levelled, a limestone base was constructed for the pyramid on which the pyramid itself was then built (Gates 2011:91). The building materials were carefully chosen and transported over vast distances. While local limestone was utilised for the construction and to fill the interior core of the pyramids, high-quality white limestone used to clad the outside of the pyramid was shipped in from the Tura quarry (Shaw 2003:65; Gates 2011:91). Originally, the completed pyramids would not have had the uneven and rough finish that they have at present. Smooth white Tura limestone was originally used as a facing for the Great Pyramid (as well as the other pyramids) and the apex would have been covered with gold sheet. Today, very few of the original casing stones remain on-location (see Figure 2.7), as 'this good-quality stone was stolen in later times for reuse in the medieval mosques and mausoleums of Cairo' (Shaw 2003:65; Fagan 2004:9, 27-28, 31). Moreover, the original outer casing

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of the pyramid served a particular purpose: it was used to conceal the entrance to the interior labyrinthian passages (Kákosy 1989:146; Katary 2015:4). As stated by Knapp (1988:115), the limestone casing was done so meticulously, that it was difficult to identify joints in the stonework: it was meant to camouflage the passage entrance and prevent people from entering the interior of the pyramid. In addition, since the entrance to the tomb was located higher up in the pyramid and not at ground level (Gates 2011:92), it would not have been located easily, possibly requiring the removal of the outer layer of stones to reveal the access point. Hence, the entrance would have been difficult to find, and the limestone would have acted as an additional layer of security to the pyramids. After all, once the burial had taken place, the pyramid was meant to remain inaccessible with the entrance sealed and therefore, all 'traces of the entrance shaft were obliterated' (Knapp 1988:115).

Figure 2.6: The Sphinx at Giza with the pyramids of Menkaure, Khafre and Khufu in the background (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 2.7: Great Pyramid of Khufu (top) with remains of Tura limestone cladding, as well as the original entrance on the northern side of the pyramid with the looters' hole below (bottom) (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

On the inside of the pyramid, deliberate efforts were made to protect the burial chamber from break-ins. After a burial had taken place, the entrance passage was usually blocked off and filled with rubble (Golia 2022:42). Additional protective measures were built into the pyramids, which formed part of a 'series of colossal mobile geometries designed to block parts of the pyramid's internal architecture' after the pharaoh's mortal remains were interred in the burial (Romer 2012:385). These physical security mechanisms formed part of the traditional interior design of all pyramids and they were derived from those used in previous pyramids (Romer 2012:385). The granite shipped from the Aswan quarries was used to construct the burial chamber, as well as plugs and portcullises to ward off grave robbers, which served to block the internal corridors after the pharaoh's burial (Romer 2012:381; Golia 2022:42).

However, grave robbers were able to circumvent these security measures. They chipped through portcullises, which had been 'precision-cut limestone slabs lowered by ropes along grooves in the walls of the underground passage', as the stone was comparatively soft (Golia 2022:42). In addition, they would tunnel around plugs and large stone slabs. As a result, the architects designing the tombs had to become even more inventive by employing 'dummy doors, secret rooms, decoy passages and … stone trapdoors' (Golia 2022:42). However, the tomb raiders were highly motivated. Once they reached a dead end, they would need to return and start anew. This could be a time-consuming endeavour with a greater risk of exposure and the discovery of their illicit activities by authorities (Golia 2022:42-43). If all these measures failed, a massive stone sarcophagus was the last line of defence. It was usually made of high-quality sturdy rock such as granite or quartzite, which could not be easily chipped away. Instead, the thieves employed 'wooden levers to raise the heavy lids that they propped open with rocks, or else the rolled the lid back on inserted wooden mallets, as if on ball bearings' (Golia 2022:44). If this did not work, they would forcefully lift the entire sarcophagus up at an angle and tip it over. This would cause it to topple over with the lid of the sarcophagus crashing to the ground. Thus, the looters did not hesitate to smash through the arduous work done by the pyramid builders, which is indicative of their level of zeal and industriousness to reach the buried treasures (Golia 2022:44). Figure 2.8 below illustrates the complex security measures that were installed into the mud-brick pyramid of Amenemhat III. While this later pyramid dates

to the 12th Dynasty, it is renowned for the almost obsessive physical mechanisms installed into the structure to obstruct thieves from reaching the innermost burial chamber, ranging from a blocked access passage to dead-ends and passages leading to nowhere to a false burial shaft and multiple trapdoors. The most notable feature of the tomb was its burial chamber, which was painstakingly made from 'a monolithic block of quartzite that had been lowered into place by sand hydraulics before the pyramid was built on top' (Golia 2022:43).
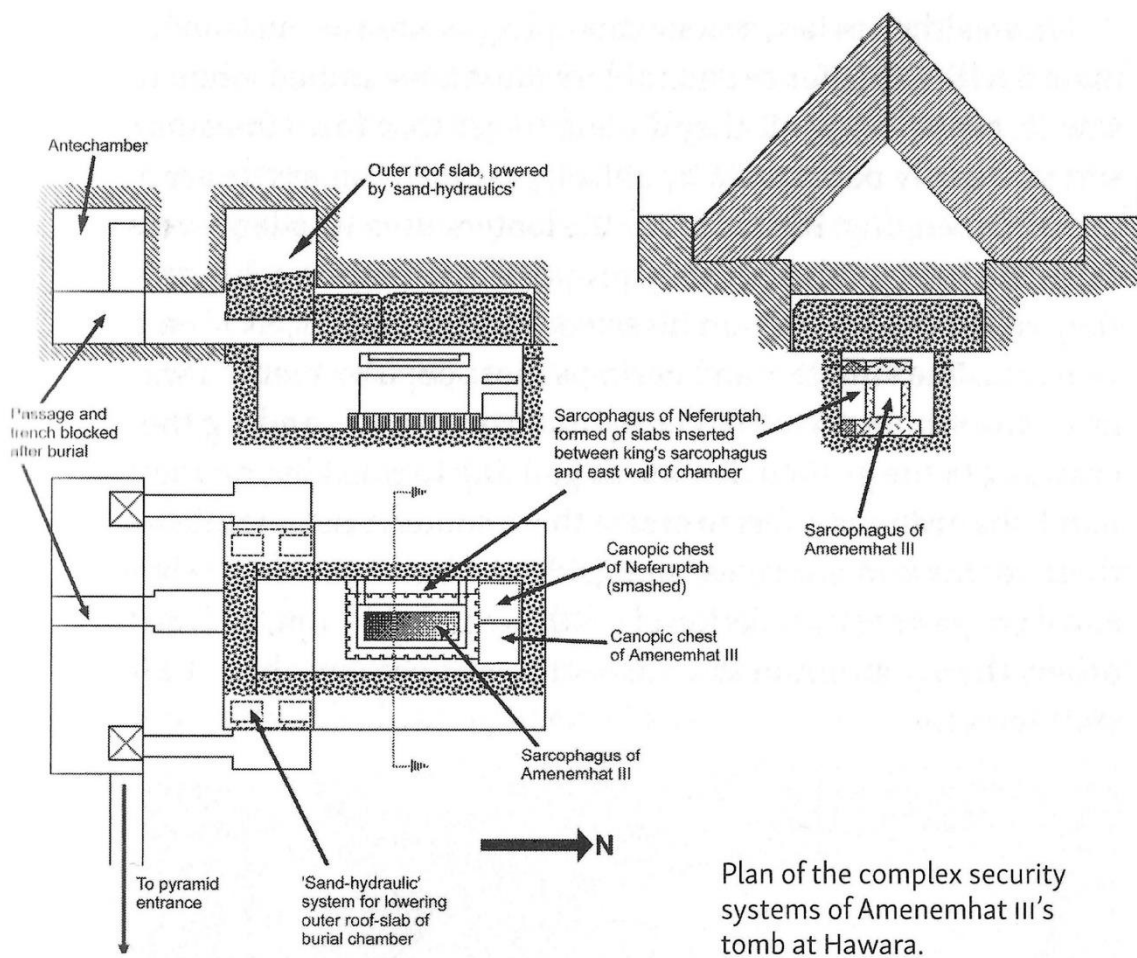
Figure 2.8: Physical security mechanisms incorporated into the mud-brick pyramid of Amenemhat III (Golia 2022:43)

In the case of the Great Pyramid at Giza, once thieves were able to locate the entrance to the internal system of passages after burrowing through the outer layers of stone casing the pyramid (see Figure 2.7 above), they would be led to an unfinished funeral chamber located under the pyramid by means of a descending corridor. The actual passage to the real burial chamber was situated in the roof of this descending corridor

(see Figure 2.9). The ascending corridor 'was filled by a limestone slab and three enormous plug-blocks of granite, of which the granite blocks are still in their original place, and the penetration of the upper levels is possible only by by-passing this obstacle' (Kákosy 1989:146). The path from the Grand Gallery to the actual funeral chamber was also blocked by means of three granite portcullises located in a horizontal passage (see Figures 2.10 and 2.11) (Kákosy 1989:147; Romer 2012:381; Katary 2015:4).

Due to all these precautions and by blocking off smaller passages leading in-between the corridors, both Kákosy (1989:147) and Golia (2022:43) argue that the robbing of the Great Pyramid, or of pyramids in general, could not have been carried out quickly by a small group of violators, as the perpetrators would have required a considerable amount of time to breach these obstacles. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the plundering of the tomb occurred briefly after the interment of the deceased individuals (Kákosy 1989:147). To be able to hack through the outer casing and protective mantle of a pyramid and to circumvent the blockages by chipping through them or digging around them, such a project of theft would certainly have been time-consuming. In addition, it could not have been a cloak-and-dagger operation as it would have necessitated a larger workforce. Therefore, it is doubtful that the theft of the pyramids occurred in a clandestine manner. It is unlikely that an operation of such scale would have gone unnoticed by the local authorities, especially since breaching a pyramid's mantle was a very visible action given the conspicuous nature of the burial monuments. Therefore, it is worth speculating if the tomb robbing of the pyramids would not have been a form of institutionalised or state-sanctioned looting, possibly in cooperation with the authorities in power during the First Intermediate Period, which had been a period of significant political turmoil (Shaw 2003:65; Gates 2011:93; Golia 2022:8). This topic may necessitate further investigation.[24]

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[24] To note: When considering the challenges that modern heritage managers face in protecting archaeological sites, it necessitates government support. However, if the central regime of a nation is not invested in protecting its cultural heritage, but rather endorses its exploitation for economic gain, this would turn the care for cultural resources into a seemingly insurmountable task.

Figure 2.9: The looters' shaft reaches the original ascending shaft of the pyramid (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 2.10: Slots for plugs and portcullises at the entrance to the burial chamber in the Great Pyramid (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 2.11: Entrance to the burial chamber (left) and Pharaoh Khufu's granite sarcophagus inside the otherwise empty burial chamber (right) (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

In essence, the monumentality of the Giza necropolis is indicative of the power of the pharaohs and of the prosperity and political stability of the time when the pyramids were built. Such a massive scale of construction would have been possible only in the presence of an agricultural surplus to support the large labour force (Knapp 1988:117). The same grand scale of pyramid building was no longer achieved after the end of the Old Kingdom (ca. 2686-2160 BCE), which was followed by a period of instability in Egypt known as the First Intermediate Period (2160-2055 BCE). Thus, the conditions were no longer favourable for such large building projects as seen at Giza, since the central administration of ancient Egypt declined (Shaw 2003:65; Gates 2011:97).

Furthermore, all efforts and protective measures were in vain, as it was probably during the First Intermediate Period (ca. 2150-2040 BCE), when all three pharaonic pyramids were robbed (Shaw 2003:65; Gates 2011:93). To illustrate this, the only 'remnant of what must have been a lavish collection of grave goods' accompanying

the burial of Khufu in the Great Pyramid was the 'lidless outer sarcophagus of red Aswan granite' (Gates 2011:93). Since large superstructures such as pyramids and their associated mortuary temples were very conspicuous, they left 'no doubt as to the location of fabulous wealth' (Katary 2015:2; Golia 2022:42). As such, they were prone to robbery, with the only remaining challenge being to determine the location of the tomb entrances to gain access to the loot (Katary 2015:2). While this was not the sole reason for the next development into a more hidden type of grave architecture, it undoubtedly drove this change:

> Thieves always managed to penetrate the pyramids and rob the burials. Because they failed in their prime mission, the protection for the afterlife of the king's body and belongings, during the New Kingdom pyramids disappeared, replaced by tombs secretly cut out of the rock in remote locations on the west bank at Thebes. Yet, despite the precautions, virtually all these tombs, too, were robbed. After the New Kingdom, the placement of royal burials changed again. Such tombs were now located not in remote desert valleys, but in the precincts of urban temples (Gates 2011:90).

2.2.4 Later pyramids, rock-cut tombs and temple-tombs

The tradition of pyramid building continued as a predominant trend far into the Middle Kingdom (Gates 2011:90). Although pyramid building was innovative during the Fourth Dynasty, the superstructure of later pyramids was increasingly simplified and became rather standardised (Dodson 2016:60). These later pyramids no longer employed stone as a building material, but appeared to have been constructed with a mudbrick exterior that was filled with rubble and limestone flakes on the inside. As such, the quality of the structures deteriorated. Some of these later pyramids, such as those of the 17th Dynasty (1650-1550 BCE, during the Second Intermediate Period) necropolis at Dra' Abu el-Naga, were enclosed by a plastered wall. Moreover, the pyramid was located over a central shaft leading to the burial chamber similar to the substructure of earlier *mastabas* (Polz 2010:346).[25] The change in building materials and the standardised shape of the later pyramids could reflect a 'lack of resources by the ephemeral rulers of that time' (Dodson 2016:60).

In addition to the continuation of pyramid building, rock-cut tombs located in relatively conspicuous locations also formed part of the burial architecture of the Middle Kingdom. Notably, these cemeteries are indicative of a clear social stratification on the

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[25] These 17th Dynasty private pyramids at Thebes, which were smaller and steeper, can be viewed as the model upon which the design of 'later stone-built pyramids of the Kushite and Meroitic kings and queens of Nubia' was based (Polz 2010:350).

basis of the location of the tombs in the cemeteries. Within a necropolis where a royal person was buried, tombs located close to that burial appeared to be more auspicious and possibly a sign of royal favour. Furthermore, the elite tomb owner hoped to benefit from the close proximity to the pharaoh as an extension of the king's divinity. Additionally, the location of a tomb in a higher or lower level of the cliff face was indicative of 'economic and social status' (Ikram 2015:141; Snape 2011:151-153). Notable examples here are the non-royal tombs of the elite at Beni Hasan (see Figure 2.12):

> At Beni Hasan the most important people, the nomarchs or governors, had tombs located at the highest level of the cliff, where the best quality rock was located. Individuals of lesser importance and wealth had either much smaller tombs in the same level or simpler shaft tombs lower down the slope. The lower on the slope was one's tomb, the lower one's rank, until the poorest graves were located at the desert edge and consisted of shallow pits dug into the desert gravel, similar in style to tombs of the Predynastic period (Ikram 2015:141-142).

Figure 2.12: The necropolis of Beni Hasan with the tombs of the elite located at the top of the cliff (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 2.13: Qubbet el-Hawa opposite the city of Aswan with tombs located at different levels in the Nubian sandstone hill (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

However, as cemeteries filled up, considerations of social status became less important, and later graves were squeezed in wherever they could still find space. In

addition, in some cases this order of the most elite tombs located at the top of the hill was inverted, when the quality of the rock was better and more stable towards the bottom of the hill, with some more elite tombs then being sunken into the ground (Ikram 2015:142). Other prominent examples of Middle Kingdom rock-cut tombs are the non-royal cemetery of Meir in Middle Egypt (Ikram 2015:142) and at Qubbet el-Hawa, which translates to 'Dome of the Wind' (named after the Islamic Period funerary shrine located at the peak of the hill). Qubbet el-Hawa was a royal necropolis in use from the Fourth Dynasty until the Roman period, and it was the corresponding necropolis of the settlement at Elephantine Island, as depicted in Figure 2.13 (Shaw 2003:92-97; Bommas 2016; Bommas & Khalifa 2020).

During the First Intermediate Period (2160-2055 BCE) another type of burial occurred. Temple-tombs emerged with the so-called Intef kings of the 11th Dynasty (2125-2055 BCE) at Thebes, which arose as the centre of power in southern Egypt. The kings of the early 11th Dynasty chose El-Tarif as the location for their necropolis (Polz 2010:350; Dodson 2016:60). This new tomb-type was inspired by earlier rock-cut tomb-chapels at Khokha, located approximately 2.5 kilometres south of El-Tarif, which had been constructed for local governors during the Old Kingdom (Dodson 2016:60). The temple-tombs also became known as *saff*-tombs (Polz 2010:350; Dodson 2016:60):

> A typical tomb of this period had its offering place fronted by a wide but shallow fore-hall, the front of which consisted of a series of pillars, giving such sepulchres their Arabic name, *saff*, implying a "line" or "many doorways". This was the design followed by Intef I and his two successors on a monumental scale, with huge courtyards sunk into the desert surface, with the royal chapel at the rear and the tombs of officials along the sides of the court (Dodson 2016:60).

Hence, the burial chamber was integrated as part of the mortuary temple in the temple-tombs.

Intef III was the last ruler to maintain control of only southern Egypt. His successor, Mentuhotep II, managed to reunite Upper and Lower Egypt and established the new necropolis at Deir el-Bahri (Dodson 2016:60). Here, the tomb-chapels of members of the nobility were cut high into the walls of the Nile valley. Mentuhotep II's own royal tomb became more elaborate: it was a temple-tomb that was constructed on two levels and 'fronted by colonnades' (Dodson 2016:60). The square-shaped terraces could be

ascended via a long ramp. Moreover, the centre of the top platform seems to have been dominated by another structure. Since this central structure has been reduced to rubble, it is unclear exactly what it looked like, but the deduction is that it might have been a small steep pyramid, or another structure such as a *mastaba* or *tumulus* as evident in Figure 2.14 below (Polz 2010:350; Ikram 2015:156). This central square was as follows:

> surrounded by a pillared hall, behind which was a colonnaded court and then a hypostyle hall, at the back of which lies the main offering place, together with the entrance to the king's rock-cut tomb. ... [In addition,] the temple itself also included the small tomb-chapels of six female members of the royal household, together with the tomb of one of the king's wives, named Tem. Further subsidiary tombs lay outside the temple proper, including the tomb-chapel of another wife of the king, Neferu (Dodson 2016:61; my inclusion).

The burial chamber of the king was located at the back of the monument hewn into the rockface and accessible via a long descending sandstone passageway (Ikram 2015:156; Dodson 2016:61-62). However, it seems that this form of a burial was employed only for a brief period during the 11th Dynasty, as the later 'pharaohs reverted back to pyramid construction' (Ikram 2015:156).
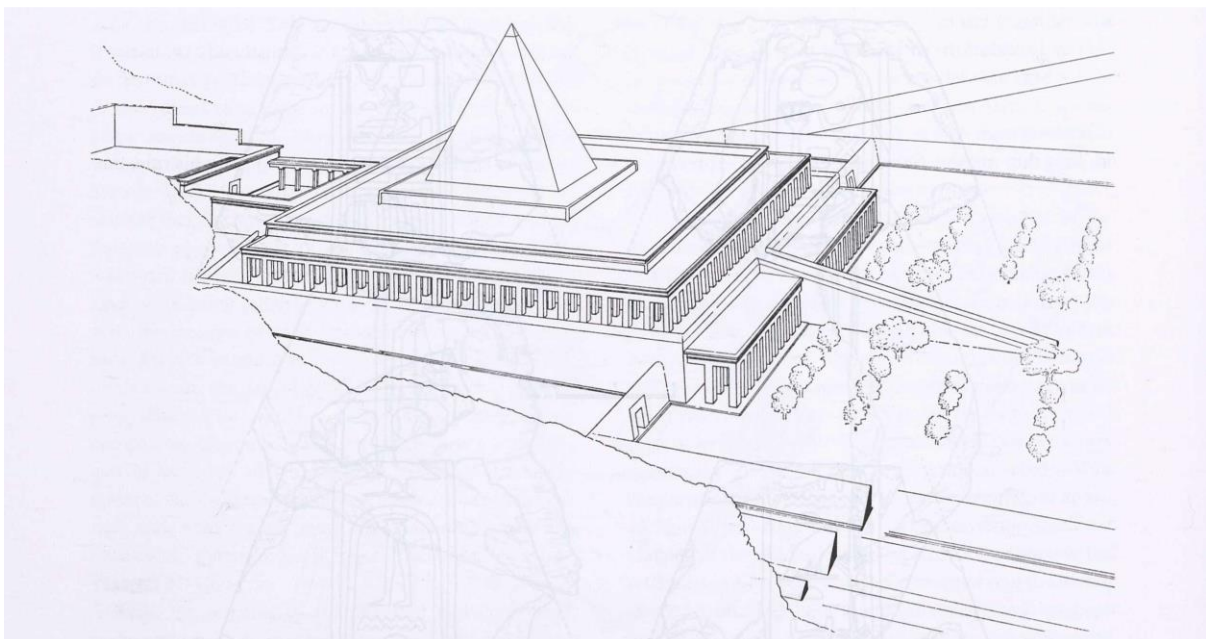
Figure 2.14: Suggested reconstruction of the temple-tomb of Mentuhotep II at Deir el-Bahri with a pyramid on top (Polz 2010:350)

As the tomb formed part of the place for public worship, this reflects the expectation that worshippers would possibly ascribe greater meaning and value to the burial of the deceased and possibly also public control over the known burial location, thereby

hindering tomb robbing. However, with the rich funerary goods located there (Dodson 2016:61-62), even temples would not have allowed for the adequate protection of the tomb and the grave goods. Therefore, temples as places of worship and conspicuous locations for the public remembrance of the deceased also failed to deter robbers from the interment of the deceased. With the return to pyramid building, some adaptations were made to the pyramids of the 12th Dynasty: the entry with the corridor leading to the burial chamber was no longer located on the northern side of the pyramid. In addition, the pyramid builders expanded the substructure with false passageways, dead ends, and massive stone portcullises in an effort to thwart thieves (Ikram 2015:156, 196). Regardless, the tombs of royals and the elite in particular remained prime targets and continued to be robbed (Ikram 2015:196).

Later, temple-tombs dating to the New Kingdom were encountered at Saqqara. Both the temple-tombs of Apuia and of Horemheb had a shaft leading to an underground burial chamber, which was incorporated into the temple's courtyard and located in front of the cult rooms or chapels on the western end of the structure. A small pyramid could have formed part of these structures as a free-standing element, or in the case of Horemheb's temple-tomb, on top of the central chapel (Snape 2011:217-220).[26]

At Deir el-Bahri, not only temple-tombs can be found, but also mortuary temples such as that of Hatshepsut, which is located next to the temple-tomb of Mentuhotep II. In this case, the female pharaoh's temple is separate from her burial, which is located in the Valley of the Kings (KV 20) – indicating the transition from clearly visible free-standing tombs to hidden rock-cut tombs located in the Valley of the Kings to ensure the safety of the interred body and funerary paraphernalia (Ikram 2015:158; Wilkinson & Weeks 2016:6-11).

2.2.5 Hidden tombs

Due to the inevitability of the robbing of tombs located in lavish superstructures such as *mastabas*, pyramids and temples, the pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty abandoned 'the grandiose tombs of their ancestors for tombs hidden from public view in a more

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[26] It should be noted that pharaoh Horemheb was never buried in this temple-tomb. Instead, his sarcophagus was actually found in another, more elaborate rock-cut tomb located in the Valley of the Kings, namely KV 57 (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996: 130-133).

remote location' (Katary 2015:7). Hence, a significant change occurred during the New Kingdom (ca. 1550-1069 BCE). Most of the royal burials were now located in the Valley of the Kings (abbreviated as KV = King's Valley), which forms part of the larger umbrella of the mortuary landscape of the Theban Necropolis (see Figures 2.16 and 2.17). The hills enclosing the valley rise approximately 80 metresabove the *wadi* (English = valley) and are crowned by a 300m high mountain peak (see Figure 2.15). *El-Qurn* or *Qurnet Murai*, as this peak is called, resembles the shape of a 'natural pyramid' and replaces the 'architectural superstructure' that was predominant in the tombs of previous generations of Egyptian rulers (Taylor 2010:224). This mountain peak with its characteristic pyramidical shape was possibly seen as a 'symbol of solar deities' (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:14). However, the tombs hewn into the bedrock of the *wadi* were isolated and guarded and access to the Valley of the Kings was restricted (Taylor 2010:224; Weeks & Hetherington 2014:9). The rock-cut tombs in the valley do not boast conspicuous or monumental architecture, which signifies the intention of concealing them within the walls of the *wadi* for their protection.

Figure 2.15: The pyramid-shaped peak of *El-Qurn* towering over the Valley of the Kings (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

During the New Kingdom, tomb robbing seems to have become a frequent occurrence and royal tombs were 'plundered as soon as they were sealed, their precious treasures removed, the bodies of their royal occupants ransacked for the gold and semi-precious stones that customarily bedecked their mummies' (Katary 2015:7). Thus, pharaohs no longer wanted to have conspicuous burial places that were publicly accessible. To further secure the burials, the mortuary temples were no longer directly attached to the tombs. However, the public commemoration of the pharaoh remained a necessity and most mortuary temples were now located several kilometres away from the graves at the west bank of the Nile River (Gates 2011:113; Weeks & Hetherington 2014:12; Wilkinson & Weeks 2016:11; Ikram 2015:157-158).

Figure 2.16: Map of the Theban Necropolis with the valley temples separate from the burials in the Valley of the Kings (Wilkinson & Weeks 2016:11)
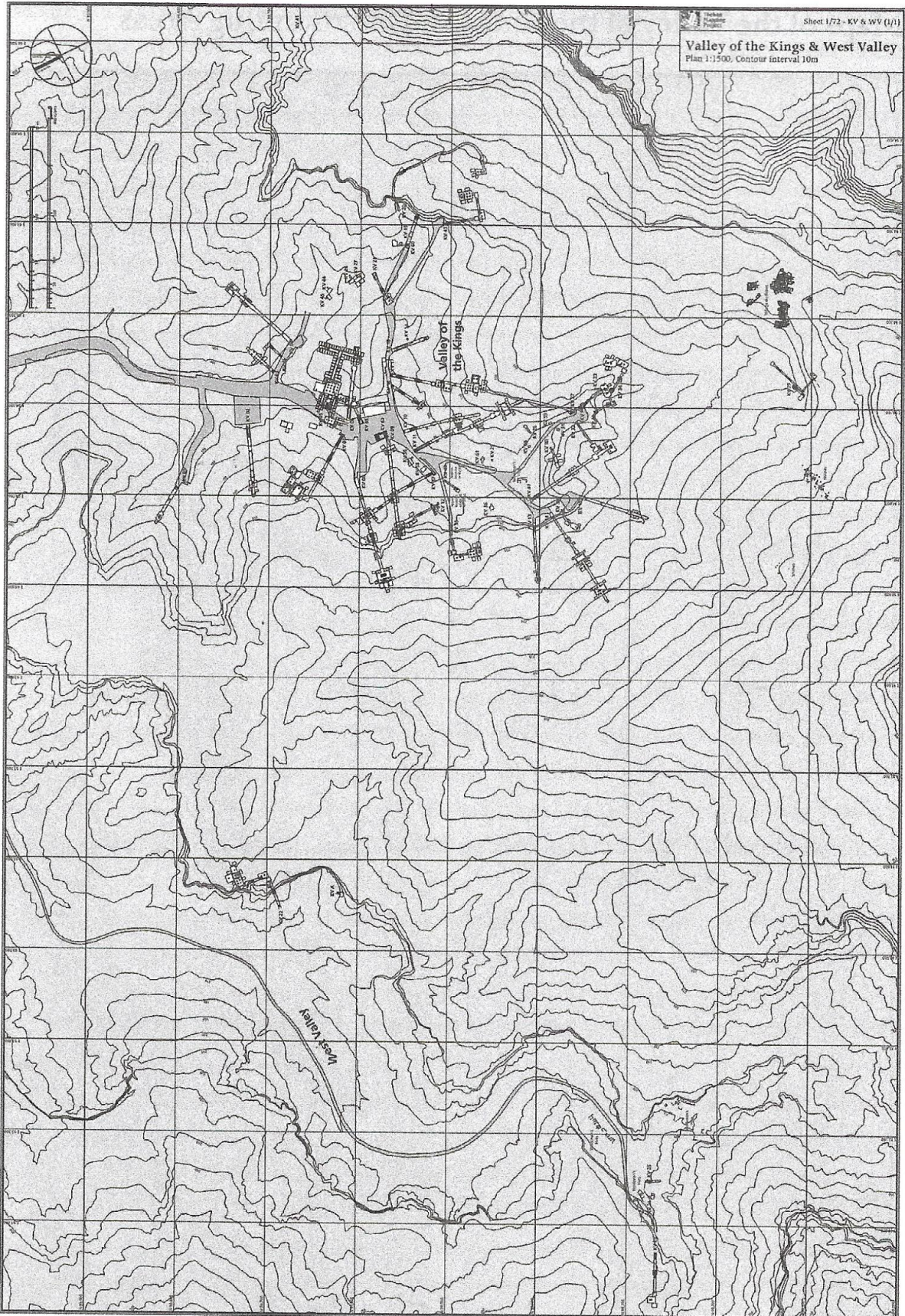
Figure 2.17: The Valley of the Kings: The East Valley where the majority of the tombs are located and the West Valley where significantly fewer tombs are located (Wilkinson & Weeks 2016:10)

Moreover, the geology and hydrology of the Valley of the Kings played a significant role in determining the choice of the tomb location. Initially, the tomb builders aimed at concealing the entrances of the tombs in an early attempt to protect them. However, this seems to have encouraged robbery and may not necessarily have served to protect them. Hence, at later times, the entrances to the tombs were clearly indicated, which in turn may have improved the inspection of the tombs (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:193). Thus, the choice of the tomb location and the preference for tomb placement changed over time, adapting to the needs and purpose of the societies of the different dynasties.

During the 18th Dynasty (1550-1295 BCE), tombs were largely cut into the cliff walls of the *wadi*. Naturally occurring features in the rock face, such as fissures or crevices and areas, where water would cascade down during flash floods, were used to conceal the tombs. Once the royal inhabitants of these 'so-called *bab* or cliff tombs' were interred, they were sealed with stone walls and the entrances were cemented, thereby blocking them from to the outside (Dorn 2016:33-34; Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:20). During the occasional flash floods, the debris washing over the entrances further buried them. Towards the end of the 18th Dynasty and throughout the 19th Dynasty (1295-1186 BCE), tombs were placed on the lower slopes of the valley or shafts were sunk down into the *wadi* floor. However, these tombs were often prone to water damage from flooding. During the 20th Dynasty (1186-1069), tombs 'were often situated at ground level, unconcealed, on the ends of rock spurs produced by run-off channels which cut down on each side', as these afforded them some protection against flooding (Dorn 2016:36; Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:20-21). In addition, numerous tombs were already located in the Valley of the Kings. The rock spurs were sections that had not been extensively used by the tomb builders until then and were still 'available' for tomb construction (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:21).
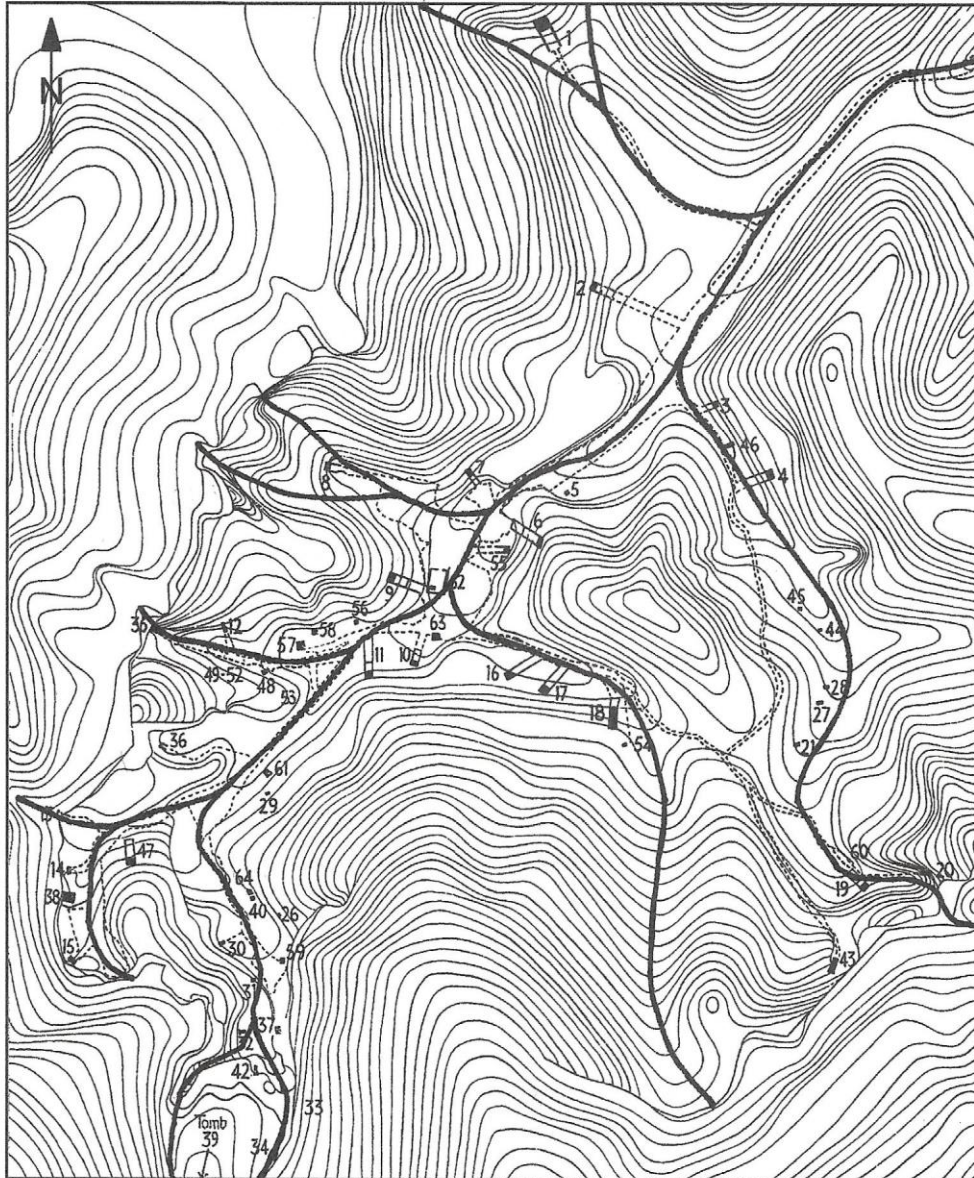
Figure 2.18: Stream-flow diagram of how the seven flash flood streams converge in the Valley of the Kings (Dorn 2016:34)

Occasional flash floods that the Valley of the Kings was prone to already occurred during Dynastic times, as is recorded in ancient Egyptian graffiti and as is evident by means of stratigraphic information (Dorn 2016:30-33). Infrequent severe rains causing flooding must have been something that was well known in ancient times, which would also have played a role in the choice of the tomb location. However, once the 'available space' in the *wadi* walls was claimed by previous tombs, later burials were hewn into the bedrock of the valley floor (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:20-21). As a recent hydrology study showed, this was a fateful choice. In the event of a flash flood, as seen in Figure 2.18, roughly seven streams flow down into the *wadi*. Some of the streams converge

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in the central area of the valley (Cross 2008:303). These floods carry vast amounts of debris with them, some of which is deposited on the valley floor (Cross 2008:305). By means of a study, Cross (2008:305) intended to prove that such a flash flood had occurred at the end of the 18th Dynasty at the Valley of the Kings, covering and concealing at least three tombs that had been cut into the valley floor located in that central area, where the debris carried during a flash flood would have lost velocity and been deposited (Cross 2008:305). Indeed, evidence of a flood layer covering the tombs hewn into the valley floor was present (Cross 2008:305-310). Therefore, the debris that accumulated on the *wadi* floor covered the tombs designated as KV 55, KV 62, and KV 63, which were located in the centre of the valley (Cross 2008:303; Cross 2014:141).

Figure 2.19: Exterior of the tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62) in the Valley of the Kings (Photo: NB Hoffmann 2022)

On the basis of geological evidence, the flash flood must have occurred soon after the sealing of Tutankhamun's tomb (Figures 2.19 and 2.20) following robberies that had occurred 'within a very few years of the king's burial', after which the tomb had been resealed (Cross 2008:310). In fact, Tutankhamun was buried between mid-March and mid-April. The flash flood occurred later that same year, namely in October or

November of the year 1323 BC, which was the first year of Pharaoh Ay's reign. These months were typically known for the occurrence of flooding (Cross 2014:147-148). As a result of the flash flood event at the end of the 18th Dynasty, approximately three metres of debris were deposited on top of the three tombs (Cross 2008:310; Cross 2014:141). This cement-like deposit effectively concealed the tomb entrances and possibly served to hinder further looting of the tombs. It certainly served to protect the Tomb of Tutankhamun until its rediscovery by Howard Carter in 1922 (Cross 2008:306). Other tombs were not as well protected and were prone to occasional flooding (Cross 2008:310; Cross 2014:150). Therefore, it seems to be by chance that KV 62 remained largely intact, whereas other tombs continued to be plundered.

Figure 2.20: Interior of KV 62, the tomb of Tutankhamun (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Evidently, even the royal tombs located in the Valley of the Kings were not spared from robberies during ancient times, despite the building elements put in place to protect them. As with the choice of the tomb location, the design of the tombs of the Valley of the Kings was adapted to the needs of the society over time.
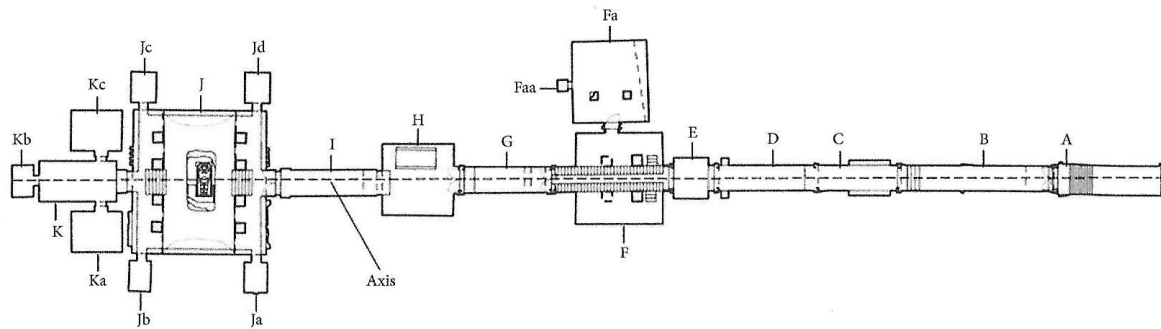
Figure 2.21: Component parts of a 'typical' KV tomb (Weeks 2016:99)

In the tombs of the Valley of the Kings, a basic tomb plan, which corresponds with most tombs, can be identified. As is evident from Figure 2.21 above, letters were assigned to the different component parts usually found in KV tombs. These were identified by Elizabeth Thomas, an American Egyptologist, who identified the basic functions of the chambers and corridors of KV tombs in her studies (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:23). Some 'typical' or common design elements are prevalent. Generally, a tomb consisted of a main entrance (A), also known as 'The Passage of the Way of Shu' (Shu = god of the air), which can be roughly translated as 'the Sun's Path', and which designated a path that was fully or partially open, with the sky visible (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25; Weeks & Hetherington 2014:23). The entrance was followed by a corridor called 'the Passage of Re' (B), which was the last passageway still illuminated by light. This would often be followed by a descending chamber or a stairwell, which had niches cut into the sides of the walls to be able to hold statues of the gods. Since this section was dedicated to the gods, it was referred to as 'the Hall Wherein They Rest' or 'Sanctuaries in which the Gods of the East/West Repose' (C) (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25). This would be followed by another passageway or corridor (D) and thereafter a chamber that comprised a deep well or vertical shaft. This pit was referred to as the 'Hall of Hindering' or the 'Hall of Waiting' (E) and it has often been denoted as a protective element within a royal tomb (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25; Weeks & Hetherington 2014:24).

Figure 2.22: Hall of Hindering or well shaft inside KV 11, the 20th Dynasty tomb of Ramesses III (left), which is still filled with some rubble and probably extends much deeper (right) (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Directly behind the Hall of Hindering (see Figure 2.22 above), there was usually a small, pillared hall called the 'Chariot Hall' (F), since remains of chariots were sometimes located here (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:24). This first pillared hall would be followed by further corridors or stairwells. The first corridor, known as 'Another God's Passage' (G), was followed by 'The Other, Second, God's Passage' (H). This was initially a stairwell, then it became a corridor and later a chamber. The last corridor was known in some tomb plans as 'The Ramp' (I). At first, in earlier tombs, this element had been designed as a room, and it later became a passageway. These corridors (G, H, I) seem to have had the function of providing 'additional wall surfaces for decoration and texts and perhaps to provide storage space for funerary goods' (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:24-25). These passages connected to a second pillared hall, called the 'House of Gold' or 'The Hidden Chamber' (J), which was usually larger in size than the first one. Typically, the House of Gold was the burial chamber, where the sarcophagus and shrines would be found. The design of the burial chamber changed over time: 'it could be cartouche-shaped, rectangular, pillared, vaulted, and/or with a sunken central floor level' (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:25). In addition, the burial chamber usually had four storerooms (Ja-Jd) attached to it and branching off to the sides. Two would contain grave goods such as food and drink, whereas the others were created to store ritual equipment such as statuettes and other items (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25; Weeks & Hetherington 2014:25). In some instances, there were fewer storage chambers, and sometimes there were more. While some of the KV tombs end with the burial chamber, others contain even more rooms and passages. A chamber known as 'The God's Passage which is in the *Shabti*-place' or 'The God's Passage which is on the Inner Side of the House of Gold' (K) is only occasionally found in KV tombs (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:25). This was originally a corridor, whereas its design changed to that of a room in later tombs. Moreover, a corridor or chamber known as 'The Second God's Passage which is at the Back of the House of Gold' (L) was also located in a few KV tombs, while a room with an unknown purpose (M) was only ever found in KV 17 (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:25). Evidently, the design of the underground tombs in the Valley of the Kings changed, with the most basic elements usually present. However, 'not all royal tombs include all chambers, and some have more than one of each' (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:23).

The protective elements evident in the tombs indicate that they were designed in such a way that they should hinder possible tomb robbers from progressing further into the tombs. One of these elements is known as the 'Hall of Hindering'; as previously mentioned, this was a deep well or shaft (Weeks 1998:41). The exact purpose of this feature has often been debated by scholars. Its original purpose may have been to function as a 'barrier intended to stop flood waters (and tomb robbers)' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25; Weeks & Hetherington 2014:24). Later, a symbolic meaning was ascribed to this feature. In some instances, scholars have viewed it as the symbolic burial place of the mortuary god Sokar or of Osiris (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25; Weeks 1998:41; Weeks & Hetherington 2014:24). Later, in the 20th Dynasty, the shaft itself was no longer sunken into the ground, but the chamber representing the well remained (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25). Therefore, the symbolic function seems relevant.

There are several reasons why the theory of the pit as a well to protect the tomb from floodwater can be argued against: Firstly, if the pharaoh passed away before his tomb was completed, the time to hew the shaft was not taken; therefore it is unlikely to have had an important function such as flood protection. Secondly, in some instances, the shafts were plastered and decorated or with 'decorated chambers at their base' (Weeks 1998:41). In the case of having a function as a catchment for water, the artwork would have been destroyed. Thirdly, the entrance leading to the pit room was usually 'walled up, plastered, and painted, so that intrusive water would have been dammed up, destroying the decorated walls in the preceding corridor … even before reaching the shaft' (Dorn 2016: 37). Therefore, many academics agree that this feature had the primary function of protection, to prevent robbers from penetrating further into the tomb. Nevertheless, it frequently failed at its purpose as a security device (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:24). Indeed, the robbers used ropes to cross the shafts (Reeves 1984:28, 91; Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:108). Therefore, it was more of a temporary hindrance, but robbers eventually found ways to navigate and traverse the shafts.
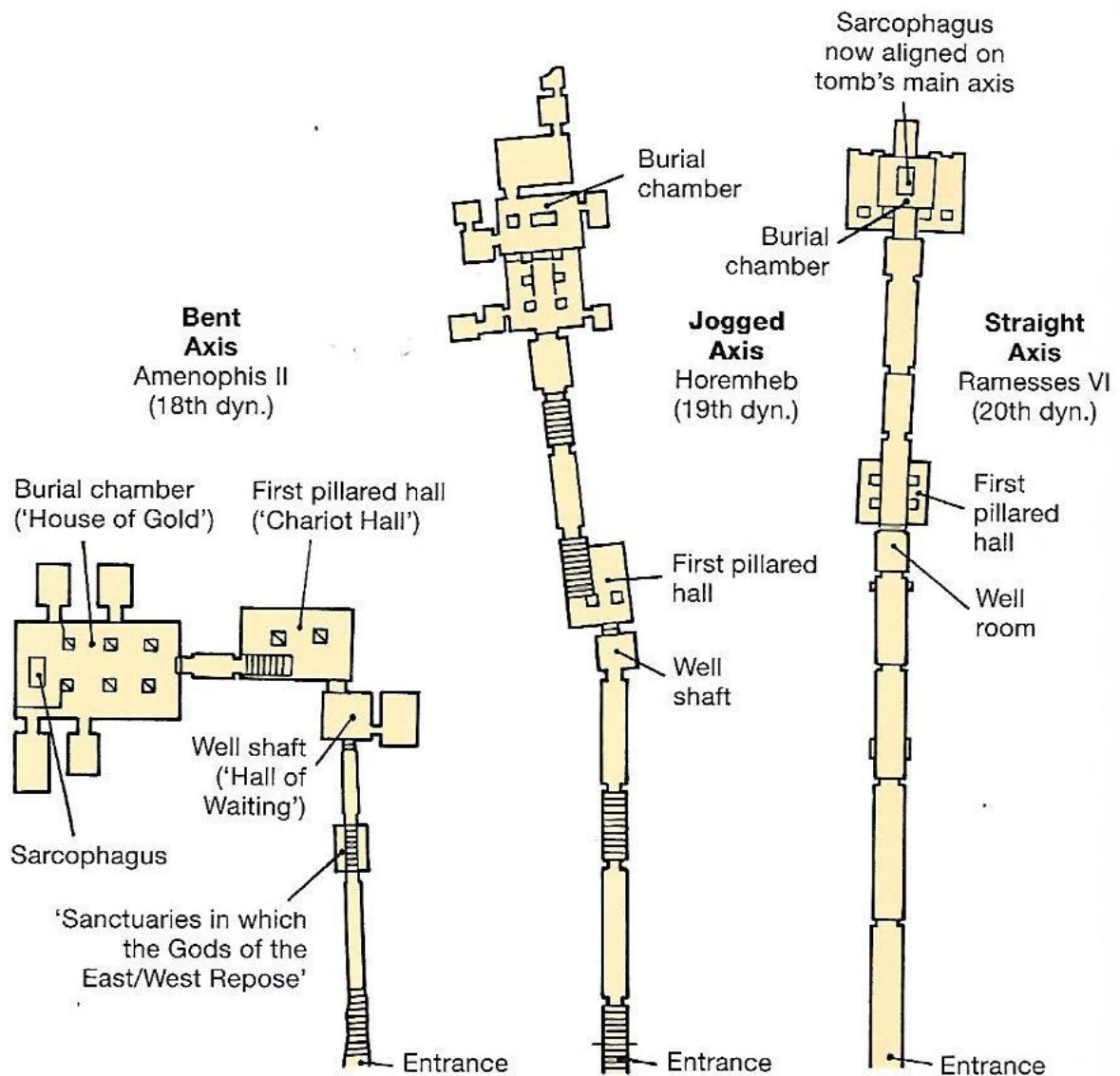
Figure 2.23: The axis of KV tombs from the 18th to 19th and 20th Dynasties (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25)

The basic tomb design was sometimes greatly elaborated, but the basic elements were almost always present. However, as is evident in Figure 2.23 above, between the 18th and 20th Dynasties, tomb design became increasingly simplified. The 18th Dynasty tombs usually had a bent axis or contained several turns and elaborations or repetitions of tomb elements. The purpose of this tomb design could initially have been a continuation of the labyrinthian inner design of the pyramids. It could also have represented the way in which the landscape of the realm of the dead was imagined. Alternatively, it could also have had more practical reasons, namely, to follow 'natural clefts of the subterranean rock or in an attempt to avoid bad stone' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:25). Originally, the orientation of the tomb was along a south-north

line, with the entrance of the tomb located in the south and the burial chamber in the north. This symbolised the passage of the sun, which would stand at zenith at the tomb entrance in the south by mid-day and would represent the sun's nightly underground zenith at midnight in the north, to which the burial chamber was orientated. Moreover, the niches of the sanctuary for the statues of the gods were orientated east-west (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:26-27).

During the 19th Dynasty, the alignment of the axis became linear and the tombs descended less steeply into the earth, as compared to the tombs of the previous dynasty. In addition, wooden doors were increasingly employed to close entrances and passages walled off and sealed in the earlier tombs (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:26). These would have had a protective function, but they could also be opened by the guardians of the necropolis for routine inspections (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:26). During the 19th Dynasty, a side room, possibly intended as a false burial chamber, was routinely added to the first pillared hall (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:26). Beginning in the 19th Dynasty, the alignment of the underground tombs changed to an east-west axis, following the path of the sun, and the tomb design became more symmetrical (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:27).

During the economic decline experienced in the 20th Dynasty, tomb design was characterised by simplification. However, the corridors and rooms increased in size and proportion with wider passageways and higher ceilings. In addition, the sarcophagus no longer stood sideways when the burial chamber was entered. Instead, it was aligned, with the head towards the end of the tomb, along the same straight axis as set out in the remainder of the tomb. In this manner, the buried royal would face the rising sun in the east (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:27).

The New Kingdom period after the 20th Dynasty was characterised by much strife, division and political change with dynasties of Nubian, Libyan and Ptolemaic rulers. This is also reflected in the funerary traditions, as the Valley of the Kings was no longer employed for royal burials from the end of the 20th Dynasty onwards (Goelet 2016:449; Ikram 2015:160; Peet 1930; Cooney 2011). Rulers of the 21st and 22nd Dynasties were buried in the royal necropolis at Tanis or at Medinet Habu, usually adjacent to or within the precinct of temples. Graves were no longer characterised by

large-scale, monumental architecture. Moreover, tombs were often grouped together, surrounded by mudbrick walled enclosures. These tombs consisted of underground burial chambers that were constructed from stone and covered with superstructures in the form of cult chapels (Taylor 2010:225; Ikram 2015:160). Since few superstructures survived, archaeologists assume that they probably displayed the architecture of 'a pylon gateway with a small courtyard and chapel … located directly above the burial chambers' (Taylor 2010:225). This indicated that the burial place and the mortuary temple were no longer physically separate as was the case earlier during the New Kingdom, but instead were united and formed part of the funerary complexes as had been custom during the Old and Middle Kingdoms (Ikram 2015:160). This trend of locating burial chambers directly underneath their associated cult chapels continued throughout later dynasties, with the exception of the Nubian Dynasty (25th Dynasty) 'whose pharaohs were buried in small pyramids with Mortuary Temples, in Nubia, at el-Kurru and Nuri' (Ikram 2015:160).

In addition, tombs were no longer reserved for the use of individuals such as a pharaoh or governor, but rather became sepulchres for entire family units. While mummification and the decoration and adornment of the human remains and the sarcophagi remained common practices, later burials were accompanied by fewer grave goods, which point toward simplification (Taylor 2010:225-226). Hence, the tombs were less conspicuous and became increasingly minimalistic. Over time, dedicated cult temples that were directly associated with the burials became increasingly rare and were associated less and less with the mortuary cult (Taylor 2010:233). This indicates that in general there was a decline in the 'significance attached to funerary provision, rather than a simple response to economic pressure' which is in stark contrast with earlier periods (Taylor 2010:237). It was only during the 25th Dynasty that a resurgence in funerary traditions was notable, and a 'renewal of past traditions' with the pyramid shape and monumental tombs became favoured once more (Taylor 2010:237). However, apart from the fact that the burial chambers of later tombs were still located underground, there is no longer much evidence of protective features.

Despite the protective elements evident inside the Egyptian tombs, as the tomb architecture evolved from the Old to the New Kingdoms, the graves were still looted. In fact, finding an intact tomb deposit is rare. Therefore, the discovery of

Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter in November 1922 was so sensational, even if this tomb also bore evidence of at least two break-ins that had been resealed (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:190). With most tombs that have been discovered to date having been robbed in antiquity (as well as in modern times), there is also other evidence pertaining to tomb robberies in addition to the changing architecture and design of tombs as seen here.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE INSIDE OF TOMBS

Apart from the physical architectural changes, archaeological evidence pertaining to tomb raiding exists in the form of plundered and partially plundered tombs (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:192). Hence, archaeological evidence is a 'matter of inference' and exists in the form of the ransacked burials and their missing contents (Katary 2015:3, 8). There were two types of commodities that robbers sought: The first category comprised of 'goods that were so ubiquitous as to be untraceable and thereby "safe" to retain and to sell' (Katary 2015:11). These would have included textiles such as linen or clothing items, which could be sold off or worn and used by the grave robber's family (Katary 2015:13). Similarly, cosmetics and perfume were items that could be used or sold. However, owing to the shelf-life of these items, they needed to be obtained soon after the burial so that they retained their value and did not deteriorate (Katary 2015:13).

The second category consisted of items that could easily be reused or recycled (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:192; Rühli, Ikram & Bickel 2015:2; Katary 2015:11). These funerary goods were in high demand, and therefore targeted during tomb robberies. Glass was one such material (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:192). In addition, metals such as gold, silver and bronze were valuable and valued by thieves as they could easily be melted into unrecognisable lumps and sold (Katary 2015:11). Furthermore, organics such as precious woods and rare objects, such as ivory, were often interred in the graves and their 'absence cannot always be put down to simple disintegration' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:192; Katary 2015:12).

The destruction of sarcophagi and of elements in the tomb is another indicator of tomb robberies. This includes the mutilation of mummies, as the thieves attempted to

dislodge the valuable amulets hidden in the mummy wrappings (Peet 1930:26). In the process of plundering the graves, the looters caused great destruction, leaving behind a badly fragmented heritage, as is evident by modern-day excavations and research. Among others, this was evident at tomb KV 31, where the 'mummies of the individuals were stripped of all their bandages and violently disarticulated', so much so that the remaining scattered and fragmented objects in the tomb did not enable the researchers to 'reveal the identity of the individuals' who had been buried there (Rühli, Ikram & Bickel 2015:2). Thus, the destructive activities of the tomb robbers have made the study of the human remains and of the context in which they were buried in difficult to ascertain. This deliberate fragmentation of the archaeological record has eliminated valuable research potential, further complicating the study of the past (Rühli, Ikram & Bickel 2015:7-8).

As mentioned before, tomb robberies were highly frowned upon in ancient Egypt. According to their belief system, the body of the deceased needed to remain intact to be able to enter the afterlife. Thus, mutilating the human remains was a highly suspect desecration, resulting in the inability of the deceased to enter the afterlife (Gates 2011:89; Snape 2011:21). Therefore, when caught and prosecuted, the perpetrators were severely punished, as is evident by means of the tomb robbery papyri.

2.4   TOMB ROBBERY PAPYRI

Evidently, looting was a persistent problem in antiquity, so much so that Reeves and Wilkinson (1996:190) claimed that: 'tomb robbing, if not quite Egypt's oldest profession, clearly ranks a close second'. During the Old Kingdom, most evidence pertaining to tomb robberies is in the form of defensive mechanisms and changes in tomb architecture, as well as the archaeological evidence of glaringly 'empty' tombs (Katary 2015:3). Looting seems to have occurred especially during the Intermediate Periods, when there was political instability and economic decline. Furthermore, during the New Kingdom, there seem to have been two major temporal groupings when the tombs in the Valley of the Kings were robbed. Firstly, they occurred during the late 18th Dynasty, during a time of unrest and 'dynastic troubles' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:191). This is evident from the tombs of Tutankhamun, Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III, which were resealed after they had been breached by robbers (Reeves

& Wilkinson 1996:191). In reaction to these thefts, a reordering of the workforce seems to have occurred to curb the looting, whereby a previously 'transient, even casual workforce' was transformed into a 'highly organised and rigidly controlled community' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:193). Secondly, many robberies took place during the 20th Dynasty or Ramesside Period, when another period of socio-economic and political decline occurred, as is evident from pertinent information originating from the so-called 'tomb robbery papyri' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:191).

These primary sources are ancient judicial documents that reveal 'the individuals involved, the types of commodities the thieves were after, and details of official interrogation and retribution' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:190). Therefore, these accounts attest to the fact that this form of heritage crime has been practiced since antiquity, and the robberies have often been performed by necropolis staff (Peet 1930:16; Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:190-191; Goelet 2016:451). In fact, these period textual sources indicate that the perpetrators, who looted valuables from the royal tombs, were often the tomb builders or other workmen of the necropolis such as quarrymen and coppersmiths (see the *Turin Necropolis Diary*, *Papyrus Mayer B*, *BM 10052* and *BM 10054* referred to in Peet 1930). During the building of the tombs, as is evident in Figures 2.24 and 2.25 below, the workers occasionally 'collided' with other tombs, while quarrying for the tomb they were currently constructing (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:191). Once the tomb workers accidentally discovered and intersected another tomb while they were excavating the rock for the current tomb they were building, the tombs they had collided with were either inspected and resealed or the hole was left open (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:193). In this regard, most of the thefts dating to the 18th and 19th Dynasties seem to have been opportunistic and small-scale in character and appear to have 'occurred when security in the Valley of the Kings had slackened considerably or was temporarily absent' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:191; Goelet 2016:451). Other occurrences of the plundering of graves seem to have made use of periods of political instability, crisis and confusion, often resulting from the changeover at the end of a dynasty or the demise of a pharaoh such as the intermediate periods, the end of the Amarna period or the end of the 19th and 20th Dynasties (Goelet 2016:451).
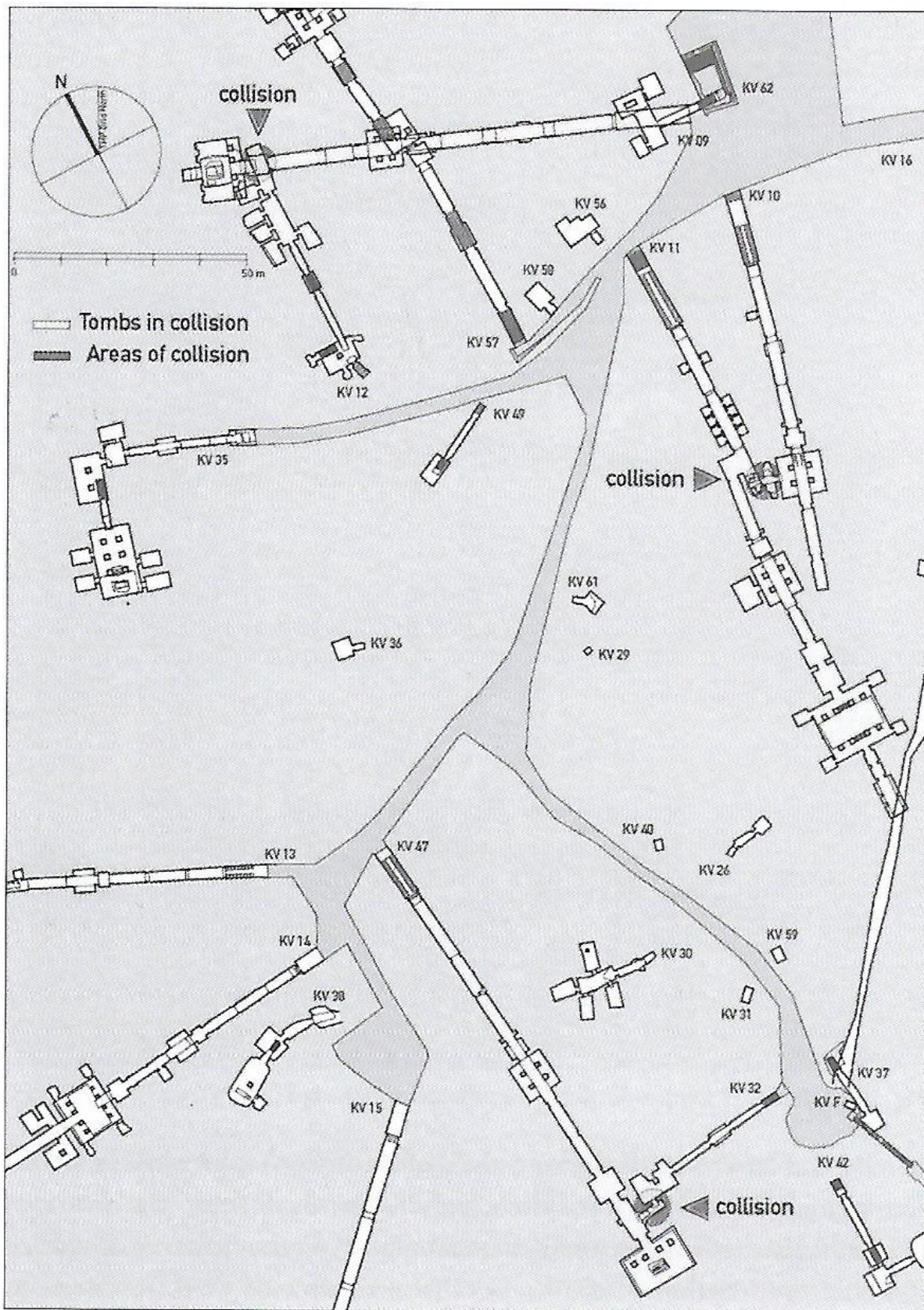
Figure 2.24: Tombs in collision in the Valley of the Kings (Weeks & Hetherington 2014:18)

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Figure 2.25: Resealed tomb collision with tomb KV 10 (Pharaoh Amenmesse) as seen from inside of tomb KV 11 (Ramesses III) (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

However, other robberies, apart from accidental discoveries during tomb collisions and opportunistic small-scale theft, seem to have been more premeditated: The

embalmers were sometimes also culprits, as they kept gold jewellery or amulets that had been provided to be wrapped with the mummies, or they poured only 'half measures' of the oils, ointments, resins and other materials used for embalming, withholding the remainder to be able to use the products themselves or to sell them (Ikram 2015:196-197). Moreover, some of the tomb robbery papyri mention the same gang or group of robbers who looted various tombs. In addition, the necropolis workmen knew how to circumvent the barriers they themselves had installed. They would also bribe guards or other necropolis officials to turn a blind eye or pay fishermen to assist in their endeavour by ferrying them and their loot (Peet 1930:53-54; Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:190-193; Ikram 2015:196-199).

As described by Peet (1930), the conditions experienced during the 20th Egyptian Dynasty must be considered within their historical context. The 19th Dynasty was characterised by prosperity and economic stability, especially due to tribute payments and booty from conquered regions such as Syria-Palestine. While incursions into the territory of the pharaohs did occur by Libyans and Nubians, the rulers of the 19th Dynasty managed to stave off the attacks. Weaker rulers followed during the 20th Dynasty, who were unable to maintain security and prosperity. Eventually, during the 21st Dynasty, Egypt came under foreign rule (Peet 1930:4-6). Effectively, the late 20th and early 21st Dynasties were characterised by political turmoil, economic upheavals and social instability due to invasions, the loss of Syria-Palestine as a colony paying tribute to Egypt and the decline or closure of various gold mines and rock quarries (Cooney 2011:3-4). Political power in southern Egypt was largely in the hands of the high priests, while the pharaoh ruled in the Nile Delta. Thus, the governing structure in Egypt was fragmented. Access to luxury goods was limited and the price for grain rose steeply, as trade routes were disrupted (Cooney 2011:3). Occasionally, food rations for labourers were not paid, resulting in strikes (Peet 1930:12-13). In fact, during the 20th Dynasty, tomb robbing seems to have increased to a hitherto unprecedented scale (Katary 2015:18). It was during this period when most of the known tomb robbery papyri were written.

As mentioned above, the so-called tomb robbery papyri originated mainly during the Ramesside Period due to the socio-economic decline experienced during the reign of the 20th Dynasty (Peet 1930:1, 6; Goelet 2016:457-461; Blakesley 2016). The papyri

mainly considered tombs from the Theban Necropolis, which were inspected by necropolis staff to identify breaches in terms of security. In this context, the Theban Necropolis included the royal, as well as private, tombs and temples located on the west bank of the Nile, ranging from Dra' Abu el-Naga, Deir el-Bahri and the Valley of the Kings all the way to the Valley of the Queens (Peet 1930:9). The papyri recorded criminal proceedings such as the prosecution of tomb robbers during trials by a court of law and the interrogation, or probably rather torture, of suspects (Peet 1930:15-27; Goelet 2016:459; Blakesley 2016). In some instances, even the robbing of memorial temples was evident (Peet 1930:16, 112-127; Goelet 2016:460-461; Blakesley 2016).

Peet (1930) grouped various tomb robbery papyri according to their content and perceived date. Group I comprises the *Abbott Papyrus* from the British Museum (BM 10221, see Figure 2.26 below) and the *Amherst Papyrus* located in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (Peet 1930:1, 45). The latter is also known as the *Leopold-Amherst Papyrus*, since it actually is composed of two sections matching together. The upper part, known as the *Leopold II Papyrus* is kept at the Musées Royaux d'Art in Brussels, whereas the *Amherst* is found at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. The papyri in this group not only recount the inspection of several royal and elite tombs, following the reported plundering thereof, but also document the confessions of the thieves, namely, a gang of up to eight robbers involved in the plundering of the tombs (Peet 1930:28).

Group II features a single papyrus from the British Museum collection, known as *Papyrus BM 10054*. From the content, it seems that the same group of robbers identified in the papyri of Group I are noted here as well (Peet 1930:1). The contents of the recto side of this papyrus include the investigation into a quarryman, who along with others, confesses to the robbing of tombs. In addition, the statements of a fisherman who ferried the thieves and received payment for his services as their accomplice in the form of gold are also noted (Peet 1930:53-54). Furthermore, a list of thieves is noted on the verso side of the papyrus, as is an indication that the criminals were 'brought up for examination' (Peet 1930:54).

Figure 2.26: *Abbott Papyrus* sections 1 to 3 (EA10221,1; EA10221,2; EA10221,3; Photos: British Museum, London, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0; British Museum 2023c; British Museum 2023d; British Museum 2023e)

Group III includes two papyri in the British Museum's collection: *BM 10068* and *BM 10053* (Peet 1930:2). Not only are the names of seven or eight of the necropolis workers who perpetrated the crimes listed in these papyri, but the documents also investigate the items and materials of value that were stolen by the thieves, noting among others, the quantity of gold, silver and copper (Peet 1930:72-74). As the robbers each list their share of the loot, the papyri provide lists of the part of the plunder still found in the possession of the thieves, and those no longer in their possession, but rather sold off. Hence, other lists indicate the persons they sold it to, thereby implicating their accomplices (Peet 1930:75, 77, 79-80, 103-104). These depositions in turn seem to have aided the necropolis officials in recovering some of the stolen property (Peet 1930:76, 79-82, 103-104). Group III also makes reference to the *Turin Necropolis Diary* (as referred to by Peet 1930:2) or rather the *Turin Strike Papyrus* (Cat.1880, located at the Museo Egizio or the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy), which documented the first known strike in human history. The tomb builders refused to work as they had not been compensated with food, which meant that they had not received the rations they were owed for their work. As documented by the scribe Amennakht, the artisans were eventually driven to threaten their superiors with tomb robbing to be able to curb their hunger, despite the knowledge that this was harshly punished. This means that they would have had to resort to subsistence looting as a result of economic difficulties probably resulting from mismanagement or localised corruption prevalent during this period (Museo Egizio 2023; Edgerton 1951; Blakesley 2016:186-187).

Group IV comprises papyri that feature thefts that occurred at other sacred places, such as the Temples of Ramesses II (Ramesseum) and Ramesses III (Medinet Habu). This information is evident from the verso side of the *BM 10053 Papyrus* and from the *BM 10383 Papyrus* (Peet 1930:2, 114). *Papyrus BM 10053* notes evidence given by a temple scribe, who discovered the robberies at the Temple of Ramesses II, implicating priests in the crime of stealing gold and wood from the temple's doorways (Peet 1930: 113-114). In addition, *Papyrus BM 10383* recounts an investigation into gold and silver stolen from the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu. Following the reporting of the burglary by a prophet, the pharaoh assigned a vizier and two other officials to investigate the matter. It seems that a scribe and various priests were the culprits, and they were also responsible for the theft of copper from doorways of the

temple (Peet 1930:122-125). In addition, the *BM 10054 Papyrus*, which is also listed under the second category, also includes a 'text dealing with thefts by priests from temple buildings' (Peet 1930:1-2). Hereby, the papyrus includes a text where the scribes noted the deposition of a priest, where he confesses that he and other priests stole gold foil from a statue from the temple of Ramesses II, as well as other silver objects. It seems that these items were then 'replaced by substitutes made of wood or other material' (Peet 1930:54). Moreover, the thief provided a list of his accomplices and of the people who received the looted objects (Peet 1930:55).

Group V 'deals with two sets of thefts into which inquiry seems to have been made at one and the same time, thefts in the Necropolis … and thefts from various portable chests' (Peet 1930:3).Herein, a section of the *Abbott Papyrus*, known as the *Abbott Dockets* (Figure 2.26), lists the thieves who are believed to have played a role in the robberies (Peet 1930:128). Moreover, the *BM 10052 Papyrus* and the *Papyrus Mayer A* (M11162 located at the World Museum in Liverpool) both record parts of the trial of the thieves who looted royal and non-royal tombs in the Theban Necropolis, whereas the *BM 10403 Papyrus* indicates further evidence that formed part of the criminal proceedings noted in the *Abbott Dockets* and *Papyrus Mayer A* (Peet 1930:128).
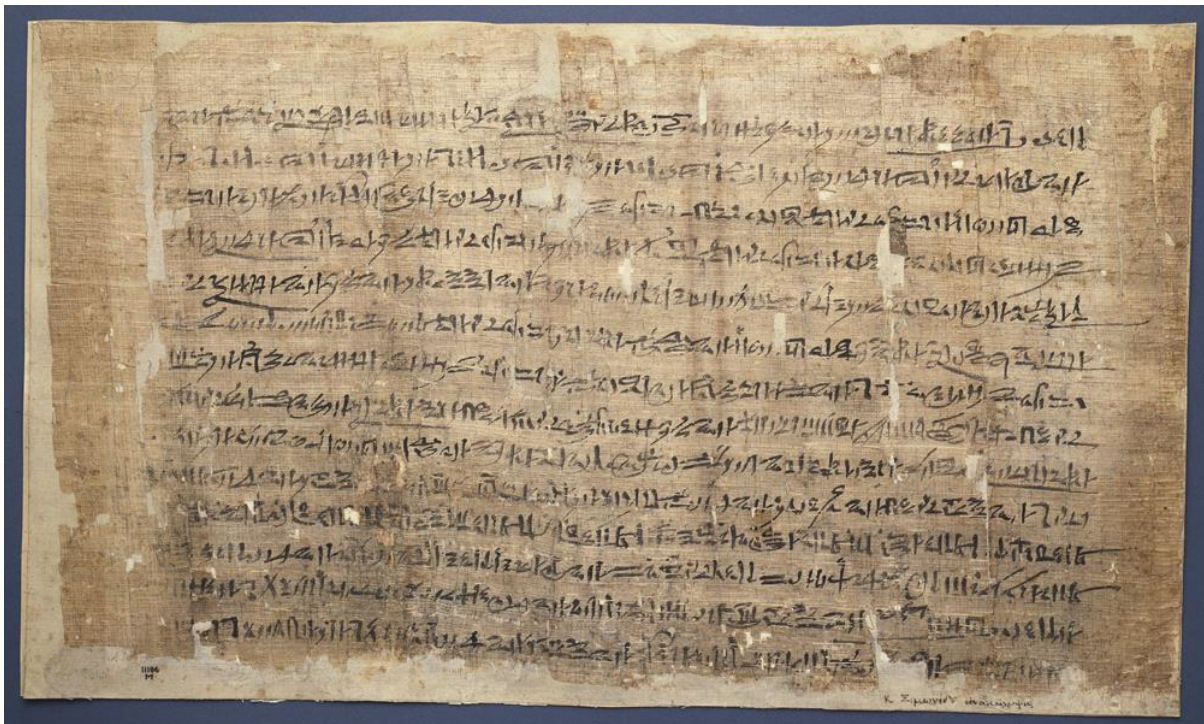
Figure 2.27: *Papyrus Mayer B* (M11186) (Image: National Museums Liverpool (World Museum), Personal correspondence: ashley.cooke@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

Group VI features *Papyrus Mayer B* (M11186 in the National Museums Liverpool, at the World Museum, see Figure 2.27), which comprises evidence from the confession of the thieves concerning the robbery of the tomb of Ramesses VI (Peet 1930:3, 176).

Finally, Group VII consists of the *Ambras Papyrus* (Vienna No 30), located at the Vienna Museum in Austria. This is a 'list of documents found stored in two vases and identifiable in part with some of the papyri in the other groups' noted above (Peet 1930:3, 177, 180). The papyrus appears to summarise a list of documents that had been stolen from the temple of Ramesses III and that had later been returned. It further seems to contain an inventory of the stolen documents that were kept in two jars. The documents in the first jar appear to be somewhat general, whereas those in the second jar seem to be documents about tomb robbing. Among these, there appears to have been a list of stolen gold, silver and copper that was returned, possibly relating to the *BM 10068* papyrus. Moreover, a document relating to the inspection of tombs is listed, which could relate to the *Abbott Papyrus.* A document relating to the investigation and examination of the same tomb noted in the *Amherst Papyrus* is also listed. There is further mention of coppersmiths as the perpetrators of some of the crimes, which again connects this papyrus to *BM 10054* and *BM 10052*. Furthermore, reference is made to a list of depositions confessed by some of the robbers, again drawing a connection to *Papyrus BM 10053* (Peet 1930:177-180).

To comprehend the legal proceedings recorded in the tomb robbery papyri, it is essential to understand the way in which the ancient Egyptian society was structured. Through the societal stratification evident in Figure 2.28 below, it becomes apparent that viziers, high priests and other high officials, who prosecuted the criminals and perceived wrongdoers, belonged to the societal tier directly beneath the Pharaoh and his family (Grajetzki 2010:195). Furthermore, Figure 2.28 below illustrates the social standing of the highest officials in comparison to the craftsmen and the builders who belonged to the working population two tiers lower, which made up the largest part of the ancient Egyptian society. This was the basis on which the Egyptian society was built – it was able to produce an agricultural surplus because its peasants and farmers and major construction projects were based on the labour of the workers and artisans. According to Peet (1930:12), the workmen who were responsible for constructing the tombs were 'employed by the state' and earned food rations and other supplies such

as clothing and oil for their lamps as payment for their services. However, during times of unrest and upheaval, as was evident during the 20th Dynasty in ancient Egypt, disruptions seem to have occurred and the workmen did not always receive their rations, resulting in the refusal to work and other consequences (Peet 1930:13). Evidently, the workmen had fewer means at their disposal, which may have caused them to resort to tomb robberies and theft.
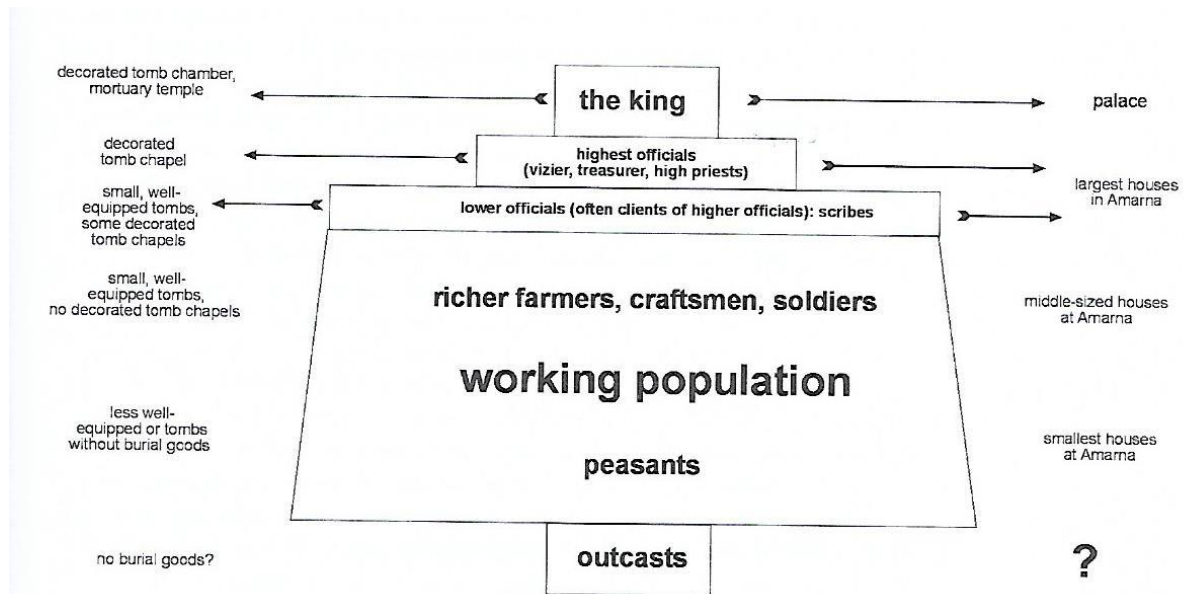
Figure 2.28: Schematic model of Egyptian society in the New Kingdom with reference to tombs and house sizes (Grajetzki 2010:195)

Therefore, towards the end of the New Kingdom, a significant change occurred in Egypt, which brought about increased looting in the Valley of the Kings. The socio-political situation in Egypt became dire, resulting in economic decline. This gave rise to an increase in the looting of burials. Therefore, one of the most prominent reasons that could be identified for tomb robbing in ancient Egypt is economic hardship in response to political instability.

2.5 TOMB USURPATION AND THEFT OF BUILDING MATERIALS

In addition to grave goods being pilfered from tombs during antiquity, tombs were also sometimes desecrated and broken down so that their material could be reused. This may have occurred for economic reasons and evidently occurred during times when pyramid building had declined. This was the case with stone blocks from the pyramid

temples at Giza that had been reused in the construction of the pyramid of Amenemhat I, a ruler of the 12th Dynasty who had his tomb built at Lisht (Ikram 2015:198).

Sometimes entire tombs were quite literally 'stolen'. This usurpation of tombs 'may involve different degrees of taking possession and reuse of an extant tomb and, in some cases, its tomb goods' (Wilkinson 2016b:347, 355-356; Ikram 2015:198-199). Some burials might have been abandoned or were not used for their intended purpose, causing individuals to later appropriate an existing burial for themselves. In other instances, this action appears to have been very deliberate and it may even have been officially sanctioned for reuse. Regarding royal burials, this usually meant that the 'tomb was entirely taken over from its original owner' (Wilkinson 2016b:347; Ikram 2015:198). Hereby, the entire tomb was stripped of its original decoration and redone for the new owner (Ikram 2015:198-199). Prominent examples of the usurpation of royal tombs include KV 20, which appears to have been constructed for Thutmose I, but was later appropriated by Hatshepsut. The queen seems to have intentionally 'extended the tomb to also include her own burial along with that of her father' (Wilkinson 2016b:348). In addition, there is much academic speculation regarding whether or not KV 62, owing to its comparatively small size and non-royal layout, was originally designed as a private tomb for Ay. As a result of the early demise of the boy-king, Tutankhamun's intended burial, possibly KV 23 where Ay was buried, might not have been completed at the time. Owing to the urgency of the burial, KV 62 might have taken the place of the pharaoh's burial site (Wilkinson 2016b:350).

Sometimes the only indication that the current person buried in the tomb was not the original owner was that the names of the original owner had been overlooked in a few places and were thus not replaced, or that faint traces were visible where the original tomb owner's name had been in place. Moreover, shabtis or other objects were occasionally re-carved with the names and titles of the usurper. In some instances, the usurpers were family members of the deceased person whom the burial tomb had originally been intended for. A just reason here may have been that the family member passed away earlier than the person for whom the burial tomb had actually been intended (Ikram 2015:198-199).

While the looting of building materials, as well as the usurpation of a tomb by another person, appears to have been a rather common practice in ancient Egypt, it is actually a topic that is closely related to and thus crosses over into the intentional destruction of cultural heritage. The resulting iconoclasm could have occurred for the purpose of the *damnatio memoriae* or the systematic proscription that condemned the memory of a person (Wilkinson 2016a:335-346; Ikram 2015:194-199). This notion is deliberated in more detail in Chapter Four, with reference to the section contemplating motivations behind the destruction of cultural heritage in antiquity, more specifically under the heading 'political iconoclasm or personal vendetta'.

2.6   ANCIENT MECHANISMS TO MONITOR AND PROTECT THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS

Evidently, episodes of tomb raiding were discovered and prosecuted in ancient times (Peet 1930). Therefore, there must have been mechanisms in place to be able to monitor, tend to and police the royal necropolis.[27] This would have enabled the staff to discover the theft in the first place. Hence, an early form of heritage management would have been carried out in ancient Egypt. As mentioned earlier, during the New Kingdom the intention was to conceal and make tombs publicly inaccessible. Thus, the Valley of the Kings was specifically chosen because it provided limited access points into the wadi and because it was to 'some extent already naturally sheltered by its hidden location within the Theban hills' (Vogel 2016:433). With only a few routes leading into the valley, it would have been possible to guard the necropolis effectively (Vogel 2016:433-434).

In fact, the locations of many tombs in the Valley of the Kings were known and, as such, regular inspections thereof could occur. In cases where the robbery of a tomb was noticed, restoration work seems to have taken place. In some cases, this was done very thoroughly, whereby broken objects were repaired and entrances were resealed as in the case of the tomb of Tuthmosis IV (KV 43) (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:192-193). In other instances, such as the partially plundered tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62, see Figure 2.29), the objects were re-arranged to appear

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[27] These mechanisms would have existed in addition to the physical security measures mentioned earlier in the context of the architectural evolution of burials. These were additional elements that supplemented the defensive burial structures themselves.

undisturbed, the doors blocked or resealed and the passage was filled with rubble to deter future criminal activities (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:191-193; Taylor 2016:361; Goelet 2016:451-453). In addition, during the later Ramesside Period a 're-ordering of the workforce' occurred, as it seems that often the builders of the tombs would later become the plunderers thereof (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:193).
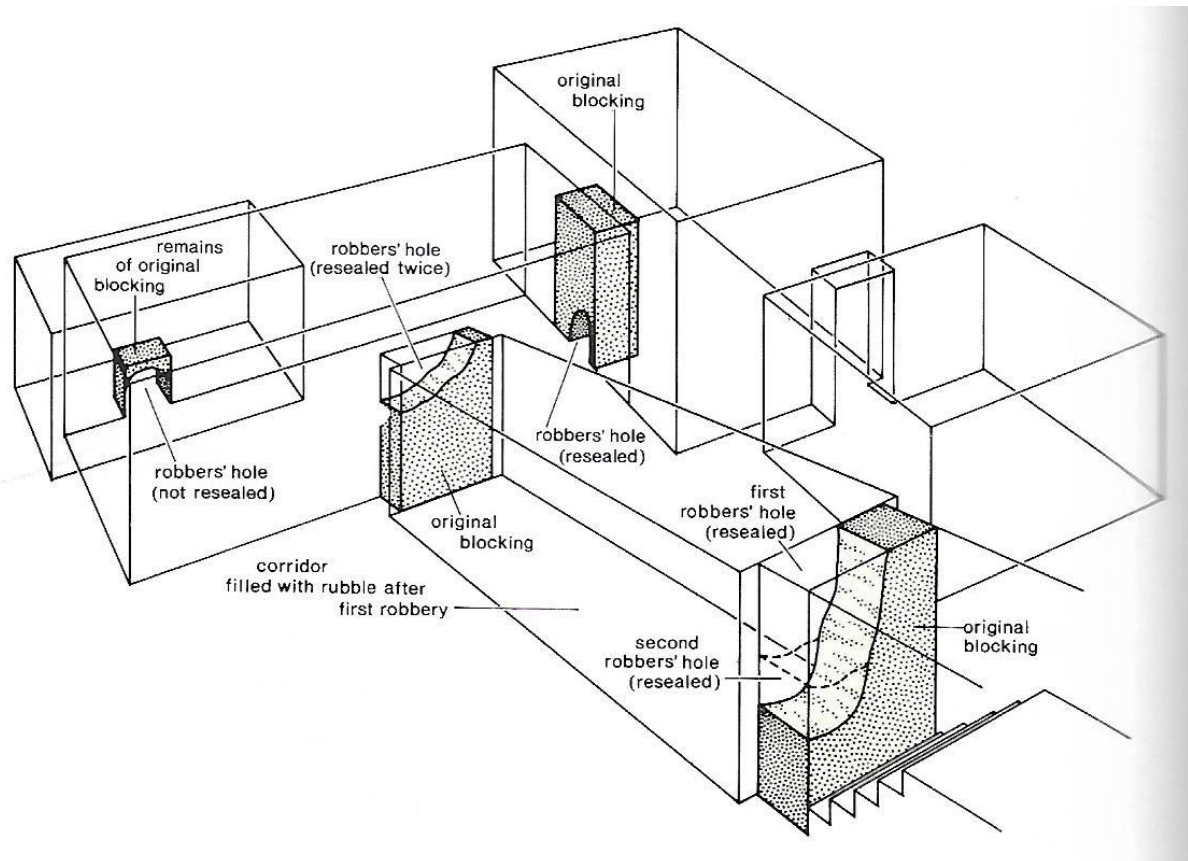
Figure 2.29: Evidence of the resealing of the tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62) as described by Howard Carter (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:190)

Moreover, in several locations in the Valley of the Kings so-called 'workmen's huts' have been discovered. Two types of such huts have been identified. The first type comprises walled huts that do not have a doorway. These were often constructed as a group of cells or rooms, on average located a respectful distance of thirty to forty metres away from the tomb that they served. These 'working huts' did not function as a form of accommodation,[28] but rather to store and process the materials required for tomb construction (Cross 2014:134). The second group of huts had doorways. These often comprised a single room and they were positioned in strategic locations away

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[28] The villages where the workmen lived were located at Deir el Medina (Cross 2014:133).

from the other huts, on the 'surrounding cliff edges' or 'on the floor of the wadi at access points to the work areas' – as such, these types of huts are classified as 'guard huts', which were actually inhabited (Cross 2014:135; Vogel 2016:435-436).

On the basis of evidence in ancient records, three groups or levels of 'guards' can be identified: the 'Medjay', the 'guardians/guards' and the 'doorkeepers'. The 'Medjay' were paramilitary troops who were responsible for policing and scouting the entirety of the 'Theban Necropolis, not just the royal wadis' (Cross 2014:136; Vogel 2016:438-441).

'Guardians' or 'guards' had the function of looking after the workforce and the materials that had been supplied. They ensured that the copper tools that the workmen used to build the tombs would not disappear, or that they were reforged once they lost their edge or broke. They supplied wicks, oil and fat for the worker's lamps, they supervised the valuable building materials such as jasper or paint and supplied leather sacks for the removal of the limestone chippings that needed to exit the tombs. In addition, they issued clothing to the workforce of the tomb. In essence, they were responsible for overseeing the materials that were stored and supplied from the working huts. In addition, they were also 'members of law courts, witnesses to oaths, oracles and barter transactions' and they also acted as inspectors (Cross 2014:135-136; Vogel 2016:436-437). As such, they held a revered position in the hierarchy of the workforce.

On the other hand, 'doorkeepers' were tasked with guarding the tomb and its entrance. This position was viewed as the precursor to that of the guardian. As such, it was not as well respected, but rather seen as a menial task in comparison to the guardians who 'guarded the working site and huts' (Cross 2014:136; Vogel 2016:437-438). Hence, three layers of protection were present at the Valley of the Kings.

Another mechanism to protect the tombs and deter people from robbing tombs and temples, is the fact that it had legal consequences. The pharaoh was clearly the leading figurehead and judge, but the vizier who was 'the highest authority next to the Pharaoh' also played a prominent role in the administration of justice (Peet 1930:17). In some cases, judgement was deferred solely to him. Once a crime was reported to the scribes, these would inform the vizier. The vizier and the high priest would then

order the arrest of the criminals who had been implicated. In cases when the crime was reported directly to the Pharaoh, he often then handed the investigation of the case and the trial over to the vizier (Peet 1930:17-18). The court judging the case was known as a *Kenbet* or a court of hearers, whereas the vizier and so-called notables formed part of the court. Notables would be important figureheads, such as the Pharaoh's butlers, heralds, princes of the royal family, the overseers of the treasury and granary and the like (Peet 1930:19). However, the trials of tomb robbers mentioned in the tomb robbery papyri were 'little more than interrogation under torture' (Vogel 2016:459).

During criminal procedures three parties were present: the judges of the people examining the case, the criminals and any witnesses. Once the suspects had been arrested, they would have appeared before the court – sometimes their wives as well. They would be questioned during the trial, and these procedures would often also include torture such as beatings and other means and/or an oath would be given. This would continue until the culprit would confess and his statement would be taken (Peet 1930:20-23). People who had witnessed the crime happening or to whom the loot was sold or given would also have been examined during these trials, taking the same format of questioning as the trial of the criminal (Peet 1930:24). In addition, confronting the accused and the witness also occurred as part of the criminal investigation to have statements corroborated, denied or caused the witnesses to implicate each other (Peet 1930:24). Following the trial, once the thieves were found guilty, or their accomplices were convicted of having assisted them or knowingly receiving stolen loot, they would then be punished. Since most tomb robbery papyri are records of the investigations of the crimes and trials, little is known about the form in which punishments took place. Imprisonment during the process of the trial is evident in the primary sources, while in some cases, it seems that innocent parties were acquitted. However, the consequence that the tomb-robbers faced was death. 'The punishment for tomb-robbery, a crime doubly heinous since it involved the damaging or even destruction of the bodies of the dead, can have been no other than death' (Peet 1930:26) The criminals were again imprisoned after their guilt had been established. Finally, the task of the Pharaoh was to impose the death sentence, which was then carried out by others. Which form the death penalty took is unclear, but it possibly happened by means of impaling the perpetrators on a stake (Peet 1930:26-27). One

aspect that the tomb robbery papyri do not elaborate on is the fate of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings and how they were treated, secured or repaired in reaction to the discoveries of the theft at the tombs and temples and the resulting prosecutions (Goelet 2016:460). Instead, what becomes striking is the extent to which the looting of the tombs was organised and the vast network of people involved in the plundering of tombs, ranging from subsistence looters who were trying to survive, low-level tomb builders employed in the Valley of the Kings to bribed guards, fisherman and so forth. This signifies the severity of the situation and a 'total breakdown of societal order at Thebes' (Goelet 2016:461).

However, harsh punishments for tomb robbing did not always hinder looters. In addition, despite the presence of overseers, who managed the funerary complexes, burials were frequently disturbed (Taylor 2010:229). In practice, the bodies of the deceased interred in the burials were often relocated to other burial places or even gathered into caches, which are communal or mass burials enhancing the management and protection of the human remains. Indeed, this may even have been a regular occurrence. However, it was not a well-recorded practice. Usually, burial caches were usually assembled over time, which stands in contrast to mass burials with 'the simultaneous interment of large groups' during a short period of time (Taylor 2010:229; Taylor 2016). The so-called 'Royal Cache' discovered at Deir El-Bahri is an example of the latter, which seems to have occurred in reaction to 'a major reorganisation of the Theban necropolis, involving the official dismantling of the royal burials of the New Kingdom and the reinterment of the mummies in a few easily guarded spots – a process which, for once, is backed up by written sources' (Taylor 2010:229; Taylor 2016:362). Hence, to remedy the problem of tomb robbing, the ancient Egyptian authorities decided to relocate some pharaonic burials into communal caches to better protect and police the burials in the Valley of the Kings. In the process of relocating the pharaohs' remains, the state officials in charge annexed the remaining valuables of the tombs and bolstered the royal coffers. As a result, 'the physical remains of the kings were preserved, the temptation for further robbery removed – and the state left with a profit to show for its efforts' (Reeves & Wilkinson 1996:188). Therefore, it seems that the presence of grave goods was important only to a point: to serve as provision for the deceased in the afterlife. However, the physical human remains were what was truly significant – their intact survival was deemed to

be more important than that of the accompanying grave goods. After all, as mentioned before, the life-force, personality, spirit and the other components that made up an individual needed to be able to recognise the mummified body so that the deceased could live on in the afterlife.

Another heritage management measure apparent through archaeological evidence is a flood control system in the Valley of the Kings. Dorn (2016:33) indicates that a deliberate form of flood protection was implemented:

> The systematic protection of tombs from water penetration before and after construction can be concluded from two observations: on the one hand, no water damage can be detected in unrobbed tombs, in tombs resealed after robbery, or even in tombs that were at times left open (e.g., KV 36, KV 46, KV 60, KV 62, KV 63); on the other hand, some tombs display constructional features that served explicitly for water drainage (Dorn 2016:33).

As a result of rainfall causing occasional flash floods, the water passed over the valley cliffs in waterfalls and flowed into streams. In addition to flooding, natural fissures existed in the cliffs, which meant that water could seep through them into the tombs. However, the 'damage caused by water penetrating through these cracks … was usually less severe than the flooding of tombs through the entrance' (Dorn 2016:33). Since this phenomenon of the flash floods was known in antiquity, the ancient Egyptians implemented certain precautionary interventions to ensure that the tombs would not become flooded. These included measures to redirect the water and to seal the tomb entrances.

Especially in the case of the oldest tombs dating to the 18th Dynasty in the Valley of the Kings, those hewn into the vertical cliffs with hidden entrances located in the rock fissures, many waterfalls would have occurred during flooding. The tomb builders closed the tomb entrances 'with stones and covered [them] with rubble after the burial' (Dorn 2016:34; my inclusion). The stones often also filled the first to third corridors. In this manner, a 'seal – a watertight closure – was achieved' (Dorn 2016:34). In the case of tombs with steep staircases descending into the rock, the 'protection against water … was achieved by filling the shaft or the descending stairs' (Dorn 2016:35). Thus, these measures were not only methods of blocking entrances to keep robbers out, but also methods to prevent the ingress of water. The entrances of such tombs, however, were sometimes deliberately located underneath waterfalls or on the wadi floor so that

the flood debris could seal and conceal them. Alternatively, the entrances were located higher in the foothills of the *wadi* so that the water flow would not reach them (Dorn 2016:36).

In addition, retaining walls, creating sequences of dams, were constructed to protect the tomb entrance located underneath, as was the case with KV 34, the tomb of Thutmose III (Figure 2.30). In other cases, such as the tomb of Hatshepsut (KV 20) cracks in the rockface were filled with stones to 'protect the underlying entrance from water' (Dorn 2016:35). In other cases, for the same purpose, construction debris was deposited some distance uphill above the tomb entrance and not, as in other instances, directly in front of the tomb to seal it (Dorn 2016:36). The additional effort of having the workers carry the debris to a higher location to change the direction of the water flow indicates long-term planning on the part of the tomb architects:

> This dumped debris, up to 2 meters high and about 15-20 meters long, also served to drain the runoff water to the west, away from the tomb entrance. Once the small depression above the tomb was completely filled, the debris was carried much farther away, to another *wadi* to the east … (Dorn 2016:36).

However, while this method may have been used successfully to protect the tomb from the ingress of water, construction debris was rather easily identifiable. A large concentration of 'sharp, bright limestone flakes' revealed that a royal tomb was located nearby, thus it would have been difficult to hide large tombs that required pronounced excavation during the construction process (Dorn 2016:36).
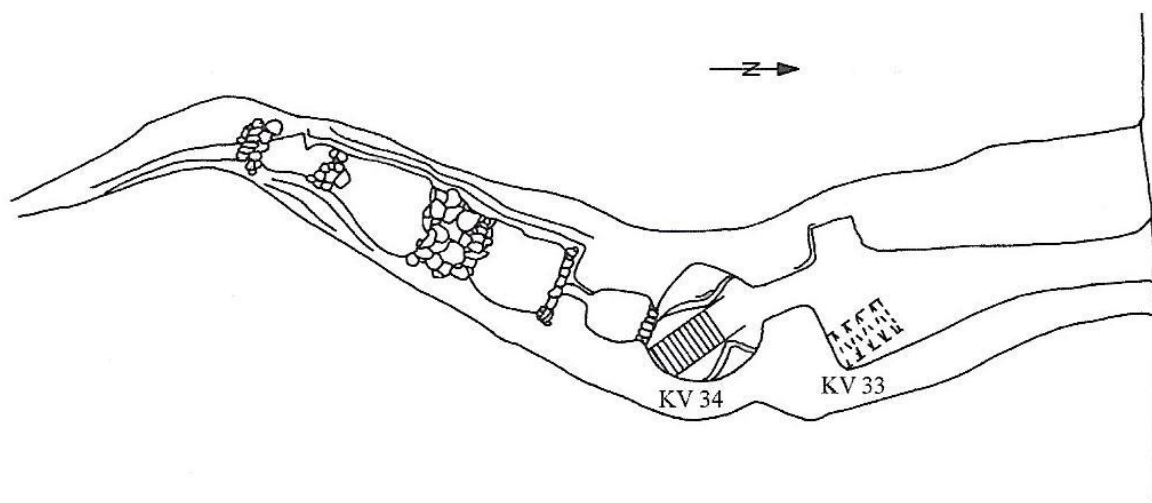
Figure 2.30: A sequence of five protective dams located over the tomb of Thutmose III (KV 34) (Dorn 2016:35)

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In other instances, such as with lower-lying late 18th and 19th Dynasty tombs with their entrances located in the foothills or *wadis*, the surface level was purposefully lowered at the tomb entrances to ensure that the water streaming down from the cliff walls would run off and not flow into the tomb. However, while such an intervention is likely, this observation has not yet been proven with conclusive archaeological evidence (Dorn 2016:35).

For the later tomb types in the Valley of the Kings, which were identifiable by means of clearly marked entrances and visible doors, flood protection was accomplished in the following way:

> On the one hand these tombs were usually constructed on rock spurs, so that the water flowed on both sides of the entrance … in pharaonic times most probably with masonry no higher than the surrounding surface; on the other hand they were positioned above the bottom of the *wadi* so that the entrances could not be reached by flash floods (Dorn 2016:36).

While the tombs would have been located higher in ancient times, this is no longer the case. Hundreds of years of flooding have caused debris to be deposited on the valley floor as sediment and, as a result, the ground level rose so much that these later tombs are now prone to flooding. Therefore, despite measures taken in antiquity for the protection of the tombs against the flooding of their entrances, time has now had an adverse effect. The valley floor is currently two or more metres higher than during the time the tombs were constructed. The actual location of the tombs' entrances would have been different in ancient times (Dorn 2016:36).

In addition, a canal system comprising several channels is evident in the Valley of the Kings, which is located on the northern side of the *wadi*. It served as a drainage system and it 'probably protected tombs lying in the outflow of the wadi such as KV 5, KV 7, KV 55, and eventually also KV 62' (Dorn 2016:36). Such a 'deep channel … would have run through the valley about 32 feet (10 metres) below the modern-day surface' (Jarus 2013). The ancient Egyptians were able to temporarily prevent water and debris to accumulate above the tombs from the periodic flash floods that occur in the region. At first, it seems as though this system was well-maintained. The caretakers of the site 'would have emptied this channel of debris and built side channels that diverted water into it, allowing water and debris to pass through the valley without causing damage' (Jarus 2013). Then, at some stage, this flood control system was neglected, causing

the flooding problem to re-emerge. However, it seems that eventually the flooding and the deposits of debris on the valley floor served to protect the tombs, by making them 'inaccessible to later tomb robbers' (Jarus 2013). This was the case with the tomb of Tutankhamun, where the tomb entrance was located underneath the debris. To date, it remains the most intact tomb that has been found by archaeologists. Since flash floods still pose problems to the integrity and preservation of the archaeological site in the present, maybe these ancient systems, if studied further, could provide the necessary answers to assist in the modern heritage management of the Valley of the Kings.

In addition to the Medjay, guards and doorkeepers who monitored and protected the tombs from the outside, the administration of justice by officials and the flood control system at the Valley of the Kings, there was another mechanism that had the potential to deter tomb robbers, namely curses. However, according to Ikram (2013:194), only a limited number of tomb inscriptions that can be identified as curses exist. They were usually inscribed 'in the entryways of tombs or on their exterior faces' (Ikram 2013:196). In most cases, these inscriptions warned 'impure' or 'unclean' people from entering the tomb or the tomb-chapel and polluting it, stating that they would face judgement in the afterlife. As a result, the inscriptions addressed not only persons with ulterior motives or 'evil intentions toward the physical tomb, the grave-goods, or the tomb-owner', but also those who would potentially desecrate the burial's chapel (Ikram 2013:195; Ritner 2012:396). Occasionally, more violent curses were inscribed on the tomb's walls, threatening physical harm to perpetrators, their *ba* (=soul) or their immediate family. For example, in the tomb of Tefibi located at Asyut, the inscription specifically warns wrongdoers against harming the burial or its contents, more specifically the statues representing the deceased person held inside the grave. Interestingly, this grave dates to the First Intermediate Period (Ikram 2013:195). This represented a turbulent time during which it is thought that the pyramids were first looted. Hence, it would be possible to deduce that illegal activities such as tomb robbing would not necessarily have been clandestine activities, so much so that contemporary persons found it necessary to protect their own burials with curses. In addition, curses were sometimes also found on funerary statues inside burials. According to Ikram (2013:196), these writings were usually more blatant and brutal than those inscribed on the tomb walls, warning criminals from harming the interred

human remains and looting the grave or the tomb-chapel and threatening harm to their soul or successors (Ikram 2013:196).[29] However, the success of the curses and other protective measures was questionable. Evidently, burials continued to be plundered throughout the ages, and the so-called 'curse of the pharaohs' or the 'mummy's curse' (Fagan 2004:244; Ikram 2013:194) has also not hindered modern researchers from entering tombs and seeking to study their contents in the hopes of gaining insight into the lives, religious burial practices and cultures of past societies.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, instances of looting clearly seemed to have increased in relation to economic hardship, which was thus one of the main reasons for looting in ancient Egypt. During times of unrest, such as the First Intermediate Period, most of the pyramids and early tombs were likely robbed. In addition, during the economically unstable Ramesside Period, the tomb robbery papyri recorded that many of the rock-cut tombs in the Valley of the Kings were plundered. In addition, it was also possible that people did not have access to grave goods for their own burials, and as such, in correspondence with the usurpation of tombs or the theft of their materials, they also stole funerary items for their own personal usage in the afterlife (Wilkinson 2016b:347, 355-356; Ikram 2015:194-199).

Nevertheless, the main reasons for looting in ancient times seem to have been political unrest or warfare and the accompanying instability leading to economic decline. In an attempt to improve their economic situation, burial sites, temples and other public buildings were pillaged. In response to tomb robbing, the architectural design of tombs has adapted over time. However, ancient mechanisms to protect the tombs, such as the provision of protective measures inside of tombs, physical security and legal prosecution, have remained largely ineffective in the face of the desperation of subsistence looters, especially during periods of socio-economic and political instability.

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[29] Tomb curses not only warned against the looting of burials, but also against the destruction of imagery representations or the erasure of the name of the deceased (Ritner 2012:396-397).

CHAPTER THREE
PLUNDERING THE LEVANT IN ANTIQUITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

While there is an abundance of compelling evidence pertaining to the plundering of tombs and temples in ancient Egypt, especially during times of political instability and the resulting economic decline, as discussed in the previous chapter, the situation of other regions in the ancient Near East also needs to be considered. At first glance, there do not seem to be as copious data on tomb robbing in the Levant[30] as compared to Egypt in antiquity, where it was evident that tomb architecture evolved over time to enhance the safeguarding of human remains and graves. In the Levant, it is possible that the information pointing to looting is more circumstantial in nature, such as the absence of grave goods in tombs. Consequently, while looting undoubtedly did occur, it may be necessary to locate archaeological and historical proof for this in ways other than exclusively considering burials. Hence, the topic of the plundering of the cultural heritage of the ancient Near East, with a focus on the Levant, bears closer investigation in this chapter.

3.2 BURIALS IN THE LEVANT – EVIDENCE FOR LOOTING?

With many burials having survived from ancient Egypt, this is 'one of the largest, richest and most informative classes of archaeological material anywhere in the world and from any period of human history' (Snape 2011:4). As a result, there is plenty of evidence about changing tomb architecture, burial locations and practices, as well as glimpses into social structures and ancient belief systems. Simultaneously, there is also an abundance of evidence pertaining to tomb robbing during bygone eras. In the Levant, the burials and associated practices have also evolved over time. However, it is unclear whether these transformations were directly related to the plundering of graves – an aspect that needs to be identified.

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[30] The present-day eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern territories of Israel and the West Bank (i.e. Palestine), Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Sinai Peninsula herewith comprise the core region of the Levant. However, Anatolia, Egypt and Mesopotamia also form part of the greater 'Fertile Crescent' and cross-cultural influence spread back and forth across the Levant as a contact zone with crossroads between empires (Levy 2014:203).

In the southern Levant, the areas of present-day Syria and Palestine, early burials dating to the Neolithic Period appear to have been directly associated with settlements. Nomadic hunter-gatherers lived in temporary settlements and buried their deceased directly underneath the floor of the dwellings or within the boundaries of societal living areas, implying a close relationship of the living with their ancestors (Mazar 1992:42; Vieweger 2012:97; Rowan 2014; Kafafi 2014; Maher et al 2021:1-2). Gradually, these socially-complex hunter-gatherer communities developed a more sedentary lifestyle throughout Southwest Asia from 'the Middle Euphrates in the Northern Levant to the north Negev in the south, and from the Mediterranean coast in the west to Jordan valley in the east' (Jammo 2022:93, 96-98; Maher et al 2021:1). Thus, they were becoming attached to certain territories, whereby the intramural burials may have acted as territorial demarcations. Eventually, the cultivation of plants and domestication of animals led to the production and storage of surplus food, allowing for increased population growth. In this context, the 'adoption of agriculture as the principal economic base contributed to the emergence of large and permanent settlements that flourished across the Levant' (Jammo 2022:94, 104). Societal structures transformed and became more complex: non-residential or communal buildings, such as places where cultic rituals could be performed and gathering places for meetings, became necessary components in the internal organisation of settlements. Simultaneously, burial customs and locations evolved due to the transition from a nomadic lifestyle into settled agropastoralism (Jammo 2022:103-104).

During the Chalcolithic (ca. 4500-3600 BCE), a transitional period between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, a 'metallurgical revolution' occurred and early states emerged in the Levant (Levy 2014:203, 207-208, 209). During this period, burial practices also started varying considerably. Intramural burials continued, but diverse forms of extramural burials also started occurring. These included cemeteries in naturally occurring caves or hewing subterranean chambers into the bedrock to extend naturally occurring fissures. Consequently, burials could range from simple chambers to elaborate caverns with numerous rooms, passages and even pillars to support the roof (Vieweger 2012:98; Rowan 2014:231-232). In arid regions of the southern Levant, so-called grave circles were more prevalent, which either contained clusters of stone cists or pit burials (Rowan 2014:232). In addition, individual *tumuli* or circular cairns

also contained inhumations. Another form of extramural burials included dolmens, which comprised a large stone slab that had been placed on top of at least three other large stones to resemble a table (Mazar 1992:82), as well as stone box graves, which were rectangular sunken pits lined with stones (Vieweger 2012:97). The increasing variation in graves could reflect increasing social complexity. However, no conclusive evidence is available from these early times, which would indicate the presence of looting. The close association of burials with residences, which could reflect ancestral ties, possibly protected the burials. Alternatively, the location of some burials underneath the dwelling floors could have hindered looting. Despite the emergence of social stratification, it does not appear as though there would have been a presence of rich grave goods at this stage, which might have made the theft enticing.

During the early Bronze Age, burials within settlements became less common. Larger cemeteries emerged in the immediate vicinity of the towns (Vieweger 2012:97). Natural caves or artificial caverns that had been cut into the rockface were used as burial locations as they allowed for the burial of multiple family members in the same location over generations (Mazar 1992:98-99). Moreover, burials in so-called 'shaft tombs' also came to be used, whereby the entrance to the underground tomb was created by means of a vertical shaft leading to a cave, which provided space for the interment of only six or seven individuals (Mazar 1992:99). In addition, circular burial structures, which had either been made of mud bricks or constructed with stones and corbeled roofs were used for multiple burials, 'perhaps for members of the same family or clan' (Mazar 1992:100; Vieweger 2012:98). Moreover, *tumuli* graves, which are single burials or stone box graves that were covered with a circular heap of stones, remained in use (Vieweger 2012:98).

During the Middle and Late Bronze Age, as well as during the Iron Age, graves were almost exclusively found outside of the settled areas (Bourke 2014:477; Vieweger 2012:98). These graves ranged from burial pits in the ground to rock-cut tombs, some comprising single and some multiple chambers. At that time, burial practices were exposed to Egyptian and Phoenician influences, which was sometimes reflected in the design of the tomb (Vieweger 2012:98-99). Much later, burial practices again changed with the exposure to Hellenistic and Roman influences. During these periods, freestanding aboveground mausoleums and other grave structures became the norm

throughout the Mediterranean. In addition, catacombs started occurring from the early Christian era onwards (Vieweger 2012:99). Evidently, the grave architecture changed according to the needs of the society and the cultural influences it had been exposed to, rather than adapting the architecture in response to looting, as had been the case in ancient Egypt.
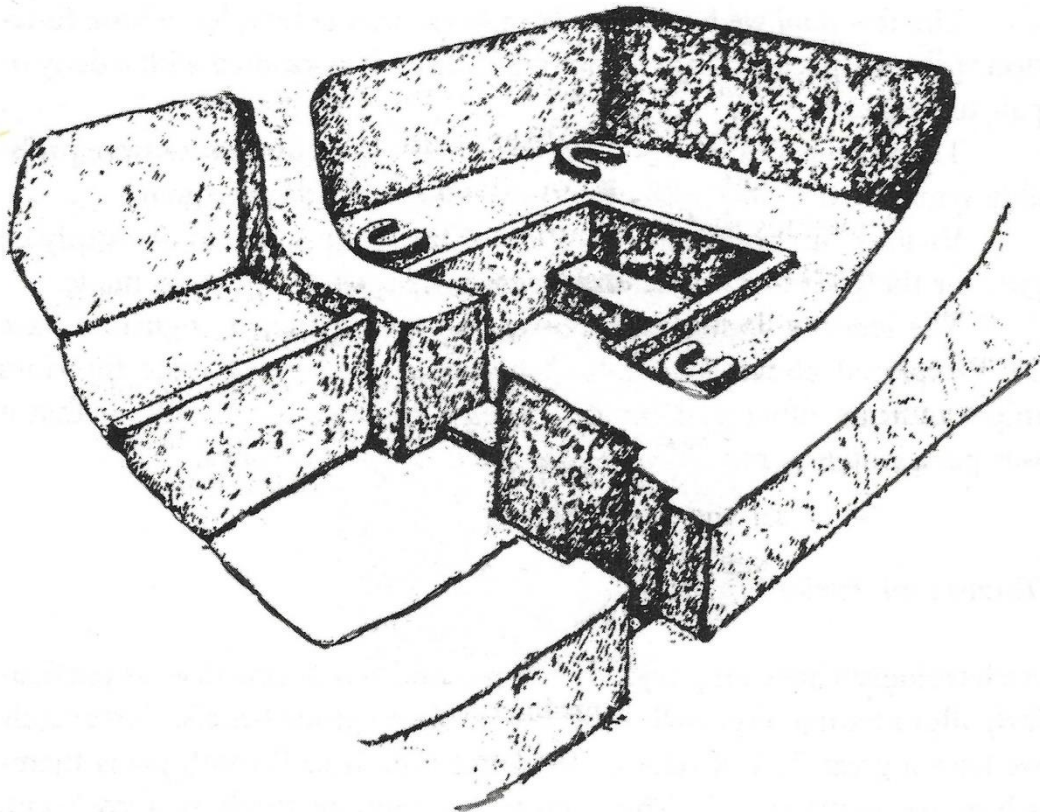
Figure 3.1: Schematic plan of an eighth-century Judean rock-cut tomb with benches (Dever 2012:284)

With respect to the diverse burials found in the southern Levant, rock-cut tombs emerged during the Late Bronze Age roughly from the tenth century BCE onwards and the bench tomb became the dominant burial type in Iron Age II Judah from the eighth to sixth centuries BCE (Osborne 2011:35; Dever 2012:283). Rock-cut tombs were extramural and were typically located in a cemetery or necropolis outside of the city walls, 'hewn into the outside slope of the tell or in adjacent cliffs' (Osborne 2011:41). Rock-cut tombs were created by utilising a naturally-occurring fissure in the rockface, which was enlarged into a chamber (see Figure 3.1 above): 'To create a chamber tomb, the fissure or cave was shaped into a quadrilateral room. Adding

benches around the perimeter of the chamber produced a bench tomb' (Bloch-Smith 2018:366).

The basic tomb plan of a rock-cut tomb with benches became rather standardised towards the end of the Iron Age.[31] It typically comprised 'a small forecourt, a low entry passage and a burial chamber with benches … on three sides for the placement of the deceased' (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:1615; Osborne 2011:40; Magness 2012:231). Waist-high benches either occurred in the back of the chamber or on the two sides and the back wall of the chamber. With the raised platforms prevalent in the rock-cut tombs, one needs to distinguish between benches with space for multiple deceased people to be laid to rest or an *arcosolium* providing space for a single person (Bloch-Smith 2018:366-368). A deceased person was wrapped in a grave shroud, and sometimes, the body was even placed in a coffin before being interred into the tomb. However, the deceased were usually simply placed on the flat platforms (benches or *arcosolia*) lining the tomb walls. Sometimes, these benches had niches for the head to be laid, indicating the direction in which the bodies of the dead were placed during the interment. Once more space was needed to bury additional deceased family members, 'the earlier remains [bones and burial gifts] were moved onto the floor or were placed in a pit [repository] hewn under one of the benches' (Magness 2012:230-231; Bloch-Smith 2018:366; Currid 2020:225). Archaeologists agree that this feature present in bench tombs is indicative of the phenomenon of a secondary mortuary practice (Osborne 2011:35-37). This is the 'regular and socially sanctioned removal of the relics of some or all deceased persons from a place of temporary storage to a permanent resting place' (Metcalf & Huntington 1991:81).

Sometimes, rock-cut tombs were elaborately decorated, boasting inscriptions, a *dromos* (a sloped or stepped entrance passage or shaft) or a lavish façade 'opening into a vestibule affording access to multiple burial chambers' (Bloch-Smith 2018:366; Osborne 2011:40). Moreover, various tombs also possessed small niches that had

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[31] Interestingly, the shape of rock-cut tombs resembled that of Israelite and Judahite rectangular pillared houses, which were the most commonly encountered types of residential structures during the Iron Age. Thus, a bench tomb can also be denoted as a 'house for the dead' and it is indicative of the close ties between a bench tomb and the family buried there (Dever 2012:283, 285; Osborne 2011:47-52; Currid 2020:225). The close connections between the term *bêt* (meaning 'house') and its use in the biblical text instead of the word 'tomb', as well as the fundamental Israelite social unit *bêt 'āb* (meaning 'father of the house') is beyond the scope of this study (Osborne 2011:48).

been carved into a wall to provide space for placing a lamp. Inside the tombs, human burials were often accompanied by some grave goods. It was customary as part of secondary Judahite mortuary rituals to offer foodstuffs to ease the spirit of the deceased person. Therefore, it is not surprising that ceramic objects were some of the most common archaeological finds inside the bench tombs. These included not only lamps and bowls, but also an entire array of 'cooking pots, plates and platters, decanters, and even storage jars' intended for the long-term use of the tomb's occupant (Osborne 2011:42-43). In addition, the items that were deliberately placed into the tomb each fulfilled a specified purpose: they 'may demonstrate concern for pleasing fragrance [juglets], sustenance [bowls, jugs, goblets], illumination [lamps], personal identification [seals], and adornment possibly affording protection [amulets, anklets]' (Bloch-Smith 2018:368). Many of these objects were directly associated with the burials, as is evident by means of the proximity of the grave goods to the deceased - they were often found to be located at the head or feet of the individual interments, or they had been moved to the repositories together with the human remains they were associated with. However, the grave goods may also have been indicative of ritual activity occurring within the tombs, whereby the goods would have been used by living visitors 'to dine in the tomb' as a form of paying homage to the dead and the veneration of ancestors (Bloch-Smith 2018:368; Osborne 2011:42-43). Compared with the rich and extravagant grave goods synonymous with ancient Egyptian burials, the funerary items in these southern Levantine tombs were comparatively simple. As a result, it could be possible that this aspect hindered robbers from exploiting the tombs, since the grave goods, which mainly comprised everyday or utilitarian household pottery items, were not 'special' or valuable enough to entice robbers to theft.

Based on archaeological evidence of the human remains and burial goods, it is apparent that rock-cut tombs were used by the same family over generations. Once the spaces on the benches inside the tomb filled up, the bones of family members and their associated grave goods were moved to the repository for storing human bones after removing them from loculi, to make space for further burials. This is indicative of a secondary mortuary practice (Osborne 2011:35-36; Dever 2012:283-284; Magness 2012:239-243). There were rare cases of elaborately decorated rock-cut tombs that were meant for the interment of a few elite individuals such as the Silwan tombs,

located in a necropolis in the Kidron Valley facing Jerusalem (Bloch-Smith 2018:369), or the tombs found within an Iron Age burial cave complex located at the Dominican Monastery of St. Étienne, close to Jerusalem's Damascus Gate (Barkay & Kloner 1986:22-39; Lufrani 2019). However, most rock-cut tombs were simpler in design and were intended to serve a nuclear family unit over a considerable amount of time. By using the same burial for successive generations of family members, there was a notion of continuity that would have allowed the descendants to 'preserve their memory and heritage' (Dever 2012:286).[32] The close association between the bench tombs and the family members interred, as evident by means of the secondary mortuary practices mentioned above, as well as the ritual dining inside of the tomb to pay homage to the ancestors, indicates that the burials played an important role within the Israelite Iron Age society and constituted a 'vital component of Judah's kinship-orientated social structure' (Osborne 2011:53). This relationship between the living and the dead, based on putative cultic rituals, may have served to protect burials from looting.

While many burials remained intact, the plundering of burials in the southern Levant did occur in antiquity. However, more research is needed to determine how frequently this occurred, when exactly the robbing activities took place, whether the looting of tombs would have been in connection with certain events, who the perpetrators could have been and what their motives were. Bloch-Smith (2018:368) states that since 'most tombs were disturbed', it is only possible to make generalisations about the length they were in use and the number of people who were interred. Hence, looting makes the research of ancient Levantine burials very challenging (Kersel & Chesson

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[32] Interestingly, 'the number of excavated interments falls far short of the population, estimated at 130 000-150 000 for eighth century Israel and Judah so the recovered remains may not represent the range of Israelite burial practices' (Bloch-Smith 2018:365; Dever 2012:105). Despite the fact that rock-cut tombs were a dominant burial type that mainly served families over several generations, they do not account for the entirety of the Israelite or Judean populations. Evidently, other burial types co-existed during these periods such as jar burials or pit graves, but these were only 'found in miniscule numbers at a limited number of settlements' and hence they 'also do not account for the missing population' (Bloch-Smith 2018:365). One probable explanation would be that the rock-cut tomb might only represent the burials of upper-class citizens, who would have been able to afford to purchase such a tomb or to have it hewn into the rock to serve for family burials (Bloch-Smith 2018:365-366; Osborne 2011:39). The grandness of the tomb depended upon the apparent wealth of the family that was buried there: some burials were simple, while others were very elaborate. Unfortunately, barely any evidence survives of the burials of people from lower social classes, who had no means and who would have been interred in simple pit burials in the ground – which would account for the so-called 'missing' burials. Thus, it seems likely that rock-cut tombs may represent abundant evidence of the burials of the elite of that society, while other burial types might not have survived in the archaeological record to the same degree. However, the abundance of bench tombs found at approximately 40 sites is indicative of this burial type being 'representative of the social norm' (Osborne 2011:39; Bloch-Smith 2018:366).

2013:679, 684-685). Dever (2012:215) notes that there were many rock-cut tombs located in the Kidron Valley below the modern village of Silwan (or ancient Siloam), which were 'all robbed' (Dever 2012:215). In this context, an eighth-century inscription found within the so-called 'Royal Steward' tomb at Silwan has been translated as follows:

> This is the sepulchre/tomb of [Shebna]-Yahu,
> Who is 'over the house'.
> There is no silver or gold here,
> But/only his bones and the bones of his slave-wife with him.
> Cursed be the man/person who opens this tomb (Dever 2012:215-216; 283-284).

The phrase 'over the house' in the inscription is interpreted to convey the meaning of a royal chamberlain. In 1953, Nahman Avigad suggested that the name of the person buried in the tomb would have been Shebna. Therefore, this could be a reference to the steward or royal chamberlain during the reign of Hezekiah in the late eighth century BCE (Dever 2012:216). Referring to the last sentence of the inscription, it seems that the tomb was conspicuous and easily visible (Dever 2012: 216). Hence, such inscriptions were meant to honour and protect the interment and could be interpreted as a deterrent that was aimed at warning looters to stay away (Bloch-Smith 2018:369).

In the case of empty tombs of Silwan mentioned by Dever (2012:215) above, this is not necessarily an indication that they were all looted in antiquity. Instead, they could also have been reused for other purposes over the ages. According to Ussishkin (1993a), many former tombs were reused as dwellings. In the case of the necropolis at Silwan, these approximately 50 to 60 rock-cut tombs were hewn into the limestone cliff of the Kidron Valley at the village of Silwan, close to the city of Jerusalem. These elaborate tombs were distinctive in style and showed many similarities to monumental tombs beyond the Holy Land with stylistic influences stemming from ancient Egypt and Phoenicia. The cemetery there was used 'from the beginning of the Bronze Age until the late Israelite period' (Ussishkin 1993a:323). It was approximately during the Second Temple Period, when most of the tombs had been broken open. While some individual tombs may never have been sealed or used for the interment of human remains, Tomb 28 already appeared to have been in secondary use for family burials (Ussishkin 1993a:335-338). Later, intensive quarrying for the limestone for ashlars damaged many of the tombs, as well as presumably an earthquake due to the weakened integrity of the cliff face. Notably, the pyramid that had been located on top

of the iconic 'Tomb of the Pharaoh's Daughter', or Tomb 3, was ruined when 'building stones were extracted from it, and the traces of the quarrying are easily recognised on its roof today' and the rock surface around the tomb was also lowered owing to these mining activities (Ussishkin 1993a:339). Many of the damaged tombs were subsequently inhabited by Christian monks and hermits roughly from the fourth to seventh centuries CE and again periodically from the eleventh until the 14th century CE. Evidence of this occupation exists in the form of chisel marks and evidence of stone-cutting, as they adapted the caves and burial tombs for habitation, such as enlarging some of the chambers, destroying some of the benches that had previously served to lay the deceased to rest, carving crosses into some of the walls, hewing out steps to entrances for an added ease of access and sockets for the roof beams of their huts and adding niches for storage and other features (Ussishkin 1993a:341-342, 346-356). Two of the former tombs were also converted into chapels (Ussishkin 1993a:356-358). From the 15th century CE onwards, Muslim settlers started occupying the burial caves, adding housing structures between them and thereby creating the hamlet of Silwan (Ussishkin 1993a:359-362). Hence, rock-cut tombs may not necessarily have been emptied due to the intentional theft of the tomb's contents, but rather to provide a new use for an existing structure for the architectonic space and shelter it provided.

Moreover, there is evidence of the plundering of tombs that points towards the period of the early Roman occupation of the southern Levant, as well as of a protective mechanism that was in place to seal the burials. Rock-cut tombs were still commonly used as burials for the elite during the first century CE, although the tomb design would have been altered over time and burial or ritual practices would have changed. Nevertheless, during the early Roman period 'Jerusalem was surrounded by a necropolis of rock-cut tombs' (Magness 2012:230). References to these burial contexts are made within the New Testament of the Bible. One such example is detailed in John 11, when Jesus travelled to Bethany and performed a miracle with the resurrection of Lazarus. According to the biblical text, Lazarus had been dead for four days and was interred in a rock-cut tomb that had been closed with a boulder, which Jesus ordered to be removed (Jn 11:17; Jn 11:38-39). The body of Lazarus had been wrapped in linen and his face was covered with a sweat cloth. According to the biblical description, when Jesus called him, Lazarus came out of the tomb alive (Jn 11:43-44).

Notwithstanding the wondrous account, the biblical description accurately recounts the appearance of a first century rock-cut tomb and the treatment of the bodies of the deceased. In addition, it clearly mentions that the boulder closing the tomb had to be moved away, indicating that the burial had been sealed to protect the body of the person interred inside.

Another mention of a first century CE rock-cut tomb occurs in the context of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. According to these texts, Jesus was buried in the family tomb of one of his followers, Joseph of Arimathea, who had gained permission for the interment of the human remains from the Roman governor in Jerusalem, namely Pontius Pilate (Magness 2012:246). After the body was wrapped in linens, Jesus was laid to rest on a *loculus* of a new rock-cut tomb and a large stone was rolled against the entrance of the tomb (Magness 2012:246; Jn 19:38-42; Jn 20:1-2; Lk 23:50-56; Mk 15:42-47; Mk 16:1-5; Mt 27:57-61). According to both above-mentioned biblical accounts and physical examples of rock-cut tombs, the large boulders that were rolled against the tomb entrances were not easily moved. Thus, the purpose of such mechanisms could also have been to protect and seal the buried remains and the grave goods located inside the tombs. However, the tomb entrances could be reopened for the further interment of human remains of other family members, so it was not impossible to move the boulders – but it was very difficult to move such heavy stones. In addition, the biblical account of Matthew (27:62-66) mentions that Pilate ordered the entrance stone to the tomb to be sealed and he had Roman guards stationed outside of the tomb to ensure that the human remains of Jesus would not be stolen by his disciples. In general, the biblical account of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus is in accordance with contemporary archaeological evidence (Magness 2012:248). However, the sealing of the tomb and the stationing of guards suggest that there was a possibility of theft, which would be circumstantial evidence that the plundering of tombs would have occurred during biblical times and that this incident would likely not have been an isolated case. Therefore, there is evidence pointing towards both the looting and the reuse of burials in the southern Levant. However, there are also numerous tombs that were found intact by archaeologists, providing valuable insight into Israelite mortuary cults and practices.

With tomb-raiding being a well-attested activity in ancient Egypt, it is interesting to note that, in comparison, various burials within cemeteries have been found in the southern Levant, which were either undisturbed or did not necessarily provide evidence of purposeful looting. These samples were subsequently excavated and studied by archaeologists. At Jericho, numerous rock-cut tombs were found, indicating that this was the dominant burial type that had been used from the Early Bronze Age until the Roman period. With almost all tombs dating to the Early Bronze Age, their roofs and entrance shafts had eroded. Nevertheless, it became obvious that they had been in use over multiple generations. They were periodically cleared, leaving behind skulls and grave goods such as ceramic vessels and other items (Kenyon 1993:678). Fortunately, many undisturbed tombs from the Middle Bronze Age were also found. The human remains on burial benches were accompanied by numerous grave goods such as ceramic or wooden household items, woven baskets, food provisions, furniture and even toiletries, but comparatively few personal or decorative items. In some graves it became evident that these had been in continuous use, due to the practice of moving earlier burials to the side into a heap to make room for later ones. Numerous undisturbed simultaneous burials towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age were also evident, together with full funerary equipment inside the rock-cut tombs. These intact graves provided valuable insight into the multigenerational mortuary practices of the period (Kenyon 1993:679-680). In addition, a Jewish cemetery dating to the Second Temple period, including graves from the Hasmonean and Herodian periods, with approximately 120 tombs hewn into a limestone hill to the west of Jericho, was excavated. The tombs all had a standardised plan, comprising one square burial chamber with loculi. Possibly due to the long period during which the cemetery was in use, it provided evidence of a range of different burial customs. The entrances to the tombs had been 'blocked with hewn sealings or brick, stone, and earth masonry' (Hachlili 1993:693). This may have served to protect the interred human remains and grave goods from theft and plundering.

Another example would include the Late Iron Age rock-cut tombs at Ketef Hinnom, located southwest of Jerusalem. The nine cave tombs had been extensively damaged by quarrying activities, similar to those at Silwan mentioned earlier (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:169). However, Cave 24, with its five burial chambers, numerous burial benches and at least two repositories, was of special interest: The repository found

underneath an unusually broad burial bench, which provided resting places for six bodies, found in room 25 'yielded remains of almost one hundred bodies and over one thousand objects' (Currid 2020:212-213; 226). This included two 'rolled-up silver plaques' with Hebrew inscriptions quoting the biblical text, which possibly had functioned as charms (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:170-171). In this case, despite having been damaged and exposed, it does not appear as though the burial was plundered for attaining wealth.

This begs the following question: Due to the presence of many intact tombs, why were these not looted, and which protective mechanisms existed? Firstly, the extramural tombs were located in designated places outside of the settlements, which were accessible and conspicuous. The visibility and easy accessibility of cemeteries for the benefit of secondary mortuary practices and ancestral veneration simultaneously meant that the rock-cut tombs were also accessible to the tomb robbers. In ancient Egypt, the conspicuous nature of free-standing tombs also allowed for veneration in the associated mortuary temples as well, but it did not hinder the looting of the burials. Therefore, apart from the curses or similar inscriptions mentioned above, there must have been other protective mechanisms in place, which hindered plundering. These can be found within the societal structure itself: the kinship structure within Israelite and Judahite society and the secondary mortuary practice of reburying the dead in repositories, as well as the putative ritual of dining with the dead imply that the graves were frequently visited. Therefore, if looting of the tombs had occurred, this may have been easily noticeable. Moreover, there may have been a relatively high threshold of propriety that hindered the plundering of many tombs because the activities taking place there probably occurred at quite regular intervals due to an active mortuary cult. Secondly, another factor hindering looting could have been the lack of incentive or potential in gaining wealth. As mentioned earlier, most of the grave goods evident within the burials were ceramic household items. These did not have a large material value, nor were they particularly rare objects. Thirdly, while many tombs were found to be empty of grave goods and remains related to the Bronze Age and Iron Age, there

is evidence of their continuous reuse as burials for families other than the original occupants or as dwelling places.[33]

3.3   THE TOWER-TOMBS OF PALMYRA

In contrast to the rock-cut tombs mentioned above, the tower-tombs of Palmyra as free-standing conspicuous burials are markedly different from many other types of graves found in the Near East. Located in the eastern Levant (modern-day Syria), they stand out as public monuments and there are 'no obvious models in the archaeological record' which explain the appearance of these distinctive tombs. Various scholars have attempted to explain the roots from which these burials might have originated by suggesting similarities to burials in other locations such as Arabia, Persia, the Levant or Syria. However, no convincing similarities could be identified. Instead, the tower-tombs of Palmyra 'remain distinctive in shape, mode of burial, and construction' (De Jong 2019:39). Because these burials are so unique, they have also been included in this discussion. Another reason for their inclusion is the conspicuous nature of these free-standing burials, much like the pyramids in Egypt. Similar to the royal burials of ancient Egypt, the tower-tombs of Palmyra (see Figure 3.2 below for a schematic representation), located in present day Syria, represent the memory of a select group of people located at the apex of the Palmyrene society. Owing to the relatively small number of tower-tombs in comparison with the size of the oasis settlement, the approximately 180 burial sites do not represent the entire oasis population, but rather a select few, namely the elite of Palmyrene society (De Jong 2019:30, 43).

The great tower-tombs were a prominent part of the landscape, rising approximately 20 metres into the sky and welcoming travellers into the ancient oasis city (Henning 2013:159). Tadmor-Palmyra was fed by underground springs and it became 'an important stopping point for people crossing the desert throughout its history' (De Jong 2019:34). Knowledge of the history of this oasis town before the first century CE is limited. However, archaeological evidence suggests the following:

> Mudbrick architecture and water features dating to the third and second centuries BCE were discovered south of the wadi and on the tell. In this period, pockets of domestic, agricultural, religious, and funerary activity spread out over an area of more than 300

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[33] In the case of earlier intramural burials before the Bronze Age, many of which were identified to be located underneath the floors of residence, not only the physical location of them being sealed under a floor, but also the apparently close ancestral connection would have served to protect them from plunder (Currid 2020:217-219).

hectares, probably comprising several hamlets, rather than a single site (De Jong 2019:35).
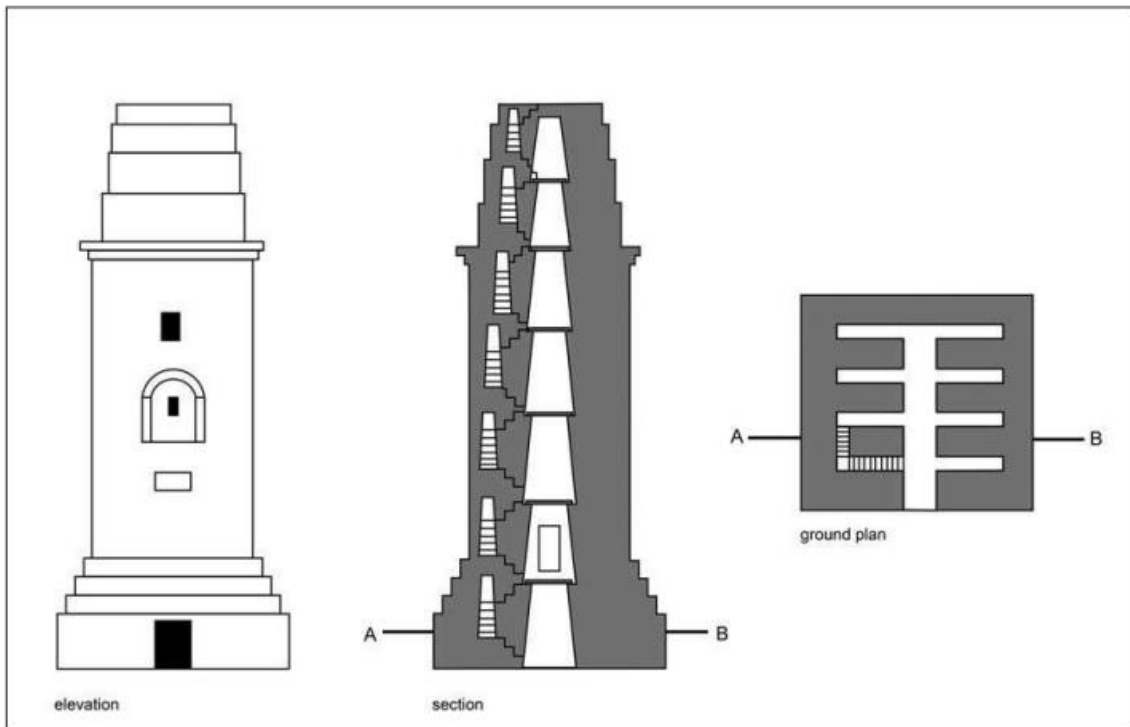
Figure 3.2: Schematic representation of a generic Palmyrene tower-tomb (Henning 2013:168)

During the first century CE a significant change occurred. Stone architecture started emerging in different places, characterising the appearance of Palmyra. This includes the construction of the Bel Temple located on the tell. In addition, 'typical urban features, such as a civic plaza and rectilinear street grid, may date to this period' (De Jong 2019:35). Moreover, the city became fortified as a defensive wall protected the area that was inhabited, as well as the orchards and springs that supplied the oasis city. By this time, Palmyra had transformed into an important centre of trade (De Jong 2019:35). Before becoming firmly identified with the Roman Empire, the city was also under the influence of the Seleucid and Parthian empires (De Jong 2019:35).

With regard to earlier burials in the north-eastern Levant, and at Palmyra specifically, burials dating from the third to first centuries BCE were typically 'underground and unadorned' (De Jong 2019:38). Two such subterranean burials could be identified at Tadmor-Palmyra: The first grave is a pit burial comprising the interment of a single person (ca. 380-160 BCE) (De Jong 2019:38). The second burial, known as the Baalshamin Tomb, is a 'large communal chamber-tomb' that was constructed with

'mudbrick walls on a limestone foundation' and was located at least partially underground with burial niches placed in a central corridor (ca. 175/150 BCE to 50 BCE/11 CE) (De Jong 2019:38). Small numbers of grave goods were found both in the small pit-grave and in the communal tomb, including objects such as jewellery, pottery and alabaster vessels (De Jong 2019:38).

In contrast to the above-mentioned subterranean burials, the first tower-tombs were built at Palmyra from ca. 50-1 BCE. The emergence of free-standing and conspicuous tombs represents a significant break in previous practices. However, the reasons for this change cannot be satisfactorily explained (De Jong 2019:30, 35, 46). Some elements of the burials are similar, such as the stacked loculi or niches and the communal character of the burials, but the remainder is largely unprecedented (De Jong 2019:38).

Remarkably, the architecture of these prominent tower-tombs did not change significantly over the centuries, but has remained largely uniform:

> The tower shaft rose from a stepped base on a square ground plan. Inside, there were several chambers situated one above the other, accessed by a winding flight of stairs. Burial shafts with loculi branched off the sides of the long chambers. The towers are presumed to have had flat roofs. In only two cases the upper part of the tower shaft has been preserved: tower 71 and tower B. They show that the tops of the tower tombs were stepped back a number of times above a profiled strip …. An Inscription plaque and a relief niche appear to have been a canonical decorative element on the outside of these tower tombs (Henning 2013:160).
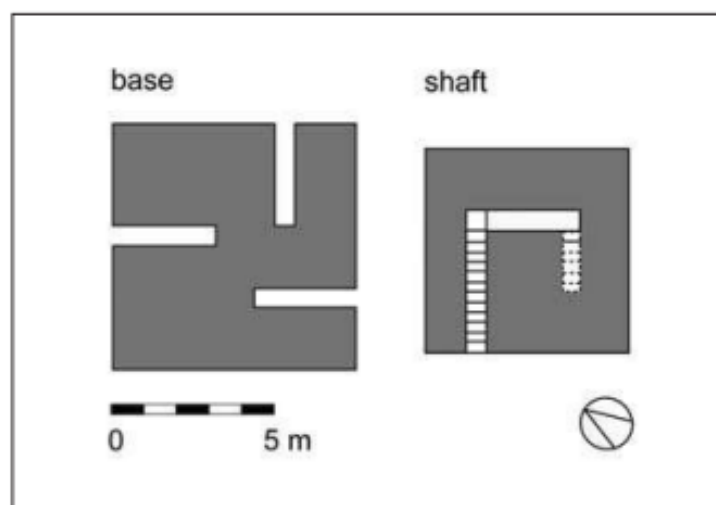
Figure 3.3: Plan of tower-tomb 2, of the earlier group with exterior *loculi* in the base (Henning 2013:169)

Two main groups of tower-tombs exist: The earlier group (see Figure 3.3), comprising sixteen burial structures, roughly dates to the first century BCE (De Jong 2019:30). These early examples were comparatively simple in design, whereas later examples were much more lavish. In addition, the free-standing structures of the early group of tower-tombs were irregularly spaced from each other and located in elevated spaces some distance from the actual settlement. Moreover, their doors did not point directly towards Palmyra itself. Of the sixteen examples forming part of the earlier group of tower-tombs, the stepped base on average measured six square metres, which was a structurally separate construction from the tower rising approximately ten metres above it.

> Burial in the towers occurred in longitudinal niches, known as loculi in the archaeological literature, in various configurations. Some included exterior loculi, made in the stepped base of the tomb, and sometimes stacked on top of each other. In these examples the loculi were accessible only from the outside and the tower itself did not appear to contain burials. Other towers had exterior loculi as well as loculi inside a room in the base or inside the shaft of the tower. Tomb 7, known as the Tomb of 'Atenatan, contained only interior loculi. The original placement of loculi could not be established in the case of five tower-tombs. The total number of loculi preserved was, on average, eight, excluding the much larger Tomb of 'Atenatan with 78 examples (De Jong 2019:35-36).
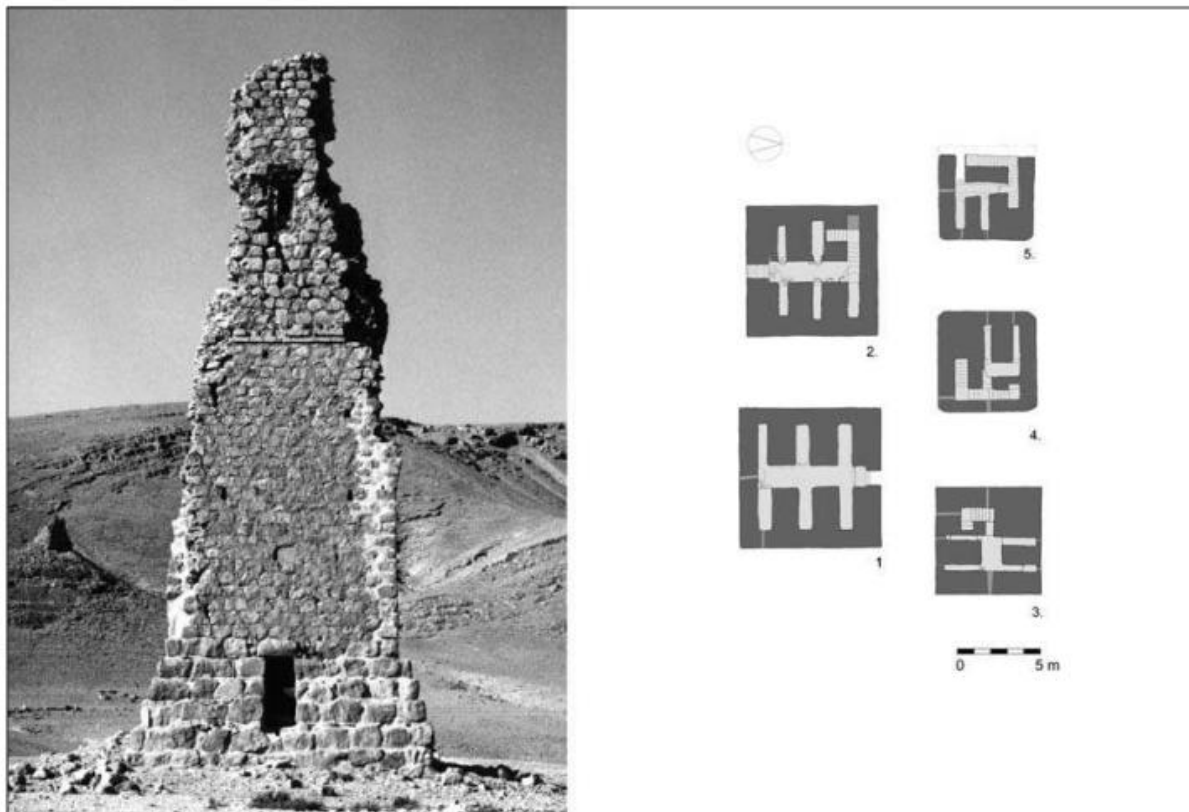
Figure 3.4: The Tower of Atenatan (tower-tomb 7) also forms part of the earlier group, but has interior *loculi* (Henning 2013:169)

Owing to the unique changes evident at the Tomb of Atenatan (see Figure 3.4 above), in terms of the presence of interior *loculi* and a larger number of burial niches, this could indicate a transition to the later tower-tombs.
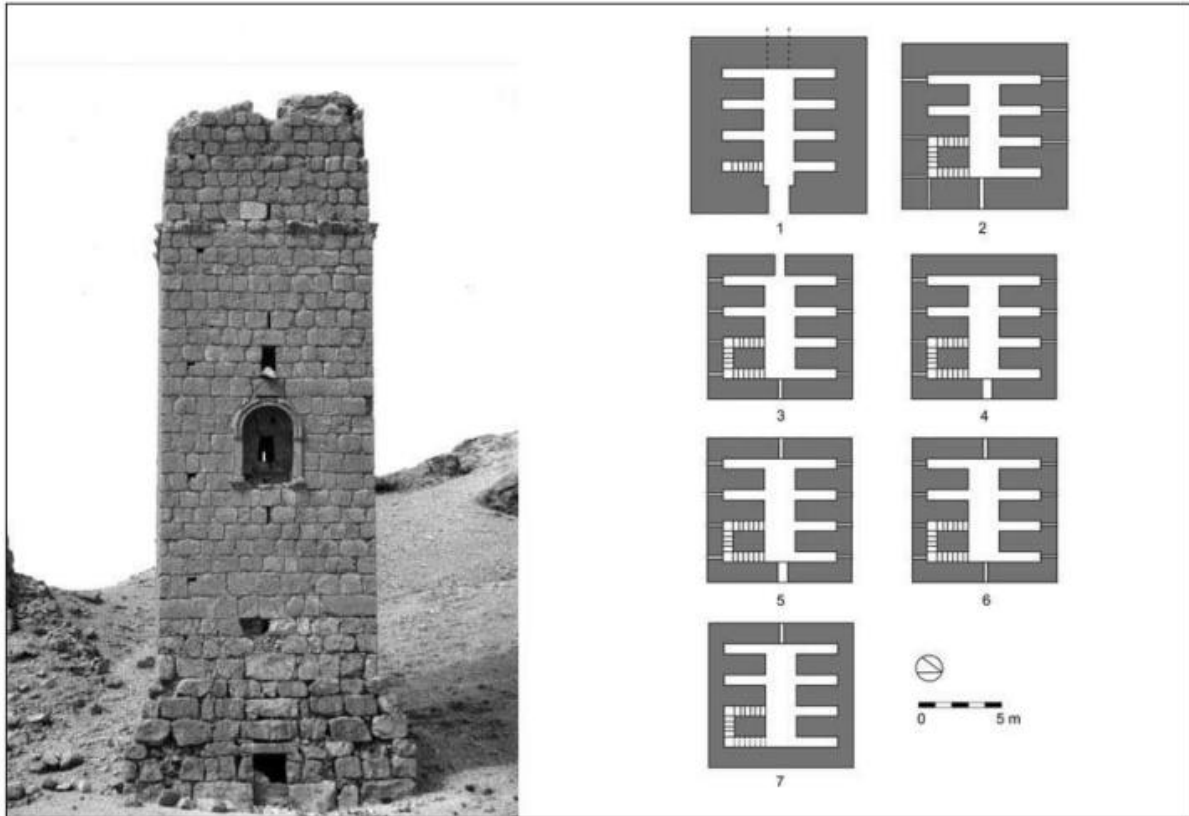
Figure 3.5: Tower-tomb 71 belongs to the younger group of more uniform tower-tombs with all *loculi* located in the interior (Henning 2013:170)

The construction of tower-tombs continued well into the first and second centuries CE, with the last tomb being built in 120 CE (De Jong 2019:36, 38). The shape and building techniques employed to construct the tower-tombs also became increasingly standardised over this period, as is evident in Figure 3.5 above (Henning 2013). These later tombs appear to be more closely associated with the settlement or the wadi itself, with their doors facing in the direction of the settlement. This second group of tower-tombs no longer had any exterior *loculi*. In addition, underground chamber-tombs, known as *hypogea*, were also 'sometimes dug below the tower-tombs, thereby enlarging the number of burial spots' (De Jong 2019:36). Furthermore, the later tower-tombs became much more elaborate and often contained 'reliefs and painted embellishments' as decorative elements, as well as founding inscriptions relating to the elite families with which the respective tower-tombs were associated (De Jong 2019:36). Hence, the tower-tombs were intended to be used by multiple generations

of the same family. In relation to this, the number of burials in a single tower increased. Moreover, portrait busts were frequently located at the openings of the loculi, and burials sometimes even occurred within limestone sarcophagi (De Jong 2019:36).

While the overall design of the tower-tombs appears rather uniform, there were two instances where the designs were altered during their construction over a period of 200 years. Initially, it appears that the loculi were accessible from the outside and, in a later building stage, they were 'moved to the interior' (Henning 2013:164). The interior winding staircase was henceforth the only means to access the interior burial chambers located on different floors, as well as the roof, and one could speculate whether this was done as a protective measure. Alternatively, the winding 'staircase may have had a cultic function' (Henning 2013:164). The second notable change in the design of the tower-tombs was a 'transformation of the ground-floor furnishing', whereby the decorative motifs were often not Roman but rather Hellenistic in nature (Henning 2013:164). The architectural and decorative motifs would have been an expression of the status of the family buried in the tower-tomb, as this change occurred during a time when 'sanctuaries were monumentalised … and public space gained in importance' (Henning 2013:164). In this context, as the city needed to represent and reinforce its status as an important trade metropolis, the public representation and promotion of Palmyrene families grew increasingly important. Therefore, tower-tombs were no longer sufficient, giving way to the rise of temple-tombs by the second century AD (Henning 2013:164).

As an oasis town and a centre of trade, Palmyra was frequented by many visitors. Therefore, one could speculate that the protection of the burial chambers would have played an important role – and it may have been the cause for the first architectural change by constraining the accessibility of the burial chambers and their loculi to the interior of the tower-tombs. Much like the Old Kingdom pyramids at Giza in Egypt, the tower-tombs of Palmyra were aimed at displaying the grandeur of the families they had been built for to outsiders, but only from afar. The interior would have been restricted to the family interred there, and was thus not accessible to outside visitors. The meaning attached to the tombs as being representative of prominent Palmyrene families might have afforded them some protection. However, at the same time, owing to the conspicuous and monumental character of these tombs, it is likely, but unclear

whether or not these types of burials were looted. In addition, the degree to which the changing burial practices and architecture occurred in response to grave robbing is, unfortunately, both under-researched and unclear at this stage. What is evident, however, is that the burial architecture at Palmyra was not as varied as it was in ancient Egypt, where there was a clear connection between the changes in tomb architecture in reaction to better protect the burials from looting (see Chapter Two). The changes in the burial architecture of the Palmyrene tower-tombs are not as significant as the adaptations made to ancient Egyptian burials, where an entire array of new burial types emerged over time. Notably, an important oasis and trade town such as Palmyra was located within a 'disputed zone of influence of the Seleucid, Parthia and Roman empires, and likely also of local kings and chiefs' (De Jong 2019:35). However, not much of the history of the site before it formed part of the Roman Empire during the first century CE is known (De Jong 2019:34-35). Hence, a lack of data does not allow for further insights into the matter at this stage. In general, it seems unlikely that the architecture of the tower-tombs was altered in direct reaction to tomb robbing.

3.4   PLUNDERING OF CONQUERED TERRITORIES

On the basis of relative standardisation of tomb design, burial locations and the associated mortuary customs evident from the above discussion in the Syro-Palestinian region, there was not a significant amount of conclusive evidence which would indicate the severity of tomb robbing in the ancient Levant. This is in stark contrast to the ancient Egyptian situation, where tomb architecture transformed in direct reaction to tomb robbing to allow for the proper management and protection of graves (see Chapter Two). Undoubtedly, there is some evidence that tomb robbing did occur in the ancient Levant, but owing to the limited information available, it is rather unlikely that this was a factor that induced a change in tomb architecture to the same degree as it did in ancient Egypt. Since there are currently not sufficient data available to support this notion, it seems more probable that burial practices have transformed due to the socio-cultural evolution from mobile foragers into sedentary farming communities and eventually into complex societies. However, while looting is unlikely to have influenced changes in tomb architecture, the plundering of cultural heritage in antiquity is more apparent in other ways. Since the Levant is located at the

crossroads between Asia, Europe, Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, this strategic location makes it an important land-bridge between continents. As a result, the Levant was one of the most fought-over territories in the history of humankind, having been occupied repeatedly over time by numerous conquering forces (Killebrew & Steiner 2014:3).

As is evident below in the schematic timeline depicted in Figure 3.6 below, successive and overlapping periods of conquest have influenced the Levant, for example the presence of the Israelites, Philistines and Phoenicians in the Levant, as well as the expansion of power of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the Medes, the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the Achaemenid Persian Empire. Among others, the biblical text accounts for numerous events of war, including accounts of looting in conjunction with the sacking of cities. It seems to have been commonplace that war was accompanied by the plundering of the wealth of conquered territories. In the biblical text, the book of Joshua (Jos 11:1-23; Jos 12) chronicled the events following the Exodus from Egypt. When the Israelites arrived in Canaan, they conquered various territories. According to the biblical description, they plundered cities such as Jericho, Hazor and Ai, annexed livestock and executed or subjugated existing populations in the process. Moreover, the Israelites burned the Canaanite city of Hazor, sparing other tell sites they encountered from the same fate of total destruction (Jos 11:12-13).

NEOLITHIC

8550 BC 8250   6500   6000   5500   5000   3500 BC

Jericho
PPNA + PPNB

Tower
Fig 1.3

Göbekli Tepe
PPNA + PPNB

Circular
building
Fig 1.8

Çayönü
PPNA + PPNB

Plan
Fig 1.6

Pottery Neolithic

Çatalhöyük

Houses
Fig 1.10

BRONZE AGE

Middle Bronze Age   Late Bronze Age

Early Bronze Age

3500 BC   3000   2900   2800   2700   2600   2500   2400   2300   2200   2100   2000   1900   1800   1700   1600   1500   1400   1300   1200   1100 BC

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

SUMERIANS:

Protoliterate Period   Early Dynastic Period   2350 BC   Neo-Sumerian

Uruk

City plan
Fig 2.2

Khafajeh:
Temple oval
Fig 2.12

Ziggurat of
Ur-Nammu
Fig 3.5

Uruk vase
Fig 2.6

Akkadian   Old Babylonian Period

SEMITIC PEOPLES:

Stele of
Naram-Sin
Fig 3.2

Isin-Larsa Period

Ur: Houses
Fig 3.8

First Dynasty of Babylon

Stele of
Hammurabi
Fig 3.9

OTHER: Kassites

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

Harappan (mature) Phase

Mohenjo-Daro

City plan
Fig 4.2

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EGYPT

First Intermediate Period · Second Intermediate Period

Predynastic | Early Dynastic (Dynasties I–II) | Old Kingdom (Dynasties III–VI) | Middle Kingdom (Dynasties XI (later)–XII) | New Kingdom (Dynasties XVIII–XX)

Narmer palette Fig 5.2 | Mastaba Tomb of Merneith, Abydos Fig 5.3 | Saqqara: Step pyramid of Djoser Fig 5.9 | Giza: Pyramid of Khafre + Sphinx Fig 5.11 | Kahun: Plan Fig 6.1 | Thebes: Area plan Fig 6.4 | Amarna: House Fig 6.14 | Deir el-Medina: Plan Fig 6.15

AEGEAN

Old Palace Period · New Palace Period

CRETE (MINOANS):

Knossos: Palace plan Fig 7.2 | Arkhanes: House model Fig 7.8

THERA

✳ Volcano erupts

Thera: Island map Fig 7.9

MYCENAEAN GREECE

Mycenaean Period

Shaft graves: Mask Fig 7.13 | Pylos: Palace plan Fig 7.17

ANATOLIA

Troy I | Troy II | Troy III–V | Troy VI | Troy VII

TROY

City wall, gate and ramp Fig 8.3 | Site plan: Fig 8.2

Old Hittite Kingdom | Middle Kingdom | Hittite Empire

HITTITES

Hattusa: Plan Fig 8.4 | Hattusa: Lion Gate Fig 8.6

CYPRUS

Late Cypriot I | Late Cypriot II | Late Cyp. III | 1050 BC

Enkomi: Plan Fig 9.3 | Ingot God Fig 9.2

LEVANT *UGARIT*

Ugarit flourished

Ugarit plan: Fig 9.5

SHIPWRECKS

Uluburun   Cape Gelidonya

FIRST MILLENNIUM BC

Persians capture Babylon, 539 BC

Alexander the Great captures Egypt, 332 BC

1100 BC | 1000 | 900 | 800 | 700 | 600 | 500 | 400 | 300 | 200 | 100 BC | (0)

IRON AGE

EGYPT

Third Intermediate Period
Dynasties XXI–XXIV

Late Period
Dynasties XXV–XXX and Second Persian Occupation

Hellenistic

Alexandria: City plan Fig 18.8

MESOPOTAMIA

NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

612 BC   539 BC

NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

Nimrud: Plan Fig 10.2

Relief: Attack on Egyptian city, from Nineveh Fig 10.8

Babylon: Ishtar gate Fig 10.13

ISRAEL, S. LEVANT

David & Solomon
Jerusalem: First temple

586 BC

Philistines

Babylonian Rule

ACHAEMENID PERSIAN EMPIRE

Medes

Achaemenid Persian Empire

Persepolis: Plan Fig 10.15

ANATOLIA

Phrygians

Urartians

LEVANT

PHOENICIANS

Hiram I, of Tyre

Tyre: Plan Fig 11.2

Atlit: Harbor plan Fig 11.5

Expansion to west: Map Fig 11.7

146 BC

Refounded by Romans

Himera

Punic wars

CARTHAGE

Early city: Plan Fig 11.10

1100 BC | 1000 | 900 | 800 | 700 | 600 | 500 | 400 | 300 | 200 | 100 BC | (0)

GREECE

Protogeometric Period

Geometric Period

Orientalizing Period

Archaic

Classical

Hellenistic

Lefkandi: Heroon Fig 12.5

Zagora: Plan Fig 12.3

Samos: early Heraion Fig 12.9

Samos: City plan Fig 13.6

Athens: City plan Fig 14.1

Theatre, Epidaurus Fig 17.4

Pergamon: City plan Fig 18.3

Delos: Delos plan Fig 18.11

Olympia: Temple of Zeus Fig 15.9

Priene: City plan Fig 17.5

Siphnian Treasury Fig 15.2

Acropolis, Athens Fig 16.3

Mausoleum Fig 17.15

Figure 3.6: Timeline of successive periods in the ancient Near East (Gates 2011)

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The city of Lachish also fell during the Israelite conquest (Jos 10:29-39). The section from Joshua 10:31 to 33 focuses particularly on the Israelite conquest of Lachish. It is said that the city fell on the second day of the siege and that all the people living there were executed (Jos 10:31-33). Indeed, the city was destroyed in a fire during the Late Bronze Age (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:221). However, it is still unclear which destruction layer in the chronology of Lachish should be attributed to this event. There are two destruction layers that could be related to this event: Level VII dates to the 13th century BCE (Late Bronze Age) and the earlier one in Level VI dates to the 12th century BCE (Iron Age IA). Since both Levels are Canaanite in nature, it currently remains unclear which destruction layer relates to the event mentioned in the biblical text and should therefore be attributed to Joshua (Garfinkel et al 2019:708).

This was not the only period of upheaval for Lachish, or for most of the other tell sites in the southern Levant. Tell sites are typically characterised by their resemblance to a layer-cake that documents successive periods of rebuilding and occupation, followed by destruction events. Later, the fortified Judean city of Lachish was famously conquered by the Assyrians under Sennacherib in 701 BCE (Ussishkin 1982; Vieweger 2012:308). This event was not only mentioned in the biblical text (2 Ki 18; 2 Chr 32; Is 36-37; Mi 1:13), but also well-documented in extra-biblical contemporary sources such as Akkadian textual inscriptions (Garfinkel et al 2021:418), and the renowned Assyrian *Lachish Reliefs* (see Figure 3.7 below). These were originally located in the South-West Palace, which was Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh. There, they were excavated during Layard's 'second expedition to Nineveh (October 1849 to April 1851)' (Uehlinger 2003:221-222, 225). This historical event was also proven with archaeological evidence by means of the destruction evident in Level III, as well as the remains of the Assyrian siege ramp *in situ* at the site (Garfinkel et al 2021; Kreimerman 2022:47; Ussishkin 1982; Uehlinger 2003). The combination of all of these sources allows archaeological scholars to cross-reference the available data in the form of archaeological, pictorial and textual data, whereby the primary extra-biblical contemporary sources and the biblical account as a 'secondary historical source that has undergone a complex editing process' can also be interpreted in conjunction with one another (Garfinkel et al 2021:420-421).

Currently, the *Lachish Reliefs* are located at the British Museum in London (museum number: 124908; British Museum 2023a; British Museum 2023f), where they have been on display since approximately 1856 (Uehlinger 2003:222). Originally, it was located in a prominent position in Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, spanning the entire room with a height of 2,5 metres and 18,9 metres in length (Ussishkin 1982; Uehlinger 2003:221-222; Vieweger 2012:301). The relief depicts the attack of the Judean city of Lachish by the Assyrians and its eventual defeat. Following the siege, the relief prominently illustrates prisoners (soldiers and civilians) and loot being led out of the city in a procession (see Figures 3.7 and 3.8 below). According to this imagery, the plunder that is taken away includes metal objects, probably also incense burners, a packed wagon and a camel laden with valuables (Uehlinger 2003:283-286; Vieweger 2012:301). Some prisoners are judged and executed, whereas other Judeans are deported with their families and domesticated animals (Uehlinger 2003:278-284). Moreover, Sennacherib is portrayed on a throne observing the proceedings, with more troops in the background, and there even is a portrayal of the Assyrian soldiers' encampment (Uehlinger 2003:286-293; Vieweger 2012:301301-308).
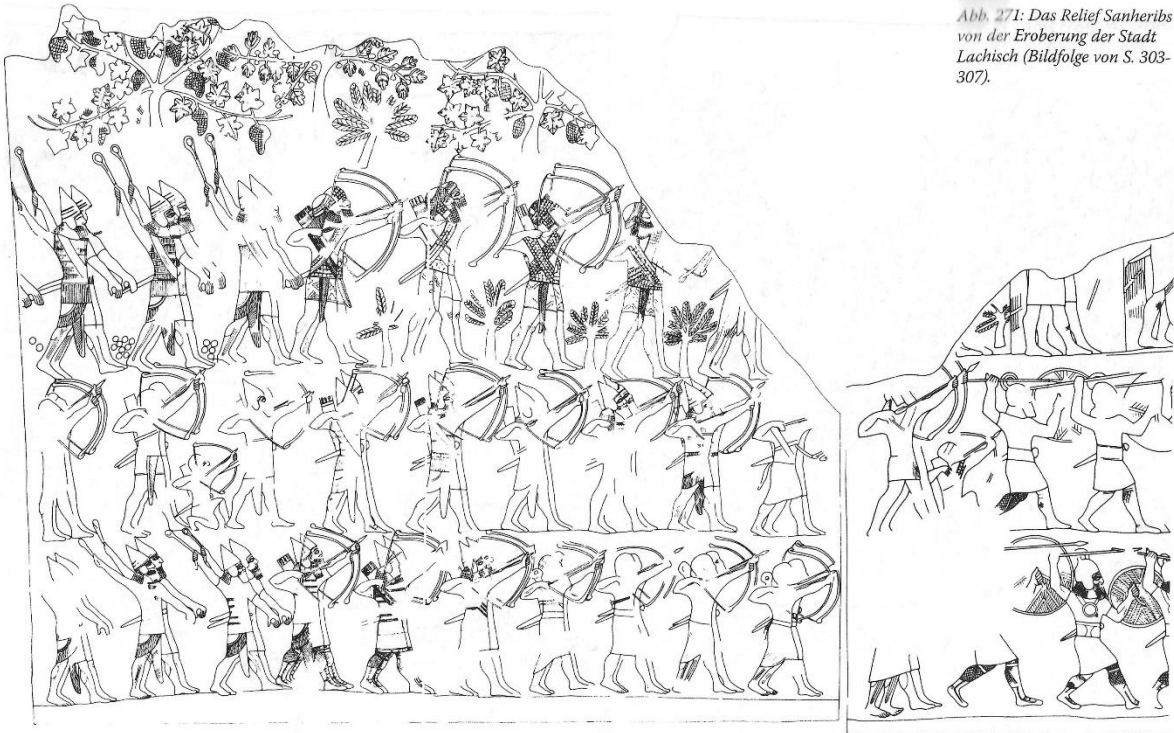
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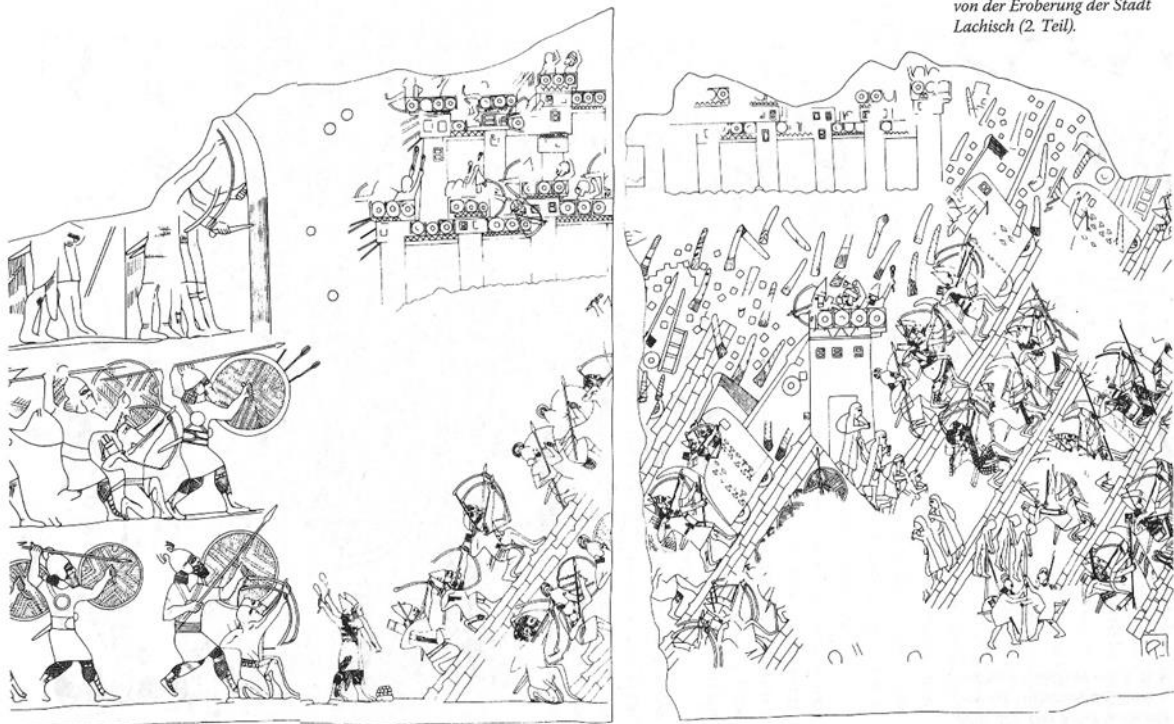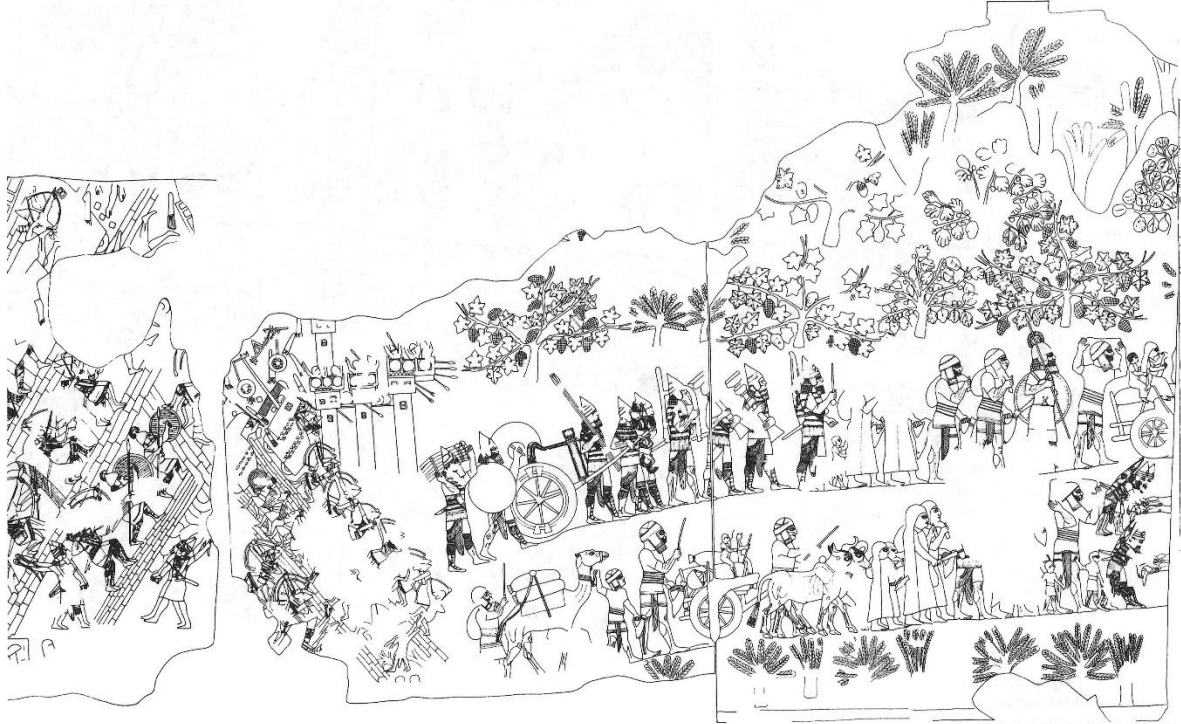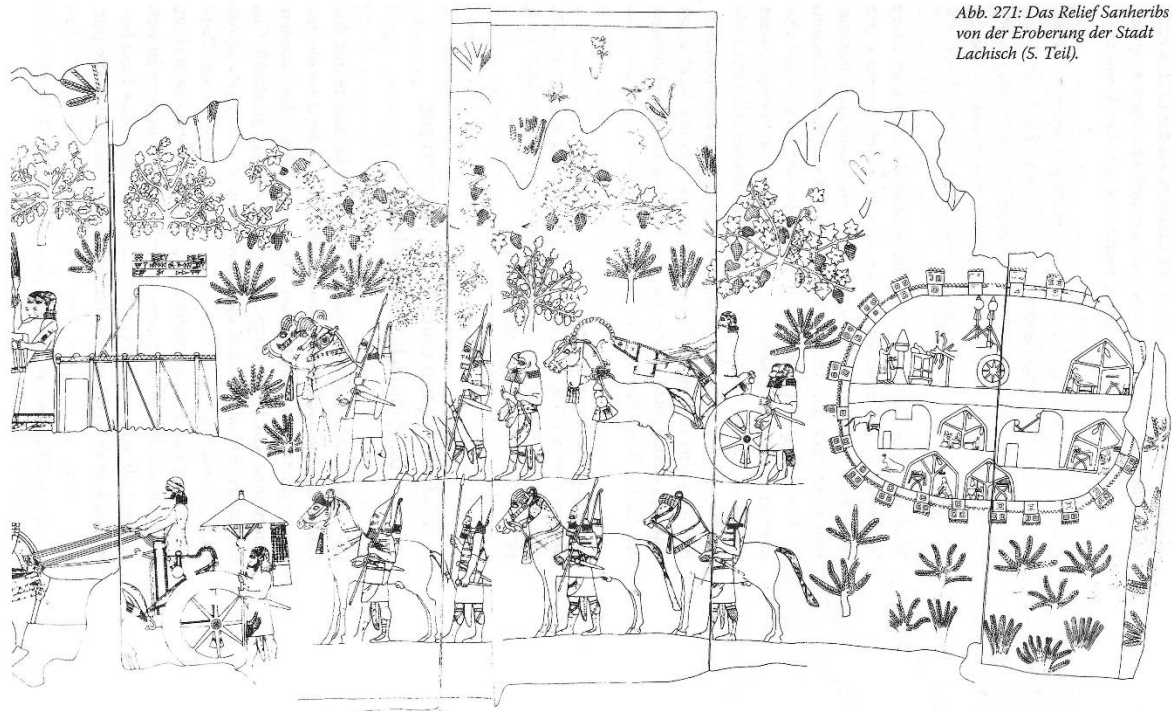
Figure 3.7: Drawing of the full sequence of the *Lachish Reliefs* (Vieweger 2012: 303-307)

However, this was not the last time the city fell during an episode of armed conflict. While the Babylonian conquest of the city was not as well documented by other contemporary sources, another destruction layer (Level II) is evident through archaeological excavations, dating to the conquest in 587/6 BCE (Vieweger 2012:308; Kreimerman 2022:47). More evidence about the destruction of Lachish and tell sites in general is provided in Chapter Four, as this may also point towards iconoclasm or subversive processes of change.

Figure 3.8: Panels of the *Lachish Reliefs* depicting plunder and captives being taken out of the fallen Judean city by Assyrian forces (Museum Number: 124908; Photos: The British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0; British Museum 2023f)

Periods of war and unrest were not rare, as is evident by the destruction layers at the tell sites. However, while archaeological evidence can point towards the destruction of a site, it cannot conclusively provide insight into the looting of a place upon its destruction: The removal of precious objects might have occurred either at the hands of the owners in an attempt to salvage their valuables or it might have been done by the looters who removed precious objects before burning a city (Mazar 2022:15). What can sometimes be noted is evidence of at least partial absence of valuable or symbolic objects, as well as the destruction of seemingly unimportant items that were left behind in a hurry or that were too large to be moved (May 2022:248). Of course, in the process of plundering a conquered settlement, the destruction of some objects likely also occurred, resulting in collateral damage. However, this is circumstantial evidence.

Contemporary written sources of a range of ancient Near Eastern societies such as the Assyrians, Egyptians, Hittites and Israelites among others have documented the clashes they engaged in. As part of many of these textual accounts of conquest, as well as pictorial information from sources such as the *Lachish Reliefs*, provide more details about their victories and losses. They typically also report triumphal processions with prisoners and loot brought along from a defeated territory. Some texts even recorded booty lists. In various instances, these spoils of war were presented to the rulers, gods and the public within their home territories, but it also becomes clear that the loot was used to pay soldiers' wages or to enrich the local economy. As a result, it is highly likely that acquiring booty from conquered territories comprised one of the main incentives for waging war (Trimm 2017:52-55, 316-345; Younger 1990). Therefore, it is evident that looting was not merely a byproduct of armed conflict, but one of the major reasons for going to war in first place.

This is also evident in the case of the Romans, who were notorious for their conquest and colonisation as they subjugated many territories under the rule of the Roman Empire. Upon returning to Rome, the Roman army and its generals often entered the city by means of a triumphal procession, showcasing the slaves and prisoners they had conquered. Hereby, they also brought home wagon loads of plunder, which they had looted from the subjugated territories. Prominent examples in this regard include Julius Caesar's conquest of Gaul, as well as his conquest of Asia Minor (Starr 1971:82-

84). Hence, the looting of occupied territories was a common occurrence that accompanied conquest.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Unlike the ancient Egyptian case discussed in Chapter Two, there is no definitive evidence indicating changes in and adaptations of tomb architecture in response to looting and theft in the ancient Levant. While tombs have been robbed and there is archaeological evidence pertaining to this, it is unclear when exactly these events occurred and if they relate to certain historical events or periods of economic decline and thus had a broader impact on society, thereby causing people to turn to other means of gaining income, such as plundering tombs for riches. At this stage, there appears to be insufficient archaeological data to support this notion. Thus, the potential effects of tomb robbing on burial design should be explored in greater depth in the future.

However, as was evident above, the ancient Levant comprised territories that were located at a crossroads between empires, which were important routes for trade and interaction. Hence, warfare and invasions frequently occurred as these were strategic territories that were sought after. As a result of these conquests, ancient cities were often plundered for war loot and then destroyed. Thus, looting and conquest were closely related in ancient times. Moreover, the conquering of an enemy city often also went beyond the mere looting of a place and often extended to the purposeful destruction of the cultural heritage of an enemy. This deliberate destruction, known as iconoclasm, that frequently accompanies warfare and the attempt to control conquered populations are aspects that are explored in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR
ANCIENT EVIDENCE OF DESTRUCTION, ICONOCLASM AND VANDALISM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The two previous chapters considered events of tomb robbing and looting in connection with conquests that are evident throughout the ancient Near East. However, closely related to the plundering and illicit trade of objects of meaning and value is the purposeful destruction of portable and nonportable cultural heritage in the form of vandalism or iconoclasm. According to Weissberg (2019:9), it is highly important to understand such occurrences in the past, as this may lead to a more 'nuanced understanding to our current moment in which the destruction of art and monuments … occupies critical space in civic discourse'. While the contemporary understanding and interpretation of imagery differ vastly from how they were perceived in the past and the meaning that was attached to them by ancient cultures, images have immense power. Visual representations are much more than 'merely' a form of art and the message sent by their destruction has the potential to have a lasting impact (Weissberg 2019:9-11). In this regard, iconoclasm can be defined as the 'intentional destruction of culturally significant images and objects', as well as texts (Weissberg 2019:9; May 2012:1). The 'breaking' of images is an international phenomenon that has been prevalent throughout history. However:

> Defining the cause of destruction is not an easy task, and in many cases, different explanations are proffered to account for a single destruction event. The sacking of a city by enemies is often taken as the default explanation for a destruction layer, although it is not an obvious explanation, since not all conquests ended in destruction and not every destruction means a conquest (Mazar 2022:7-8).

Therefore, destructive events do not always imply that an entire city was demolished. It could also have only been a partial destruction that focused on areas of socio-cultural significance. Moreover, the ruination of a place was not necessarily caused by external conquests, but could also have resulted from internal strife. Civil unrest within a community could have resulted due to the exploitation of a population group. Moreover, frustrations due to natural catastrophes such as drought or plagues and subsequent suffering 'could have led to riots and collapse of the traditional governmental structure and annihilation of symbols of power' (Mazar 2022:8).

However, not all damage to buildings, statues or reliefs was intentional or human made. It may also have occurred as a result of wear and tear or other natural causes such as environmental disasters such as earthquakes, or erosion over a course of time (Connor 2019; Mazar 2022). Therefore, distinguishing whether the damage to cultural heritage was accidental or intentional is essential.

The context within which a broken sculpture is found, it may provide more clarity on the circumstances of the destruction, allowing researchers to determine whether it was done intentionally. Within the archaeological record of the Near East, three types of damage resulting in the 'disappearance' of movable art and religious objects can be identified, namely 'exile, burial, and mutilation/destruction' (Ben-Tor 2006:8). The first, the 'exile' of statues or cult objects, relates to their pillaging and occasional restitution. Works of art have occasionally been excavated far removed from their places of origin, which has been noted in the archaeological record of the Near East (Ben-Tor 2006:8-9). Since 'exile' frequently includes the mutilation of the items, it is denoted as part of iconoclasm, but it is actually a combination of looting and purposeful vandalism and it will be discussed later in greater detail. Secondly, the burial of statues and cult objects is a phenomenon that has been recorded since the Neolithic period into the present. However, 'whether the motive for this practice was "positive" (intended to preserve, protect, or dispose of a damaged cult object in a dignified manner, as often attested in temple *favissae*) or "negative" (in "an attempt to nullify or de-sanctify its role", Peltenburg 1989:166) cannot in most cases be determined with certainty' (Ben-Tor 2006:9; Garfinkel 1994:178-180). Thus, the actual burial of statues and cultic objects may have been purposefully carried out to honour or protect them, possibly with the intention of retrieving them at a later stage (Ben-Tor 2006:10; Teeter 2011:54-55).

Finally, the deliberate mutilation of statues, reliefs, stelae or even entire structures often leads to their complete destruction. An indication of the intentional destruction of the representations and monuments of rulers would be their historical context. According to contemporary written or pictorial sources, there could be an indication if the reign of a historical figure was disputed, if the period of reign was fraught with conquest and political tensions or if it ended violently, among other reasons. Therefore, there may have been reasons for persons to carry out violent retaliation through iconoclastic actions (Suter 2012:74). When considering statues, protruding

parts are usually the 'most fragile and susceptible to breakage' (Connor 2019:283). However, when the damage coincides with those areas of statues that are considered to be symbolically valuable, such as noses and mouths, to receive nourishment and breath, or hands to receive offerings or holding symbols of power, and the remainder of a sculpture is completely intact, then it seems to be too much of a coincidence that only the areas that are symbolically valuable were damaged. This would then bring into question the eventuality of a statue having been accidentally damaged as a collateral of natural disasters and it would rather appear to be intentional abuse and defacement. This becomes even more apparent, when statues and reliefs, or stelae, have been damaged or fragmented in places that are not considered to be fragile or prone to accidental breakage (Connor 2019:283-284; Suter 2012:58). Similarly, systematic hack marks stemming from the blows of axes, hammers, chisels or other tools on works of art, symbols of power and architectural structures would be evidence of their purposeful mutilation. In addition, graffiti vandalising art and architecture may be a visible sign of abuse. In addition, these hack marks would have targeted areas of symbolic value, as these would be indicative that the systematically abusive actions were carried out with the intention to mar. Thus, there should be some kind of pattern or system to wilful damage (Ben-Tor 2006:11; Suter 2012:57-59, 71-74).[34] Hence, one could argue that the more random the destruction appears to be, the more unlikely it would seem that it was done intentionally.

With respect to the intention to destroy, there are different explanations for the deliberate destruction of building structures and related iconography. Understanding these motivations may also help to ascertain whether the damage was intentional. However, these motives could have been very diverse, ranging from 'attention-seeking, breaking the image's hold on the beholder's imagination, and damaging symbols of power' (Suter 2012:57). Archaeology and contemporary records can only partially shed light on the psychological, religious or political reasons for the purposeful annihilation of cultural heritage (Mazar 2022:8). Therefore, it is important to continue

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[34] Rulers of the ancient Near East would have been aware of the possibility that their statues or stelae as symbols of royal power could be deliberately mutilated or destroyed and therefore some deliberately avoided having reusable materials incorporated into their representations. The possibility of iconoclasm thus directly affected the material choices. In the case of Gudea of Lagash, of whom a rather large number of statues have survived, has an inscription located on one of his statues: 'This statue is neither applied with silver nor with lapis lazuli, nor with copper, tin, or bronze; nobody shall reuse (these materials) for (other) work; it is (exclusively) of diorite', which was a very durable and hard stone (Suter 2012:63).

searching for answers. In addition, the study of iconoclastic events that happened in antiquity has the potential to inform present-day discourse by gleaning insight into past socio-cultural, religious and political circumstances and the reasoning behind these actions.

Especially in the ancient Near East, where regions such as Egypt, the southern Levant and Mesopotamia were fought over throughout history, changing regimes brought about altered power dynamics, even within the same nation or dynasty. New rulers followed their own agendas as reflected in their use of iconography, and in their elimination thereof. However, conflicts not only between different states, but also between non-state parties, as is more common during recent events such as the violent and deliberate destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in Afghanistan and the destruction of monuments and sites in Syria by Da'esh or the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) whereby they used sledgehammers and explosives to wreak havoc, have again brought this topic to the forefront of public attention and scholarly investigations (May 2012:1-2; Mueller 2016:70-71; Terrill 2017; Turku 2018; Tugendhaft 2020). Therefore, the diverse manifestations of iconoclasm in antiquity are explored as part of this chapter to determine the deep roots of the destruction of cultural heritage. The research in this chapter combines a literary study, observations made during a study trip to archaeological sites in Egypt in September 2022 and the consideration of a selection of museum artefacts from the online catalogue of the British Museum in London and an in-person visit to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (including the 'Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung' and the 'Vorderasiatisches Museum') in February 2023, to view some of the actual objects mentioned in the literature, as conclusive evidence. In this chapter, ancient Egyptian evidence will again be considered separately because of the high concentration of archaeological heritage *in situ*, followed by an investigation of iconoclasm that was prevalent throughout antiquity in the southern Levant and Mesopotamia.

4.2   ICONOCLASM IN ANCIENT EGYPT

In ancient Egypt, destruction often formed part of the process of creating something new: to craft a sculpture or relief image, a comparatively violent process was required to break down the necessary raw materials:

To create a statue the stone was hammered and chiselled from its earthly home, then cut and shaped into its new form. Gold was boiled and scalded in a cauldron, pigments were ground with pestle and mortar. Yet the result of such activity was to provide the new form with all the raw elements used therein so as to add the *Ba*, the empowered personality, that would reside in the image. Thus, the process, although violent, was not negative, but transformative (Bryan 2012:363).

While mummification served to preserve the human remains so that the life force would be able to find its vessel again in the afterlife, the image was a lasting representation. As such, it was considered to have even more power than the living person who was represented. The divine power or spirit was considered to last after death and it would be able to live within the mummified body, or another 'representative vessel' such as a mummy mask or statue or another image of the deceased person, which 'could be activated to host a supernatural power' (Bleiberg 2019:27; Bryan 2012:364).

This power could be either divine or the soul of a deceased human who had become divine at death. The occupied image was a meeting point between the supernatural and the terrestrial. It was also a physical body enabling such powers to act in our material world. Without an image, supernatural forces could not intervene in events on earth. The powers of these images could be activated through rituals, and power could also be deactivated through deliberate damage (Bleiberg 2019:27-28).

Thus, two- or three-dimensional artistic representations could be animated through ritual acts and were considered to be resting places for divinity (Bleiberg 2019:28). In this regard, sculptures and reliefs that were considered to contain divine power comprised central elements in the process of conducting ritual worship and could also receive offerings, whereas representations of deceased persons could continue to make offerings to the depicted deities even in the afterlife (Bleiberg 2019:29-30). Thus, to allow the spirit of a deceased person to last or the power of a deity to be able to act and interact on earth, it was necessary to preserve the human remains, and/or visual representations of an individual or deity. For this reason, ancient Egyptians 'both preserved the human body and its imagined embodiments and also attempted to destroy both when a threat was perceived …. Repelling, blocking, and damaging the vessels containing any hostile spirit was the Egyptian response' (Bryan 2012:364; Ikram 2015:23; Ritner 2012:395). Therefore, mutilations of mummified bodies, such as dismembered limbs and severed heads, were not uncommon and have been encountered since Predynastic times (ca. 4000 BCE). The purpose of decapitating and dismembering mummies was to restrict their vitality or movement in the afterlife by preventing the spirit of the deceased from roaming around, completely killing the

person or 'depriving it of power' (Bryan 2012:364-365; Ritner 2012:395). In many cases, upon the excavation of ancient Egyptian graves, it became apparent that the graves had been disturbed not only as a result of tomb robberies, but also deliberately soon after the interment. According to Bryan (2012:365), the 'dismemberment was done by someone who knew well the placement of the body in the ground'. Other researchers suggest that the mistreatment of human remains could have already occurred before the burial took place, which would be indicative of hostility and punishment towards the person who had been buried (Bryan 2012:365).

The leap from the mutilation of human bodies to their imagery depictions is thus not far: 'what could be created could also be damaged' (Bryan 2012:363). As such, the destruction of images was carried out for different reasons, reflecting 'specific political, religious, personal, and even criminal motivations' (Bleiberg 2019:27). When considering the damage to ancient Egyptian statues and relief artwork, certain patterns become evident. The mutilation of ancient Egyptian artwork can be attributed to two main periods: iconoclastic attacks that were contemporary to Pharaonic antiquity, and the early Christian era, when the ancient Egyptian belief system declined. These patterns, may indicate 'when the damage occurred and the identities of the perpetrators' (Bleiberg 2019:27).

Moreover, it makes sense to consider the wall decorations within temples and tombs to determine the severity of damage based on the location and type of iconography within built structures. Temple decorations occurred on pylons, walls and columns of the religious monuments. Both the raised relief (*bas*) and the sunken relief (*en creux*) were encountered. However, to create a *bas* relief was much more time-consuming, intricate and expensive. It required much more effort to create a bas relief, as the entire background of the raised figures had to be removed for the images or hieroglyphic text to stand out. Therefore, it was a type of temple decoration that was generally used to a lesser degree than the sunken ones and it was more frequently encountered on inner surfaces. The *en creux* relief was much simpler in comparison. It was frequently used to decorate the outer surfaces of temples, where the 'shadows helped define its forms in bright sunlight' (Wilkinson 2000:44).
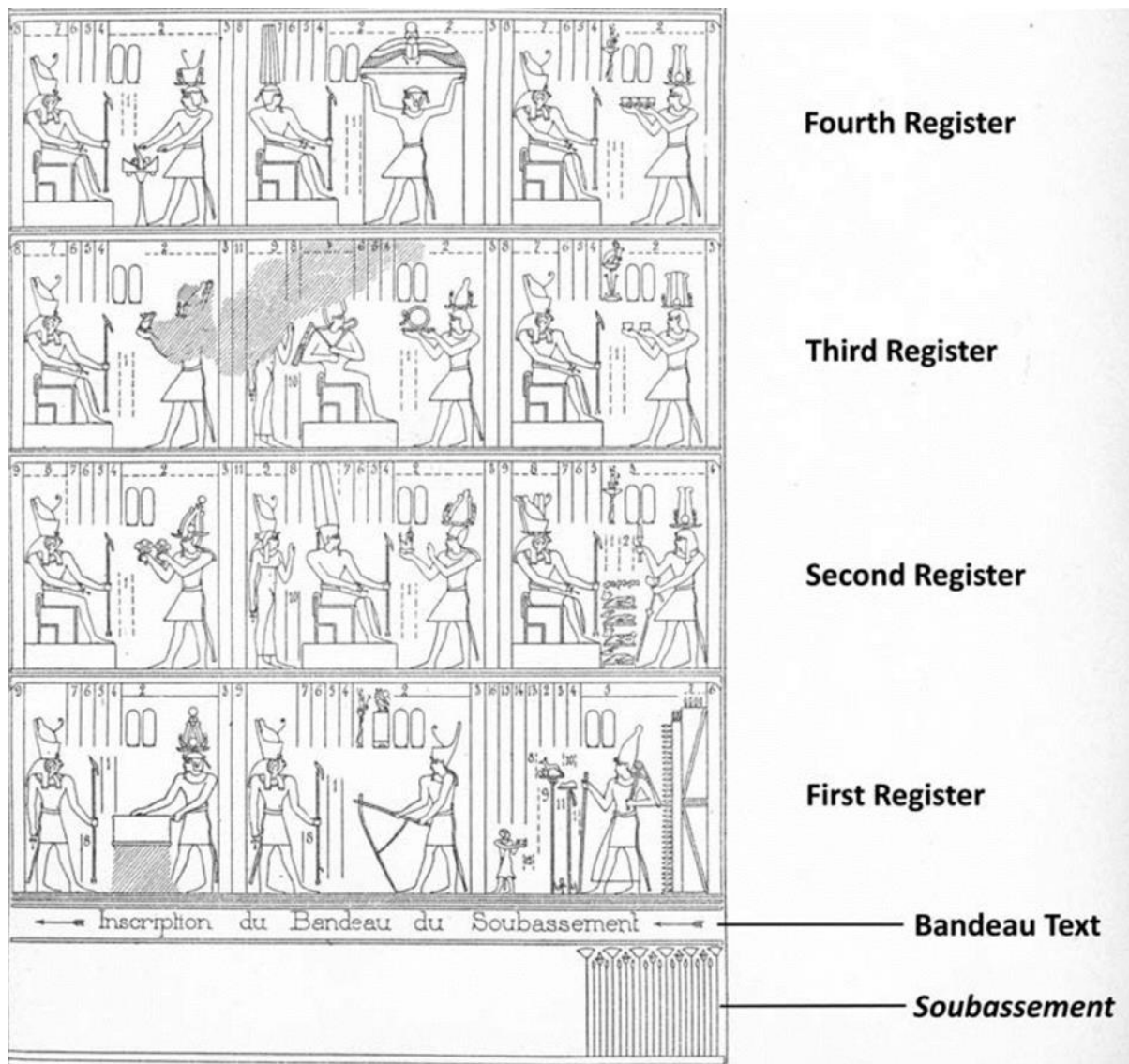
Figure 4.1: Levels of Egyptian temple decorations (Wong 2016:95)

These carves scenes, which are located on the interior and exterior, used to boast bright colours in antiquity. At the present, much of the vivid paint has been lost to the wear and tear of the elements (Teeter 2011:41). Relief temple decorations usually consisted of several levels, starting with the lowermost *soubassement* or bottommost base of the wall with its recurring decorative motifs (approximately 1.5m in height), followed by a row of *bandeau* text. There are usually a minimum of two to a maximum of four registers of images and texts (each measuring approximately 2m in height) located above the *bandeau* text, as is evident in Figure 4.1 above (Wong 2016:94-95).

Figure 4.2: Levels of temple decorations with less severe mutilation at upper registers as evident at the Temple of Edfu (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

The figures in the first register are already located relatively high up and are not comfortably within reach. An aid might already have been necessary to reach the top section or the faces of some of the figures there, or by means of the further range of a pickaxe or another tool. Therefore, it is not surprising that the most severe damage usually occurred at more easily accessible lower areas (see Figure 4.2 above). However, while height can be considered as a 'limiting factor', sometimes the vandals were especially industrious and used ladders or scaffolding to reach higher levels to create extensive damage, as is evident in Figures 4.3 and 4.4 below (Wong 2016:94-95, 110-111). In addition, most damage occurred in the areas of a temple that was well-illuminated or out in the open (Wong 2016:97). Therefore, Wong (2016:98) deduced that the destruction evident in Egyptian temples was largely due to 'iconoclasts valuing accessibility and practicality above other factors'. Hence, accessibility in terms of height and lighting can be considered limiting factors.

Figure 4.3: Interior court at the Temple of Edfu with different levels of temple decoration evident (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 4.4: Purposeful mutilation at the topmost register would have required ladders or scaffolding to be reached (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Ancient Egyptians were aware that the destruction of sculptures and reliefs was able to hinder worship and could cause a disturbance to the resting place of the spirits of deceased humans and divine powers, and they accordingly made provisions. Some rulers made decrees to punish perpetrators, who were caught in acts of iconoclasm at temples or tombs. Similar to the punishments for tomb robbing mentioned in Chapter Two, the penalties for damage to iconography were harsh. These ranged from the loss of property and an inheritance to the denial of a proper burial to execution or divine retribution through curses and repercussions for the descendants of the perpetrators (Bleiberg 2019:31-32; Ritner 2012:396-397). However, despite the threat of punishment, iconoclasm continued to occur for numerous reasons. In fact, iconoclasm has consistently occurred since the Early Dynastic period in ancient Egypt (Bleiberg 2019:33; Connor 2019:281):

> [There] is good evidence that the practice of damaging images of the human form – as either protection from, or an attack on, perceived enemies – remains common. As late as the Roman period, the Greek historian Plutarch could describe the mutilation of the body of the god Osiris by his brother Seth as the ultimate way to disempower an Egyptian god. Similar attacks on images continued into the Late Antique world of Christian Egypt, sometimes even imitating Seth's attack on Osiris. Attacking a human image was a deeply entrenched ancient Egyptian method for dealing with an enemy (Bleiberg 2019:33; my inclusion).

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Therefore, the archaeological context in which evidence of iconoclasm occurs, provides insight into the circumstances in which the damage took place and enriches the scientific understanding of ancient Egyptian society. The archaeological context thus remains essential to determine when the damage to cultural heritage occurred, which elements or images were targeted and whether the mutilation was meaningful and intentional (Connor 2019:298). Therefore, when analysing the elements of statues that were damaged, or the areas of wall reliefs and frescoes that were targeted by mutilation, this may further indicate the motivation behind the acts of iconoclasm.

4.2.1 Hieroglyph erasure

Iconoclasm was not only reserved for iconography, but also exceeded onto textual records. This is especially evident within ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, which comprise a pictographic writing system whereby the words and signs are intricately linked. Hereby, images represent full words or syllables. Hence, by erasing an image, either an entire word or a part of a word could be obliterated. This also meant that names, which were spelled out by means of hieroglyphic symbols, were particularly vulnerable to destruction (Ritner 2012:396). To ancient Egyptians, iconoclastic damage to a written name was considered catastrophic, as 'the name itself constituted … an image in which the spirit might reside' (Ritner 2012:396). Therefore, the full or partial erasure of a name inscribed in hieroglyphics was extremely problematic (see Figure 4.5). This was part of the reason for incorporating protective curses into private tombs since the Old Kingdom: Their purpose was not only to ward against tomb robberies, but also to protect figures and texts at the burial site and the tomb owner from the deletion of his or her name in case of acts of revenge that resulted in *damnatio memoriae* or tomb usurpation (Ritner 2012:396-397; Ikram 2015:194-196, 198; Bleiberg 2019:61). In addition, the usurpation of temples and other monuments became a common practice by the Ramesside period. To hinder this from happening, the sunken or *en creux* reliefs were 'carved at great depth in order to discourage or make impossible the recurving of the stone by future kings' (Wilkinson 2000:44). However, if the combination of hieroglyphs specifically spelling out a name was the target of iconoclastic damage, it 'strongly suggests that the attack took place during the Pharaonic period when hieroglyphic writing was still understood' (Bleiberg 2019:61). However, by the third century CE, Egyptian priests themselves no longer

mastered the interpretation and reading of hieroglyphic texts. Since the ability to master the hieroglyphic language was lost, iconoclasts from the Coptic church would not necessarily have noticed the close correlation between the images and the language. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the early religious iconoclasts would not necessarily have been able to understand the texts but rather would have perceived them as images (Wong 2016:101, 104).

Figure 4.5: Hieroglyph erasure at the tomb of Amenemhat (Tomb 2) at Beni Hasan (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

With respect to the obliteration of hieroglyphic texts, most of the destruction has been recorded at the *bandeau* text and at the *soubassement* level (see Figure 4.1), which was more readily accessible. The texts in the registers above were targeted less often. However, if it did occur, the lower parts of scenes in the bottommost registers typically suffered most of the attacks. Typically, hieroglyphs located on well-lit and easily accessible enclosure walls were more frequently destroyed, whereas those in unlit interior or darker areas of the temple were spared. Therefore, lighting and accessibility likely played a role in the erasure of hieroglyphs (Wong 2016:103-104).

Figure 4.6: Hieroglyph erasure at Edfu Temple (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Nevertheless, when hieroglyphs were indeed targeted by iconoclasts, certain signs were more likely to be destroyed than others: animal shapes such as birds or anthropomorphic signs were frequently targeted, whereas symbols of snakes appear to have often been overlooked or spared (see Figure 4.6 above), possibly owing to their inconspicuous size or appearance (Wong 2016:104).

4.2.2 Damage to human figures

In addition to hieroglyphs, images of human figures were frequently targeted by iconoclasts to 'take away their power to see, hear, breathe, speak, and walk' (Bleiberg 2019:34). As mentioned above, statues and other imagery were considered to be imbued with divine power, the *ba*, in ancient Egypt. As such, they were 'powerful, meaningful, active agents' and 'active as substitutes of the represented individuals or entities, and were subjects of rituals' (Connor 2019:281; Ikram 2015:23-31). However, an artistic creation that can be made to come alive can also come to an end. By mutilating human images, the perpetrators intended to impede their potential to exert their magical power so that they could no longer act in this world (Connor 2019:298). Thus, the final stage in the life of statues and other representations would be their 'death', which was caused by ritually killing or de-activating the images. By means of this very deliberate and strong action, images were mutilated in areas that would have been symbolically vital in an intact depiction. Such an act of defacement could only have been done with the 'intention to shock, to put an end to a cultic activity and to symbolically erase specific records of the past' (Connor 2019:281; Bleiberg 2019).

Indeed, it appears that statues and human figures in reliefs were often treated in the same way that vital areas in a real human body would be targeted: 'broken, disjointed, decapitated' (Connor 2019:298). Hence, it was not necessarily the entire figure which was hacked away, as the mutilation was often focused only on certain body parts of the images. Since many sculptures have been found, where the torsos are headless, and as many separate heads are located in sculpture collections, it seems that decapitation was a form of mutilation that frequently occurred. Concurrently, the beheading of sculptures seems to have been very common (see Figure 4.7). The head of a figure is an important body part and as such it is a 'radical and symbolic way of killing and depriving the individual of his identity' (Connor 2019:288; Bleiberg 2019).

In addition, in modern times, it appears to be easier to transport a part of a looted statue that remains expressive and indicative of its value. Therefore, 'a head is much easier to transport, to hide and to sell than a complete statue, and remains a very valuable piece' (Connor 2019:288; Suter 2012:71). This may also have been the case in antiquity, which would explain the multitude of decapitated statues. However, intentional hack marks were rarely found at the necks of human figures in relief depictions, and rather focused on the face – at least, this is the case regarding the relief depictions encountered at Edfu and Dendera (Wong 2016:104).

Figure 4.7: The severed head of Hatshepsut at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Concurring with the decapitation of statues, the eradication of facial features in all ancient Egyptian iconography was the form of mutilation that occurred most regularly. Hack marks are frequently centred on the eyes, nose and ears (see Figures 4.8, 4.9, 4.11 and 4.12 below), possibly because the human face is a very prominent and expressive feature (Wong 2016:104; Bleiberg 2019:42-45). In cases where the nose and mouth were damaged, the intention may have been to 'make the owner of the tomb blind and unable to breathe, while the robbers were plundering the tomb' (Connor 2019:288).
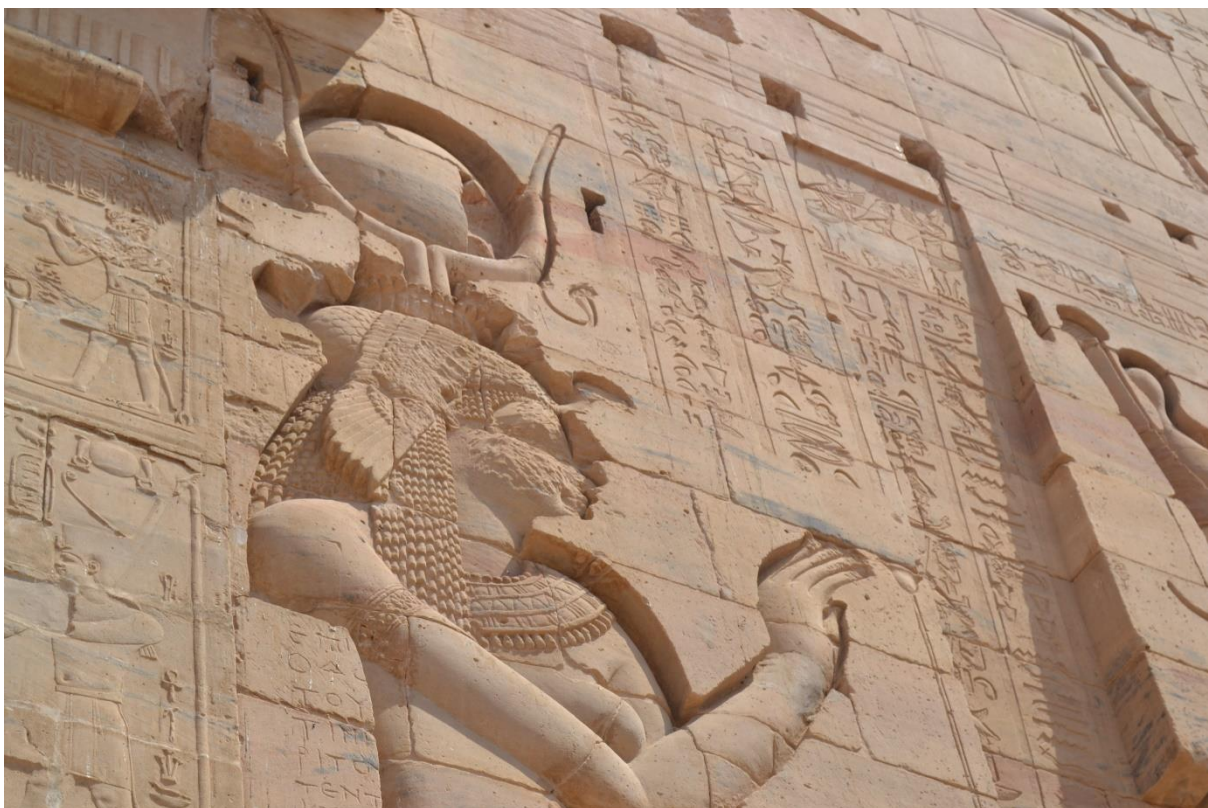
Figure 4.8: Chisel marks on the face of the goddess Isis at the first pylon of the Great Temple of Isis at Philae (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

In statues and reliefs, symbols of royalty and divine power such as the *uraeus*-cobra or the striped *nemes*-headdress, a feature typically only worn by the pharaoh, or the royal beard, were common targets of iconoclasts (Bleiberg 2019:42; Connor 2019:288). While the higher position of the crown or headdress in a relief depiction may have made it a less practical target for iconoclasm, it was still attacked by some iconoclasts (Wong 2016:104). The targeting of royal insignia was also a common occurrence in ancient Mesopotamia, as is evident later in this chapter.

Figure 4.9: Chisel marks on the limbs and face of a deity (Horus?) in the Edfu Temple (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 4.10: Mutilation of both hands and one foot at a pillar of the Great Temple of Isis at Philae (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

In addition, the upper and lower limbs of human and nonhuman iconographic representations frequently show evidence of iconoclasm as is evident in Figures 4.9 and 4.10 above, as well as 4.11 below (Wong 2016:105-107). When considering iconography especially in reliefs, the images frequently portray scenes of deceased humans – especially members of the royal family and other elite individuals – who provide offerings to the gods. According to ancient Egyptian tradition, it was customary to present offerings and prayers with the left hand and for deities to receive them with the right hand. However, when exactly these elements in the depictions were damaged, it became impossible for the depicted persons or deities to give or receive ritual goods or nourishment, thus hindering the ritual worship from taking place (Bleiberg 2019:30-31, 56-57, 63). Attacking limbs such as hands and arms, and feet and legs through chiselling these features away or by breaking these elements in statues, rendered the depicted individuals unable to move and act. Hence, different forms of damage and foci of destruction may provide insight into the purpose of the iconoclasts.

Figure 4.11: Mutilation of the faces and limbs of deities and a person at Kom Ombo Temple, although notably the *ankh* and *was* sceptre symbols being poured out by the deities over the person remained intact (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 4.12: Mutilation of the faces of the goddess Hathor at the birth house of the Philae Temple Complex possibly due to her nonhuman appearance (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 4.13: Iconoclasm of full figures at the first pylon of the Great Temple of Isis at Philae (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Figure 4.14: Erasure of full figures from the left to the centre at the outer wall of the back side of the Great Temple of Isis at Philae (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Depending on the level of industriousness and the accessibility of the relief images in the lower or upper registers at temples, chisel marks might even be evident beyond

the limbs to extend to the remainder of the human figures (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14 above) (Wong 2016:107). In addition, owing to their nonhuman appearance, animal-headed deities were also often targeted by iconoclasts, as shown in Figures 4.9, 4.11 and 4.12 above. Hence, these figures might have been singled out for religiously-motivated mutilation in an attempt to destroy pagan depictions (Wong 2016:109).

Interestingly, discrimination on the basis of gender is not evident at most temples (Wong 2016:108). However, iconoclastic castration should be considered separately. At the Chapel of Min, located at the Edfu Temple Complex, 'phalli were gouged out in their entirety, leaving a deep, distinctive gash unlike the small and dense chisel blows made by iconoclasts' (Wong 2016:116). This is unlike meticulous hack marks recorded elsewhere at Edfu. Therefore, the phalli could have been 'harvested' as ingredients for aphrodisiacs and were not necessarily attacked for the same reasons as the figures in the remainder of the temple. In addition, castrations of the depictions of Min seem to have been restricted to the lower registers (Wong 2016:113-116).

While most chisel marks have been centred on erasing anthropomorphic images, there are also some unusual mutilations. Sometimes, it is not clear what the intended target was, because of the widespread scattering of hack marks. In other cases, inanimate objects were the subject of iconoclastic attacks. These include plants, sceptres or cartouches (Wong 2016:116-118). However, interestingly, the symbol of the *ankh*, also when the sign is held by anthropomorphic figures, seems to have largely escaped attempts at mutilation (see Figure 4.11). Some researchers consider the *ankh* as a forerunner of the Coptic cross and maintain that this may be the reason that it was mostly spared (Wong 2016:118-119). This aspect may offer further insight into the motivations that led to the deliberate mutilation of depictions in the form of statues and reliefs.

4.2.3 Destruction due to looting and war

As mentioned earlier, plundering of tombs and iconoclasm are closely related issues. In the process of robbing graves, the looters simultaneously attacked and harmed the associated cultural heritage. Some of the damage may have occurred as collateral from tomb robbing, whereas other vandalism would have been intentional. 'Perhaps

in order to avoid the curse of the tomb owner, statues from the funerary chapel or the serdab were often found intentionally smashed, possibly by the robbers' (Connor 2019:287; Bleiberg 2019:62-63).

Hence, the reasoning behind the mutilation of iconography in grave chambers could have been symbolic or material. The former, namely the mutilation of imagery representations or of hieroglyphic names, might have occurred to hinder the spirits or divine powers of the tomb owners, which imbued funerary statues and reliefs, from seeking vengeance and '[rendering] them unable to act' (Connor 2019:288; Bleiberg 2019:62-63; my inclusion). Alternatively, referring to the latter, the mutilation of statues may have occurred for more practical reasons, namely to pry precious stones and metals from statues, which had been used as inlays or ornamental decorations. The economic value of the raw materials could have been sufficient for committing the acts of mutilation to extricate these resources (Connor 2019:288). Furthermore, the reason for mutilation could also have been a combination of the two factors: hacking away the inlays to extract the raw materials could merely have been an added benefit to rendering the statue unable to act in this world. Regardless of the actual reasoning, the damage caused by the looting of graves would have been intentional in nature (Connor 2019:288).

Moreover, damage as a result of violent incursions is also likely, whereby damages would have occurred as a result of acquiring and removing war loot. When statues were carried away as war trophies, they may have experienced some damage. In addition, the cultural heritage of the conquered enemy may have been purposefully damaged as a sign of superiority over an enemy. During the Second Intermediate period (ca. 1700-1600 BCE), the kingdom of Kerma was very powerful and sent military incursions into Egypt. During this period, the sanctuary of Heqaib at Elephantine was violently vandalised. Subsequently, it was 'buried and covered with successive levels of occupation, which sealed its ruins and mutilated statues' (Connor 2019:294). During the same period, the 'kings of Kerma were buried under large tumuli, together with sacrificed human bodies, *bucrania* and fragments of Egyptian statues' (Connor 2019:294). The fragmented remains of Egyptian statues located within Sudanese royal graves may indicate that these were brought back to the

kingdom of Kerma during a military raid in Egypt and could imply a sense of victory over an enemy (Connor 2019:294).

4.2.4 Destruction due to construction?

Currently, it is a common problem that archaeology must give way to building projects and modern societal needs. This is also one of the greatest problems prevalent in Egypt today, whereby archaeological heritage is salvaged by means of rescue excavations or it is lost due to urban encroachment, uncontrolled development or agricultural production (Timothy 2011:214-216; Hanna 2013; Hanna 2015). However, human pressures on cultural heritage due to construction, agricultural production and the like can also be traced back to antiquity. Evidently, very few early Egyptian temples have survived. Most of these were dedicated to deities and were not mortuary temples of the pharaohs. The latter rather appear to have been 'dismantled by later pharaohs seeking convenient sources of building stone' (Shaw 2003:17). Therefore, pre-existing graves and other structures were destroyed, levelled or buried to facilitate the construction of later structures. In parts, the existing building materials or spolia would have been reused. This was especially evident in the continued use and development of a necropolis and may even reflect a form of official proscription. The mortuary landscapes at Saqqara, Dahshur and Giza, among others, were known to have been extended over time, thereby encroaching upon earlier burials, temples, workers' houses and the like. As a result, newer buildings were erected over previously-existing structures, or older structures were sealed off and buried or broken down to make way for the new developments (Arnold 1991; Lehner 1985; Lehner 2002; Haase 2006:3; Arnold 2006).

Foundations of earlier structures, fragments of building components and wall decorations are often the only remains pointing to the earlier use of a burial landscape. This is the case at Dahshur, where a large *mastaba*, located at the eastern mouth of the wadi, was identified through magnetometry. Owing to the structure's typology and related ceramic finds, it could be dated to the Third or Fourth Dynasty, which predates the other Fifth and Sixth Dynasty tombs that are also located in the wadi. In addition, the find possibly predates the construction of the Red Pyramid and its causeway. Initial research indicated that the mudbricks of this *mastaba* had been systematically

dismantled until the bottommost layers, with only the *taffl*-filling of the superstructure still *in situ*. The cult chapel had also not survived. Therefore, the researchers concluded that it comprised the remains of a purposefully dismantled structure (Alexanian et al 2006:28-29). Alexanian, Becker, Müller and Seidlmayer (2006:29) even consider that, owing to the conception of the Red Pyramid, this mastaba might no longer have been acceptable and would thus have been purposefully dismantled.

In addition, Old Kingdom graves were buried and other related structures were possibly demolished for the construction of Amenemhat II's pyramid complex at Dahshur (Rees 2022:41). The terrain to the northeast of the pyramid was surveyed in 1997, which provided a confusing picture. To gain insight into the confusing layers evident in that area, two test trenches were excavated there in 2002, and the periphery of the pyramid complex could be identified. In this context, to construct the terraces and extend the platform for Amenemhat II's pyramid complex to the north, a cemetery dating to the Old Kingdom was buried (Alexanian 2006:30).

Similarly, two Third Dynasty shaft graves were excavated in the western court of the tomb complex of Pharaoh Senusret III (also called Senwosret III or Sesostris III) at Dahshur. One of these shafts contained two alabaster sarcophagi that had a similar typology to those found eastwards underneath the Step Pyramid in burial shaft V, allowing for the dating of the shaft graves to the Third Dynasty. 'The rationale behind the placement of these shafts is unknown, but one can speculate that they belonged to an undiscovered structure of some importance, hidden under the debris of the northwest corner of the Senwosret III complex' (Arnold 2002:107-108; Alexanian et al 2006:30). Furthermore, it would be worth speculating whether the earlier structures still existed or were at least partially visible at the time of the construction of Senwosret III's pyramid. If this was the case, the choice of this site for the construction of his own tomb complex would be questionable: 'One may, therefore, tentatively suggest that Senwosret III levelled a (royal?) Old Kingdom cemetery to increase the building space for his own complex' (Arnold 2002:108). In the meantime, Fourth Dynasty (Old Kingdom) *mastaba* graves were also uncovered, which had been partially dismantled due to the northward expansion of the pyramid complex during the 12th Dynasty (Middle Kingdom) (Arnold 2006:44-45; Rees 2022:41). Further examples of Old

Kingdom burials making way for the construction or expansion of later 12th Dynasty burials are also evident at Dahshur (Rees 2022:41).

A similar trend might have occurred in various other burial grounds of ancient Egypt, as their planning changed and they would have expanded over time. However, it is unclear, whether the levelling and destruction of earlier graves and temples would have occurred purposefully in an attempt at official proscription or simply because they were in the way of later construction projects. This aspect requires further research.

4.2.5 Political iconoclasm or personal vendetta?

Ancient Egypt reflects one of the richest archaeological records, enriching the present-day understanding of the past. Not only the monuments and physical artefacts that were left behind, but also the writing in which the civilisation recorded itself (as is evident by means of hieratic papyri or hieroglyphs carved into the walls of monuments) informs research and assists academics in comprehending the complex dynamics that were at play in ancient times. However, sometimes, the absence of information about a ruler and the people associated with that pharaoh also reveals information. Damage to iconography or hieroglyphic text, which is very obvious and visual, seems calculated to make the public 'remember to forget' a disgraced individual who has been condemned for political, personal or even religious reasons or 'at least maintain a very particular kind of memory of the individuals subjected to this punishment' (Kristensen 2015:670). Hence, textual references and images of some individuals were erased from monuments. This was done to 'incapacitate the representations of these persons and to render them inactive' (Connor 2019:288). Thus, politically motivated image destruction can be explained by the ancient Egyptian belief that 'the destruction of an image equalled the death of its referent' (Wong 2016:93).

However, politically motivated iconoclasm went beyond the killing of the magical spirit inhabiting images to 'cancel their memory', reminding the public that the remembrance of these individuals should be shunned, thus resulting in a very visual form of social amnesia and a 'systematic proscription': a conscious forgetting (Connor 2019:288). It is generally accepted that with the change in the rulership of a country, the political agenda and focus of that regime will also change. Personal animosity between

successive rulers may also have added fuel to the fire. In this context, various instances in antiquity are apparent when Egyptian pharaohs wanted to eliminate the records of the regime, achievements and even the existence of their predecessors. Thus, iconoclasm was carried out to suit the personal, political or propagandistic agenda of later rulers.

With respect to social amnesia and the death of the memory of the person an image refers to, the Latin phrase of *damnatio memoriae* comes to mind.[35] The intention of the perpetrator is to 'erase all records and sometimes the tangible works of an individual from history', which results from 'criminal or heretical acts of the individual attacked or the desire of the individual's successors to discount the targeted individual's legitimacy and to enhance their own legitimation at either the personal or dynastic level' (Wilkinson 2016a:335). For example, the temples of monuments constructed and sanctioned by an individual would be attacked to varying degrees of destruction ranging from their 'total destruction at worst, to selective destruction or, where usurpation was involved, the careful reattribution of the monuments through replacement of the individual's names, titles, or images' (Wilkinson 2016a:335).

4.2.5.1   *Hatshepsut*

A case whereby this issue can be illustrated is that of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut (see Figures 4.7 and 4.15). As the daughter of Thutmose I, Hatshepsut 'seized the opportunity to inherit the crown from her brother, Thutmose II, instead of allowing it to pass directly to her nephew and stepson, Thutmose III' (Shaw 2003:136). At the time Hatshepsut ascended the throne, following the early passing of her husband-brother Thutmose II, his son was a minor at only nine years of age. Following the queen's passing, Thutmose III then aimed to legitimise his own rule, thereby clearing the path of legitimacy for the reign of his own son, Amenhotep II, by portraying a clear line of succession (Bryan 2012:366; Bleiberg 2019:34; Cooney 2018:99-159).

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[35] *Damnatio memoriae* translates as the 'condemnation of memory' (Wilkinson 2016a:335).
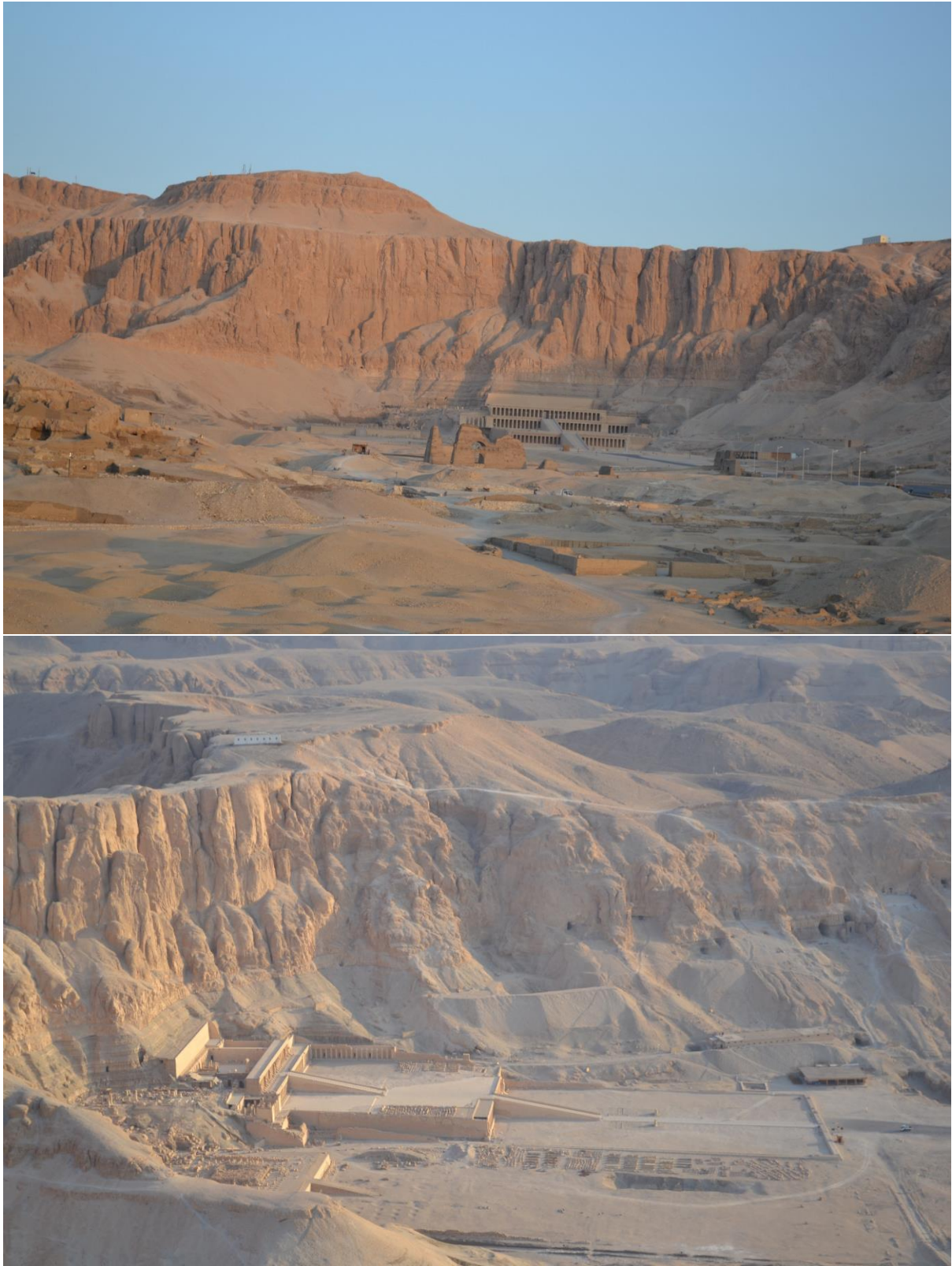
Figure 4.15: The mortuary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

In this context, Thutmose III appears to have ordered the desecration of many of Hatshepsut's monuments and temples to systematically erase evidence of the Queen's reign. Consequently, Hatshepsut's statues were removed from her mortuary

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temple at Deir el-Bahri (Figure 4.15). They were intentionally mutilated and discarded in two large holes before her temple: the decommissioned statues were decapitated and the limbs and the *uraei*, as symbols of royalty adorning the headdress, and the royal beards were mutilated. Interestingly, the facial features of the queen were generally spared, although her royal status was evidently attacked (see Figure 4.7) (Bryan 2012:366; Connor 2019:288-289; Bleiberg 2019:34-37). Such ritual deactivation may have served to hinder the queen's spirit from seeking revenge (Bryan 2012:369). While the names of the queen and the inscriptions on the statues remained intact, this was not the case with regard to the relief texts in the temple, where Hatshepsut's name was replaced with that of her predecessors Thutmose I or II, effectively usurping her monuments (Bryan 2012:368; Connor 2019:289). However, at her undecorated tomb KV20 in the Valley of the Kings, there is no concrete evidence of wilful destruction (Wilkinson 2016a:336).

4.2.5.2   Akhenaten and Ay

Similarly, the reign of the so-called heretic pharaoh was highly contested upon his death and later rulers chose to eliminate evidence of this period of great upheaval. This is because Akhenaten made some radical changes during his reign, that can in themselves be considered iconoclastic (1352-1336 BC):

> [He] changed his name from Amenhotep ['Amun is content'] to Akhenaten ['glory of the sun-disk']; and he began to construct a new capital city called Akhetaten ['horizon to the Aten'] at the site now known as Amarna in Middle Egypt. This newly founded settlement was evidently intended to replace both Memphis and Thebes as the religious and administrative center of the country. The site has given its name to the brief period in Egyptian history [about twenty years] consisting of Akhenaten's reign and that of his ephemeral successor, Smenkhkara: the Amarna Period (Shaw 2003:150-151; my inclusion).

As is evident above, Akhenaten was initially linked to the state-god Amun. However, he abandoned the polytheistic belief and instead propagated the belief in a single deity, namely the sun-god Aten as represented by the sun-disc. With the construction of temples dedicated to the Aten and the change of his name, he commenced a process of religious change, which was considered very radical at the time (Shaw 2003:152-153; Bryan 2012:369-373). Hence, the rule of Akhenaten was closely tied to the new monotheistic cult of the Aten that he and his royal wife Queen Nefertiti introduced. Moreover, with the proclamation of the worship of the Aten as the sole god, the '[worship] of the former chief god of the pantheon, Amun, was suspended,

and his name was removed from many monuments' (Bleiberg 2019:37; my inclusion). This means that as part of this reformative process, he eventually proscribed the entire Egyptian pantheon of gods apart from the Aten and a few closely related deities who were also associated with the sun cult. Eventually, the pharaoh ordered the names of other deities to be removed from existing temples and their cult iconography to be destroyed (Shaw 2003:152-153; Bryan 2012:372-373). Thus, Akhenaten commenced a proscriptive iconoclastic campaign 'against the traditional gods, in particular Amun' to have the name 'Amun' deleted from monuments and all related statues (Connor 2019:289; Bryan 2012:370).

Together with a new belief system, a new settlement originated at a site that was considered 'untarnished by the cult centres of any other gods' (Shaw 2003:153; Bryan 2012:372). Archaeological evidence points to the fact that the city was merely occupied by a single generation and seems to have been abandoned approximately fifteen years after it was founded. It was not levelled or rebuilt by later generations. It was simply abandoned after the rule of the pharaoh ended (Shaw 2003:151-152).

Figure 4.16: The entrance to the unfinished tomb that Akhenaten had commissioned at Tell el-Amarna (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Upon his death, Akhenaten intended that he and his family should be buried in tombs that were constructed in the royal wadi at Akhetaten (also known as Tell el-Amarna, see Figure 4.16 above). However, the tombs were never completed. In addition, the aftermath of the Amarna Period was characterised by violence: it is indeed 'poorly documented, precisely because of the extensive iconoclasm that occurred after Tutankhamun restored the cult of Amun and … abandoned Akhenaten's capital at Tell el-Amarna for the traditional capitals at Thebes and Memphis' (Bleiberg 2019:38). Consequently, there is much confusion concerning the fate of the royal family of Amarna and some researchers believe that the remains in tomb KV55 in the Valley of the Kings may be the last resting place of the heretic pharaoh and his immediate family (Shaw 2003:160; Wilkinson 2016a:336). Smenkare (or Smenkhkara), who briefly ruled Egypt after Akhenaten (Shaw 2003:160), was succeeded by Thutankamun, whose reign was followed by Ay.[36]

By the time Ay was buried in the Valley of the Kings, Amarna had long been abandoned. Both Ay, who reigned from 1322 to 1319 BCE and Ay's successor Horemheb, who reigned from 1319 to 1292 BCE, seem to have been the perpetrators who ordered the proscription of Akhenaten and his monotheistic belief in the sun-god Aten (Bleiberg 2019:39). Thus, Akhenaten's actions in ordering the proscription of the god Amun in turn led to his own *damnatio memoriae*, namely the erasure of his names on monuments and king lists, the smashing of statues related to the Amarna royal family and the dismantling of his monuments and destruction of his city Akhetaten (Connor 2019:289; Bryan 2012:373). The demolished and reconstructed statues of Akhenaten are currently on display at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (see Figure 4.17 below). Moreover, it appears to have been Horemheb who had the temples and palaces of Akhetaten demolished and the building materials reused as fill for the pylons of the temples he constructed at Karnak – another iconoclastic event that was intended to eradicate the memory of the so-called heretic pharaoh (Shaw 2003:161; Bleiberg 2019:39; Connor 2019:289).

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[36] Ay seems to have been related to Queen Tiye, Akhenaten's mother (Shaw 2003:161). He was also a 'servant of Akhenaten' and succeeded as pharaoh following the rule of Tutankhamun (Wilkinson 2016a:337).
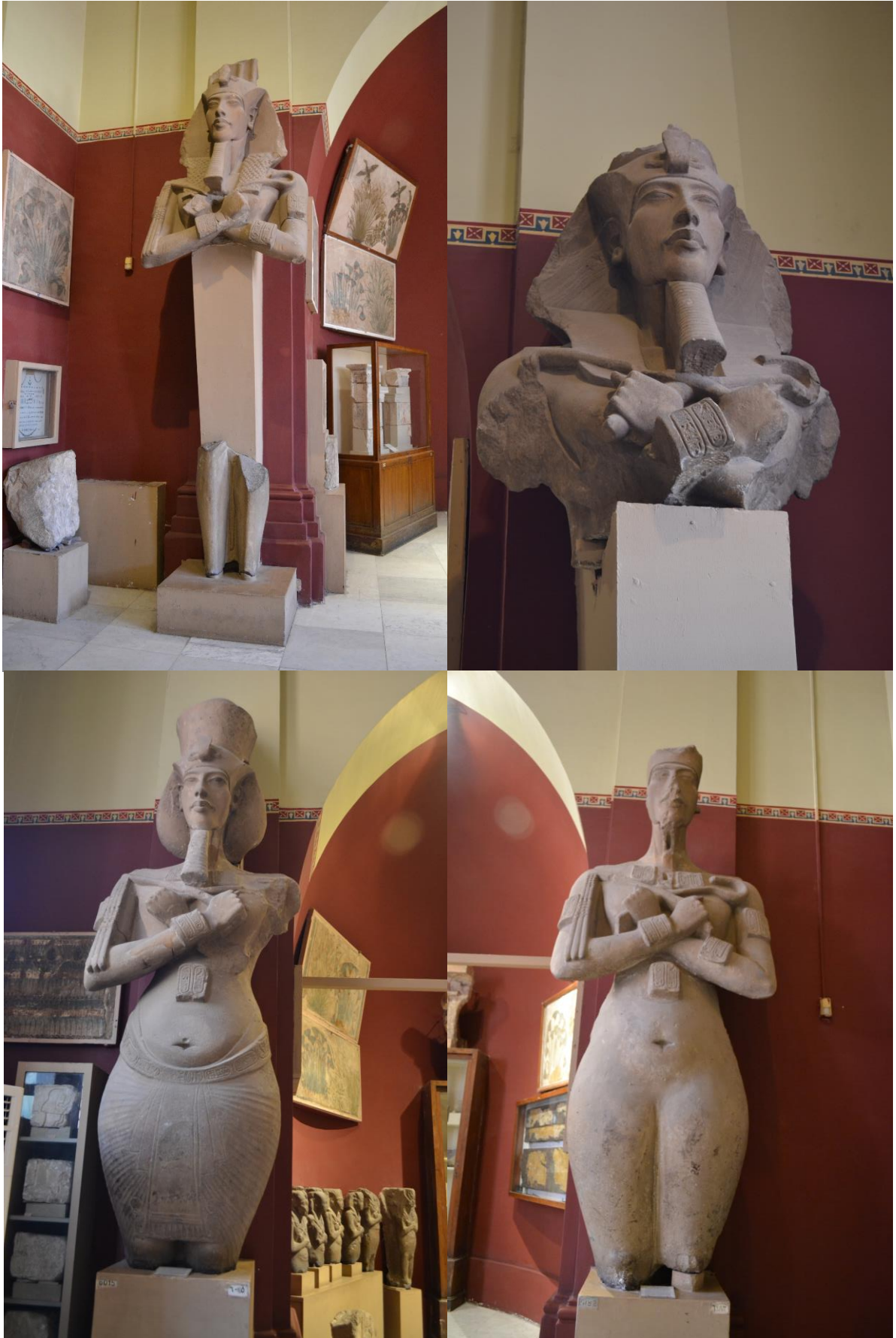
Figure 4.17: Smashed statues of Akhenaten at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Photos: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Similarly, Ay's tomb in the Valley of the Kings (KV 23) is another example of *damnatio memoriae*. In fact, archaeologists have questioned whether the tomb was originally intended for this pharaoh. Since it would have been incomplete at the time of Tutankhamun's death, it could have been reused for or usurped by Ay and it was certainly decorated for him. A sarcophagus with Ay's cartouche was also found there. Apparently, soon after the burial occurred, the tomb was desecrated. The mutilation was likely sanctioned by Horemheb, who succeeded Ay as the ruler of Egypt, possibly because of the close relationship with the Amarna royals (Wilkinson 2016a:336, 337-338; Connor 2019:289). The names and images of the pharaoh were erased, likely to extinguish the memory associated with the pharaoh (Wilkinson 2016a:338-339). The figures in the tomb depicting Ay were deliberately targeted and the destruction mainly focused on the nose, heart and genitals. The nose would have represented the ability to breathe or to destroy the facial appearance of the pharaoh. In ancient Egypt, the heart represented the location of the spirit in the body and the erasure of the genitals would symbolically remove the ability of the pharaoh to procreate (Wilkinson 2016a:340).

According to a recent study, the chiselling away of the hieroglyphs of the name of Ay and the associated pharaonic images was a deliberate action. However, it had a negative ripple effect of causing additional damage in the form of natural decay or plaster falling into the tomb, damaging other sections of the wall paintings and decorations (Wilkinson 2016a:339-340). Other decorative features, such as representations of different gods in the burial chamber, which was the only decorated space of the tomb, were also damaged, which can be considered collateral damage. The gods themselves were not necessarily the focal point of iconoclasm, but they 'are nonetheless affected by it – even beyond accidental damage' (Wilkinson 2016a:340). Accidental damage to the depiction of deities, such as the seated Osiris next to the mummified body of Ay, occurred as they surrounded the image of the king that had been the intended target (Wilkinson 2016a:341). Deliberate damage to the depictions of deities, such as the goddess Nut, seems to have occurred to hinder them from blessing or welcoming the pharaoh to the afterlife, in essence nullifying their actions by 'cutting' their wrists or removing the *ankh* symbol that would bestow life to the king's nose (Wilkinson 2016a:340-341).

4.2.6 Ritual repair vs. deactivation

In some cases, statues and reliefs even bear evidence of successive iconoclastic episodes due to restoration attempts that have occurred and then damage added to those layers as well. Thus, a single artwork can display evidence of mutilation, repair and further defacement, which may have occurred throughout different periods of Egyptian history. The repairs are indicative of care and reverence of the deities or persons who have been represented in the art, so much so that an effort was made to restore it (Connor 2019:299).
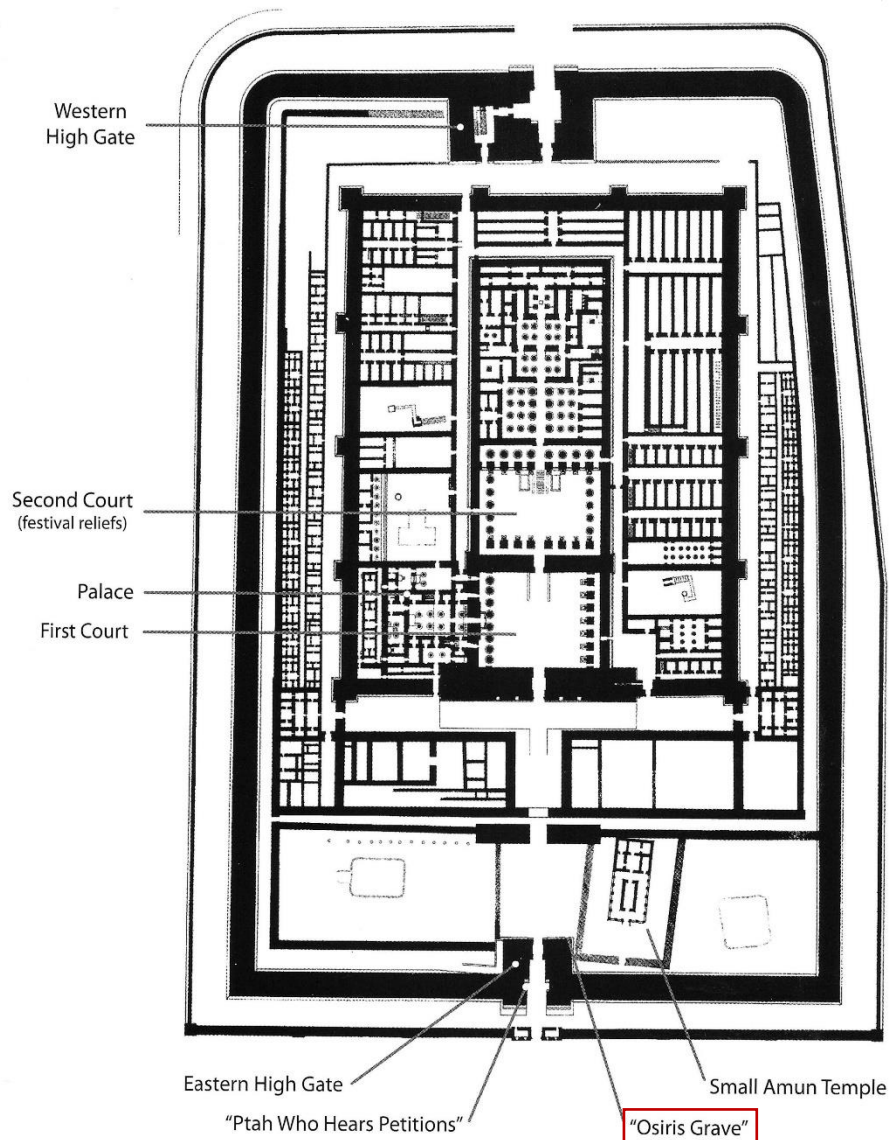
Figure 4.18: Location of the 'Osiris Grave' at Medinet Habu (Teeter 2011:xxiii)

However, in other instances, it appears that statues could have been deliberately broken and buried almost in a reverential manner that shows great planning and care. Similar rituals are known from the Egyptian Execration Texts, which 'clearly represent the mass burial of objects intended for use in some kind of cultic ritual, most likely in the form of "sympathetic magic"' (Ben-Tor 2006:10). Such a codified procedure could be considered a type of termination ritual for a *cachette* of statues that fell out of favour, or a cultic temple that had fallen into disuse and was not rebuilt. There are some examples of statues that were recovered from pits underneath the pavements of temples, known as *favissae* (Connor 2019:294-295; Teeter 2011:53-55). One example would be the so-called 'Osiris Grave' found at the Medinet Habu Temple Complex (see Figure 4.18 above), where hundreds of small bronze statues all depicting the god Osiris had been deposited (Teeter 2011:54).
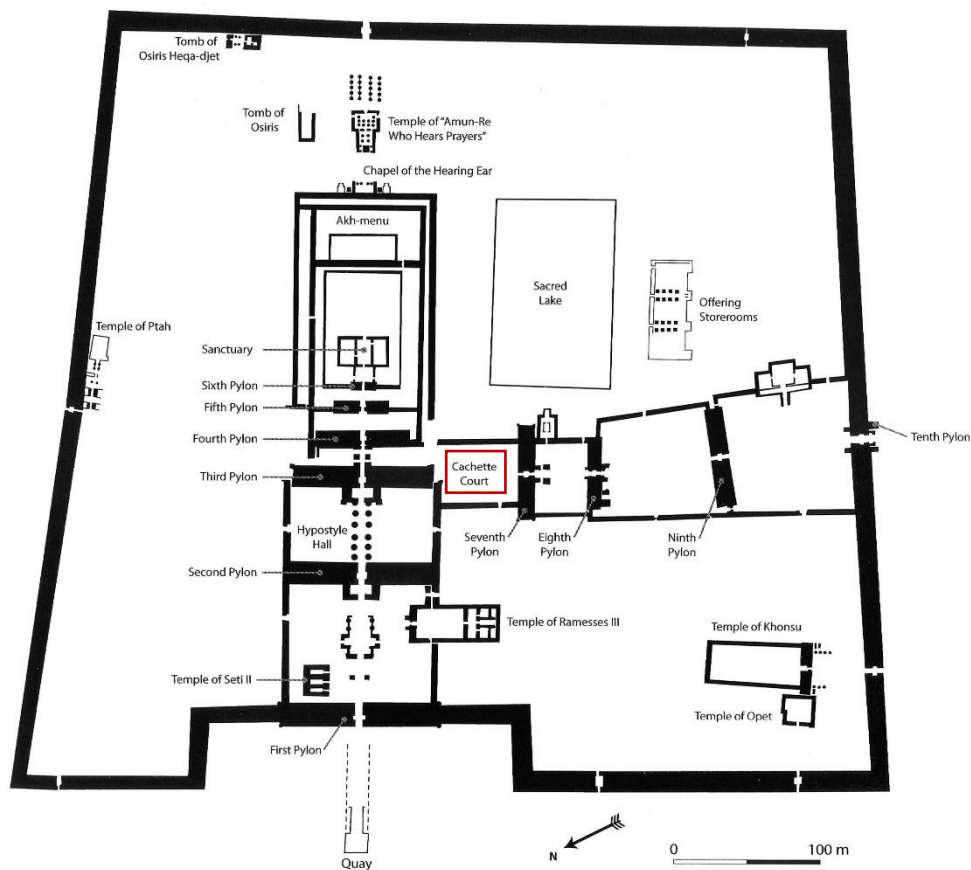
Figure 4.19: The 'Cachette Court' at the Karnak Temple Complex (Teeter 2011:xxi)

Another group of buried statues is known as the 'Karnak Cachette' (see Figure 4.19 above), which contained 'more than seventeen thousand small statues and pieces of temple furnishings, and approximately seven hundred fifty larger stone statues of

deities, kings, and individuals' (Teeter 2011:54). This *cachette* was excavated in the southern part of the courtyard located in-between the hypostyle hall and the seventh pylon of the Karnak Temple Complex. The youngest of the statues buried there dated to the early Ptolemaic Period, indicating that it had probably been buried there by 'either Ptolemy III or Ptolemy IV' (Teeter 2011:54-55). Teeter (2011:55) suggests that with the large number of statues excavated, it was likely that there were too many cultic objects in the temple and that not all of them could be accommodated in the temples' halls, which would account for their burial instead of their destruction.
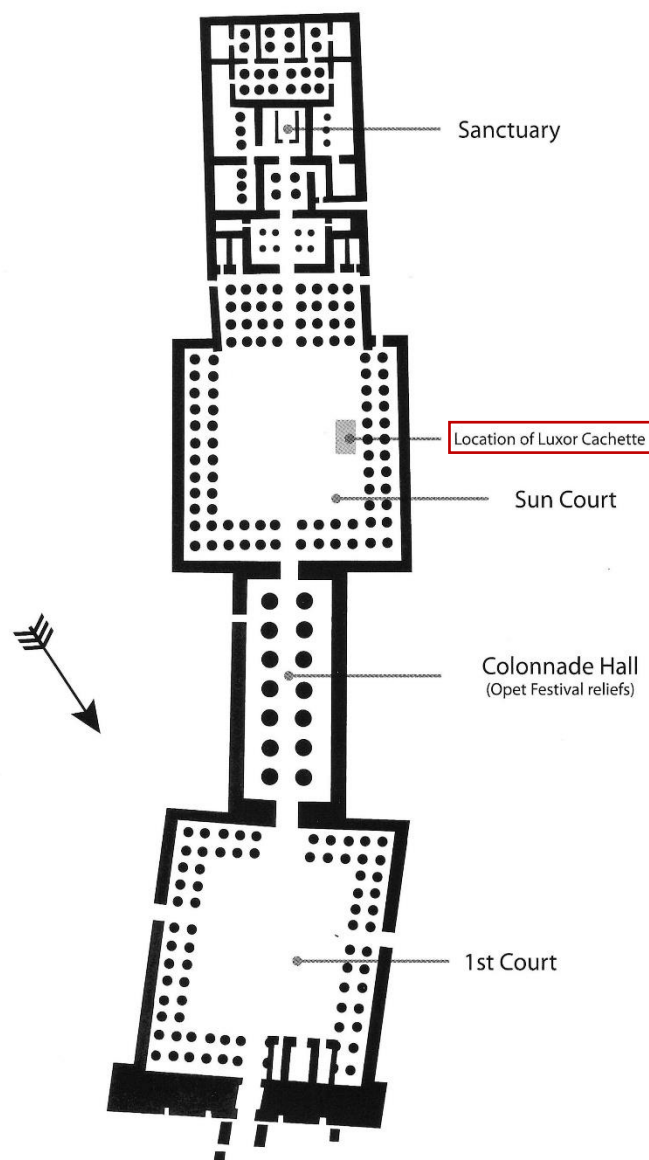
Figure 4.20: The location of the 'Luxor Cachette' inside of the sun court at the Luxor Temple Complex (Teeter 2011:xxii)

A third example would be the so-called 'Luxor Cachette', which had been uncovered by researchers in the sun court of the Luxor Temple Complex (see Figure 4.20 above). This *cachette* comprised 'twenty-six stone statues of deities and the king, some of them in an almost perfect state of preservation' (Teeter 2011:55). On the basis of pottery that had also been located in the *cachette*, it becomes evident that the statues had been buried there during the fourth century CE (Teeter 2011:55). This was a period when ancient Egyptian religion declined. Therefore, it is likely that the statues had become obsolete and were buried as part of a type of termination ritual when the use of the temple was likely discontinued.

In the case of the Karnak and Luxor *cachettes* mentioned above, the statues had likely been in use inside of the temple precincts. However, when they were disused, they were respectfully buried instead of destroyed. Sometimes, however, sculptures appear to have been deliberately fragmented and the recurring patterns of damage also speak to a type of ritual termination and deactivation (Connor 2019:294-295). Such events could provide insight into changing socio-political dynamics within ancient Egypt, for example at Saqqara, a number of 'roughly-made clay statuettes', representing rulers of their enemies, were recovered, which had all been 'ritually broken and then buried' (Ben-Tor 2006:10).

4.2.7 Religious iconoclasm of Coptic Christians

Unlike political iconoclasm or the *damnatio memoriae* mentioned above, which were aimed mainly at extinguishing the memory of certain individuals, religiously motivated iconoclasm dating to the Late Antiquity or early Christian era was aimed at the objects and monuments representing paganism. Initially, monotheistic religions prohibited the production and worship of cultic icons (Connor 2019:285). Early Christian traditions were largely intolerant of idol worship. This prohibition was based on the Judaic tradition known as *Avodah Zarah*, whereby the Hebrew Bible claimed that idol worship was forbidden, and images of idols were to be 'avoided and destroyed' (Wong 2016:91-92). As stated in the Bible (Ex 20:4-6; Ex 34:17; Num 33:52; Deut 7:5; Deut 7:25; Deut 12:3), when Christian believers encountered idols and images of pagan worship, they were encouraged to destroy them. As such, Coptic Christians responded

by damaging or attempting to 'neutralise' pagan or pre-Christian monuments and images (Connor 2019:285; Teeter 2011:55; Fagan 2004:25-26).

Numerous documents dating to the fourth and fifth centuries CE have recorded iconoclastic events that occurred in Egypt. Some accounts mentioned the violent extinguishing of cultural heritage, which included the demolition of entire monumental structures. This included the destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria in 391/392 CE, whereby the 'chryselephantine colossal statue of Serapis was publicly smashed, dismembered and burned, in order to show the pagans that this "idol" contained no power. The head was then exposed to the mockery of the people of Alexandria' (Connor 2019:285). In addition, a few years later, in 397 CE, the Serapeum at Memphis was also ruined by the Copic Christians (Fagan 2004:25). However, such drastic occurrences do not seem to represent the norm of how pagan images and monuments were usually treated by Coptic Christians, but are examples of extreme exceptions perpetrated by radical groups, such as the 'fanatical patriarch Cyril and his armies' (Fagan 2004:25; Connor 2019:285). In most cases, the monuments of the past were either preserved or forgotten and left to naturally deteriorate and disappear under the desert sands (Connor 2019:285).

Another motive for the destruction and defacing of images was that early Christians questioned or feared the divinity and power of the idols. They 'believed dangerous demons inhabited images and temples' and that by worshipping them, pagans were able to imbue them with power (Wong 2016:92; Fagan 2004:25; Teeter 2011:55). Therefore, by closing or destroying the temples or by obliterating the depictions of idols in temples, further pagan worship could be hindered. Similar to the ancient Egyptian belief that the destruction of the image of a person or deity represented its death, iconoclasm could have served as a means of exorcism or Christian purification or neutralisation of a space. Thus, there is also evidence of the 'Christianization' of images by inscribing or carving a cross or Christian star over the images in tombs and temples to baptise and cleanse the space (Wong 2016:92-93; Bleiberg 2019:60; Connor 2019:285). Marking the walls of tombs and temples, as well as statuaries and reliefs with crosses 'may have been a "soft" alternative to complete destruction' (Connor 2019:286). This is evident, for example, at the Temple of Isis at Philae (see Figures 4.21 and 4.22). In addition, the Coptic Christians believed that the conversion

of the space from pagan to Christian would have a positive ripple effect by eventually bringing about the conversion of the worshippers to Christianity as well (Wong 2016:93; Bleiberg 2019:60; Connor 2019:285).[37]

Figure 4.21: The incision of a Coptic cross over hieroglyphs at the Temple of Isis, Philae (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

The motivations behind this iconophobia, which resulted in iconoclasm, are diverse. Since the early Christians believed that evil demons inhabited the images depicted in temples, which lent malevolent potency to the iconography, this encouraged them to mar and destroy the images. As a result, the iconoclasts recognised that images represented power, and they sought to 'undermine that connection' (Wong 2016:93; Teeter 2011:55; Fagan 2004:25). More importantly, the eradication of pagan imagery was meant to make a statement to the people still worshipping those deities. This occurred especially since pagan worship had not been completely discontinued by the fourth century CE (Wong 2016:92-93). It was aimed at discouraging them by signifying

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[37] Future research could examine whether there were any papal decrees that ordered the closing of pagan temples and if this would have influenced the Coptic fervour of eradicating symbols of ancient Egyptian belief systems. It is evident that emperor Justinian I ordered the closure of ancient Egyptian temples and encouraged the religious zeal that led to the iconoclasm of pagan figures (Fagan 2004:26). Therefore, it is likely that there also would have been papal decrees in this regard.

the 'helplessness of the polytheistic gods in the face of Christian monks, who were determined to end non-Christian power on earth' (Bleiberg 2019:60). Similar to vandalism, iconoclasm was often a deliberate public act that sought to reach a wide audience by displaying the 'errors of the pagan religion by countering the popular view that the destruction of idols would lead to dire consequences' and to demonstrate the power of Christianity (Wong 2016:93; Bleiberg 2019:60). Nevertheless, the complete destruction of an image or statue was discouraged. It was perceived as less effective than only partially damaging an icon. A partially damaged image was more effective at displaying the powerlessness of the ancient Egyptian gods as compared to the apparent might of the Christian god. As a result, the Coptic Christians 'damaged the working parts of temple and tomb statues but left them in place, where former polytheists could be continually reminded that their old religion was now defunct' (Bleiberg 2019:60).

The harsher treatment of tombs and temples through iconoclasm is still evident within Egypt. This phenomenon is especially notable at the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, the Horus Temple at Edfu and at the Philae Temple Complex. While it remains difficult to date when the events of iconoclasm occurred, the chisel marks on the images reveal some evidence as to who the possible culprits were. Owing to the build-up of sand inside the Ptolemaic temples, which covered the lover registers and the damage executed there by the iconoclasts, the attacks on the temples must have occurred before the sand was deposited there. As a result, consensus points to the Coptic church as the most likely culprit. After all, the monks of the Coptic church were notorious for their eradication of what they perceived as 'pagan imagery' (Wong 2016:90).

Figure 4.22: Crosses incised into both sides of the main entrance at the first pylon of the Temple of Isis at Philae (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

During the Roman period, pagan worship had already declined in Egypt. Edfu and Dendera are both Ptolemaic temples located in Upper Egypt. As such, they would have been located more towards the southern border of the Roman Empire and held out longer as centres of the ancient Egyptian religion. However, Philae remained one of the last bastions of 'pagan' worship until approximately 456 CE (Wong 2016:91). While the exact date of the end of the worship of the ancient Egyptian religion remains unclear, some priests continued religious rites at temples into the third and even sixth centuries. It is evident that emperor Justinian I ordered the closure of the 'temples of Isis on the island of Philae', which may have contributed to the eventual discontinuation of the religious practice (Fagan 2004:26). In addition, it seems that the temples attracted early tourists, some of whom left behind graffiti (Wong 2016:91, 92). Roman tourists, for example, remained 'curious' about the ancient Egyptian religion and its associated monuments (Fagan 2004:25).

4.2.8 Iconoclasm during Muslim rule

During the seventh century, Egypt was conquered by the Arab Muslims, who established their rule by 642 CE. The Muslim rulers acknowledged the achievements of the ancient Egyptians, but owing to the ruined state of most of the monuments they felt that the pharaonic monuments represented 'human frailty without the "true" god' (Bleiberg 2019:60-61). Compared with clear evidence pointing towards the mutilation of ancient Egyptian monuments by early Christians, 'Islamic iconoclasm is more difficult to point out' and much of the evidence is rather circumstantial – such as the level of sand having accumulated to such heights at monuments that upper sections were more readily accessible to be damaged at the time since the Islamic conquest (Connor 2019:286).

According to Islamic authors from the 13th and 14th centuries, reactions to Egyptian monuments were diverse. Some evidence points to iconoclasm, whereas other sources pride themselves that the ancient monuments remained largely undisturbed. Since the ancient Egyptian belief system had been in disuse for a long period of time with the advent of the Muslim conquest, and since many pharaonic monuments were 'already dismantled or buried under the sand or alluviums', there does not appear to have been a need to further mutilate the monuments, and contemporary Egyptians

chose to ignore or tolerate them as remnants of a bygone pagan religion (Connor 2019:286-287). Thus, the 'mutilation or damage carried out on pharaonic images may be in many cases simply due to their reuse as "spolia" in medieval monuments, instead of meaningful and ritual deactivations of statues' (Connor 2019:286). The Muslims under Saladin engaged in numerous massive building projects. Among others, they removed the casing stones of the pyramids at Giza and reused them for the construction of Cairo's citadel and city walls (Fagan 2004:9, 28-29).

Figure 4.23: A temple reused and transformed into a mosque at the Luxor Temple Complex (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

At the time, Muslim Egyptians were more concerned with furthering new building projects than with the preservation of the ancient statues and monuments. As a result, they used the readily available statues and ruined monuments as building materials since they spared them from having to quarry large quantities of stone. Thus, it seems that the Muslim inhabitants were more concerned with using the available stone than with altering and negating the power of the iconography. Thus, many ancient monuments were looted and the spolia were reworked or directly reused in Islamic building projects (Ali & Magdi 2017:334; Connor 2019:286; Fagan 2004:9, 28-29). Despoliation occurred as the architectural elements from monuments and 'ancient

statues were regarded as a valuable piece of stone' (Bleiberg 2019:61). As is evident in Figure 4.23 above, there are also instances where entire temple buildings were reused and transformed into mosques, such as at Luxor.

4.2.9 Vandalism in the form of graffiti

In addition to purposeful iconoclasm, the vandalism of Egyptian cultural heritage is also evident. Soon after the completion of the formal temple decorations, additional scenes or inscriptions were added. As such, early graffiti may actually be enlightening about contemporary events. However, few of the early writings have survived in the remains of the plaster and they are also not always clearly distinguishable. Therefore, later inscriptions originating from travellers to Egypt are much more abundant and, interestingly, they provide additional information about the eventual dissolution of temples, as well as their rediscovery during the colonial era. 'Textual graffiti include both those contemporary with the active life of the temples – written in hieroglyphic script, Hieratic, Demotic, Greek or Latin – and those of later times written in Coptic, Arabic and various other languages' (Wilkinson 2000:47).

Egypt has long been a sought-after tourist destination, even within ancient times, with the Great Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza being the last of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World (Queiros 2003:15). Travellers continued to vacation in Egypt to view the sights at least from 1500 BCE onwards (O'Gorman 2010a:3; O'Gorman 2010b:5; Fagan 2004). Pilgrimages, voyages of exploration and imperialism were factors that contributed to the renewal of interest in the ancient world (O'Gorman 2010a:14) and sightseeing in Egypt to round off an education was also popular during the period of the Grand Tour (Queiros 2003:17-19). Moreover, the advent of the steam engine during the Victorian Era made long-range travel much easier and accessible. It became an enabling factor that made mass tourism to exotic locales such as Egypt possible.

Figure 4.24: Graffiti on painted plaster inside the tomb of Baqet III (tomb 15) at Beni Hasan (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

Therefore, it is not surprising that in addition to taking home souvenirs in the form of antiquities, which were frequently pried from cultural heritage sites or looted from graves, thereby damaging the sites and supplying the illicit trade in antiquities, travellers were also prone to leave behind graffiti (Queiros 2003:25; O'Gorman 2010a:3; Timothy 2011:160-161). Today, remnants of graffiti pained over artworks or carved into reliefs are visible at most cultural heritage sites within Egypt, with some of these marks even dating back to the colonial era (see Figures 4.24 and 4.25).

Figure 4.25: Graffiti and a cross hewn into the rock at the Philae Temple Complex (Photo: NB Hoffmann September 2022)

4.3 ANCIENT LEVANTINE AND MESOPOTAMIAN ICONOCLASM

The deliberate and collateral destruction of cultural heritage is often the result of an immensely complex process that results from a combination of political, socio-cultural, religious and even economic factors. Therefore, purposeful iconoclasm is most

frequently encountered in conjunction with armed conflict (May 2012:3; Brammertz et al 2016:1151, 1160). In antiquity, iconoclasm was aimed not only at the mutilation and destruction of the images depicting rulers and other symbols of political power, but also at intimidating and subjugating conquered populations. Moreover, iconoclasm deliberately targeted the religious cults of populations, which were intrinsic to their socio-cultural identity. Therefore, investigating evidence of how a population could be subjugated by mutilating and abducting their cult idols and directly attacking their belief systems is worthwhile. This form of psychological warfare performed by a foreign polity would have caused a defeated society to feel a great amount of anxiety about being abandoned not only by their political leaders, but also by their gods.

Therefore, it is important to determine the changing dynamics that were at play not only within ancient Egypt, but also in the remainder of the biblical world, more specifically the Levantine region of the Near East. In the aftermath of successful military campaigns, not only the looting and destruction of conquered cities, but also the ways in which invaders sought to subjugate local populations should be considered. It seems that instilling fear and intimidation were common mechanisms of control. However, there were different ways to achieve the successful domination of conquered populations to establish and maintain control over vassal states. Clearly, the erasure of remnants of a previous political regime was one method of doing this, by deliberately destroying existing administrative and socio-political structures when levelling cities. Another way to achieve this was the destruction of the images of previous rulers and the monuments and stelae they had erected as displays of their power. Frequently, propagandistic iconography recorded and displayed the achievements of the royal leaders of a society. By destroying the depictions of royals and their achievements, remnants of their power could be erased and negated. However, the control of conquered populations also had a distinctly religious dimension, which makes it important to analyse how the dynamics changed and went beyond political domination into the domain of socio-cultural displays of power through the religious reform and the targeted abduction and mutilation of cultic symbols and centres of worship.

4.3.1 Destruction and armed conflict: Evidence in the form of tell sites

The most visible evidence of the destruction of cultural heritage occurs in the form of archaeological tell sites, which occur in great abundance in the Near East, especially in the southern Levant (Zuckerman 2007:3-4). Located at a crossroads between empires, the southern Levant (especially present-day Israel and Palestine) was fraught with tensions throughout successive regimes in antiquity. These tensions frequently resulted in warfare, causing entire cities to be captured, destroyed and abandoned, but also to be rebuilt. Therefore, tell sites were formed by rebuilding one city over an earlier one. Over time, these sites grew into artificial hills (Currid 1999:37-38, 42; Price & House 2017:31-32). Interestingly, the biblical text already referred to tells as mounds or heaps of ruins, making it apparent that these were not naturally occurring hills (Dt 13:16; Jos 8:28; Jr 49:2). Moreover, the Hebrew Bible also mentioned the rebuilding of cities on these mounds of ruins (Jos 11:13; Jr 30:18). As a result, archaeological tell sites represent a comprehensive record of the successive occupation of ancient places, thereby comprising a palimpsest of archaeological data,[38] similar to a 'layer-cake' of archaeological deposits, which provides researchers with an abundance of chronological information about the communities that have inhabited a site. As a result of tell sites and contemporary documents such as texts and iconographic depictions of significant events such as battles, which can be dated to certain corresponding periods, archaeologists were able to build a generally accepted timeline of successive periods in the Near East (Zuckerman 2007:9; Magness 2012:377-378; Vieweger 2012:463-507; Steiner & Killebrew 2014:45, 48-63; Price & House 2017:41).

While tell sites are indicative of armed conflict, they also reveal the socio-cultural resilience of ancient societies as the rebuilding of cities suggests political, socio-cultural and religious changes have occurred over time. Therefore, tell sites in

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[38] A palimpsest is a manuscript which was erased and reused by later writing, or new script was superimposed on effaced earlier work. However, the earlier work was not completely or correctly erased and still shines through, causing 'some of the earlier text [to] be read through the later over-writing' (Darvill 2003:309). Within the context of archaeology, it is used to express when something of deposit or archaeological layer of a site bears visible traces of an earlier form or stage. Archaeological tell sites also often do not comprise of uniform layers and levels, as remains from earlier periods could be reused or continue to be in use throughout periods of change. Thus, when researchers are able to gain glimpses of structures from earlier periods 'amongst and below the modern pattern', it is also considered to be a palimpsest (Darvill 2003:309).

themselves are not necessarily clear indicators of iconoclasm, but more often than not, they seem to represent subversive processes of transformation. As a result, it is the intention behind a destructive event that needs to be understood to identify whether it was purposeful iconoclasm: it is 'the motivation and the objective behind the act of destruction that makes an act iconoclastic, be this objective political, religious, magical, economic, or an interlacing of all these' (May 2012:3).

Hence, it is necessary to distinguish between events, where the destruction resulted in the complete abandonment of a place[39] or the subsequent rebuilding of a site (sometimes also producing occupation gaps), where destruction may have evened the way to socio-political, ideological or religious change. The former could be interpreted as an iconoclastic event, whereas the latter may be indicative of a subversive change that contributed to the continued formation of the site over time. However, since not all destruction is necessarily an indicator of iconoclasm, understanding the archaeological context is vital.

4.3.1.1 Lachish

The Hebrew Bible prominently mentions the unsuccessful revolt of the Judean king Hezekiah against the Assyrians, when he colluded with the rulers of the 25th Egyptian Dynasty by 705 BCE (Vieweger 2012:484; NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:558). As mentioned before in Chapter Three, in retaliation against the attempted uprising, the Assyrian king Sennacherib led an invasion and conquered the city of Lachish in 701 BCE. This event prominently featured in the Old Testament in 2 Kings 18:13-37. During this military campaign, the Assyrians also besieged Jerusalem, but there is no record of the fall of the Judean capital (2 Kings 19:1-37). On the other hand, there is an abundance of archaeological evidence confirming the conquest of Lachish. This includes the Assyrian siege ramp and the destruction layer from excavation Level III dating to this period (Ussishkin 1980; Vieweger 2012:299-300).

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[39] Destruction events would sometimes have led to the complete abandonment of a tell site, where the people were hindered from rebuilding a new city on top of the ruined older one, possibly due to ideological reasoning. The Hebrew Bible mentions the case of the city of Ai, which was destroyed by Joshua's army and made 'into a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day' (Jos 8:28-29). Similarly, according to biblical tradition, the 'biblical ban' or the *Herem* was a concept or notion that forbade the rebuilding of the settlement, hence an ideological ban on resettling there (Gevirtz 1963; Stern 1991; Del Monte 2005).

In addition to the brief biblical mention of the siege at Lachish, it is in fact one of the best documented historical events by means of extra-biblical sources (Dever 2012:353). The so-called *Lachish Reliefs* (mentioned in the previous chapter) consist of twelve stone wall panels, which were originally wrapped around the circumference of a room at the South-West Palace at Nineveh as part of one continuous scene (object number 124906; British Museum 2023a). This iconographic Assyrian relief documents Sennacherib's account of the conquest and the subsequent fall of the fortified Judahite city of Lachish (Ussishkin 1980; British Museum 2023a).

The *Lachish Reliefs* portray Sennacherib's narrative of the battle of Lachish. In this context, the account commences with the portrayal of the attack of the city by employing long-range artillery such as bows and arrows, slings and stones, as well as siege engines. To facilitate the assault, artificial ramps are also shown, which would have been constructed by the attackers. At the top of the city walls, the defenders of the city are depicted as they torch the siege engines. At the same time, the inhabitants of the city also exit Lachish in a procession, which may already indicate that the city had fallen. The aftermath of the battle further indicates that loot was removed from Lachish. The procession of men and women is led past Sennacherib, who is portrayed seated on a throne (with the Assyrian war camp in the background), seemingly judging over and prosecuting the captives, some of whom are executed, while at the same time witnessing the fall of Lachish. The wall panels also display two cuneiform inscriptions, which illustrate Sennacherib's version of the conquest of Lachish (Ussishkin 1980; Vieweger 2012:301-308; Dever 2012:359; Kreimerman 2022:39-60; British Museum 2023a). After the Assyrian destruction of Lachish, there seems to have been an occupation gap of several decades before the city was rebuilt during the seventh century BCE. The next destruction layer (Level II) then dates to the Iron Age, when the city was conquered by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar II in 586 BCE (Mazar 1992:427-435; Ussishkin 1993b:897-911; Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:238; Kreimerman 2022:44-47).

4.3.1.2   Gath

In contrast to the rebuilding evident at Lachish and other tell sites that bear evidence of a very long and continuous occupation, there are also archaeological tell sites that

are indicative of a very abrupt demise and near total abandonment. An event resulting in the annihilation of a place might be indicative of iconoclasm.

The Philistine city of Gath, also known as Tell es-Safi, fell during the Aramean military campaign of 830 BCE. The conquest of Gath by king Hazael of Aram Damascus and the subsequent abandonment of the site is mentioned in 2 Kings 12:17-18 and can be further validated by archaeological evidence (Maeir 2017:223, 225). The archaeological deposit indicative of the 830 BCE destruction layer was largely consistent all over the site and evidence pointing to large-scale destruction was apparent in all areas that had been excavated in the upper and the lower cities, revealing extensive burning residue, smashed pottery and human skeletons that had been buried under collapsed walls (Namdar et al 2011:3472, 3480-3481; Maeir 2017:223, 225; Currid 2020:136-137). In later periods, only a much smaller section of the site was reoccupied, meaning that in large parts of the site, especially in the lower city, the destruction layer was located almost directly underneath the surface. Since it was not disturbed by later rebuilding, it was well-preserved and could be studied intensively. The destruction layer revealed a very broad material assemblage, bearing evidence of everyday life at Gath before its destruction. Therefore, Gath was only partially reoccupied at a later stage, but at a much reduced scale (Maeir 2017:225).

4.3.2 Direct references to iconoclasm in the biblical text

Instead of the destruction of entire cities, it almost seems 'easier' to identify iconoclasm when considering individual structures or artworks within the context of a single destruction layer at a site or referenced in contemporary documents. There are various instances, in which iconoclastic events of both political and cultic images are axiomatic in antiquity. It is the intention of this study to consider the changing dynamics behind these events, especially where attacks on cultural heritage extend beyond the secular domain into the religious domain.

The Bible is an anthology of religious texts. Like other contemporary documents, this collection of books is the 'product of a particular time, place, culture, language, and it must be placed back in that context to be understood at all' (Dever 2001:16). Therefore, it is subjective to the context it was authored in and the audience for which

the text was created, which brings about a number of interpretive challenges that are studied in terms of history, linguistics and theology. Especially in conjunction with additional extra-biblical sources and archaeological evidence, the biblical text can be considered as an historical and socio-cultural textual source as these factors add value and data that enhance the understanding of historical periods (Dever 2001:1-21; Vieweger 2012:57; Richelle 2018:73-78). Thus, the biblical text is not automatically factually or historically correct. Instead it offers possibilities for deductive research, which then needs to be cross-referenced with extra-biblical contemporary texts and the archaeological record (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:331). This author believes that the subdiscipline of Biblical Archaeology does not have the aim to prove or disprove the veracity of the biblical narrative, but rather aims to use the Hebrew Bible as a primary textual source and an impetus to study the tangible remains of the places, events, and communities mentioned in the Bible to gain insight into the lives of past societies. In this regard, Biblical Archaeology can provide a better understanding of the aftermath of conflicts and the occurrence of iconoclasm in the ancient Near East.

Numerous iconoclastic events are self-evident as they are blatantly referenced in the biblical text. These occurrences of the destruction of cultural heritage have a predominantly religious character as opposed to the fall of cities due to political strife and armed conflict mentioned in connection with the fall and rebuilding of tell sites earlier: the ancient Israelite religious canon was grounded in two firm principles. Firstly, the belief in the one true God and, secondly, the proscription of creating (iconoplasty) and worshipping idols (idolatry) (Hurowitz 2012:259-260). While the ancient Israelites did encounter idols and idol worship, it seems to have been dealt with quite harshly to set an example. This is evident with respect to the golden calf (Ex 32-33; Chung 2010; Hurowitz 2012:261).

During the Exodus from Egypt,[40] the Israelites wandered through the Sinai desert. According to the biblical account, once they reached Mount Sinai and made camp at the foot of the mountain, Moses went to the top of the hill to receive the Ten Commandments from God. However, owing to the waiting period at the foot of the

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[40] The account of the Israelite Exodus from Egypt forms part of the biblical tradition. Since there is currently no conclusive archaeological or historical evidence that can be used to cross-reference the veracity and actual occurrence of this event, it has been the cause of much academic dispute. Regardless, it remains a very strong biblical tradition.

mountain, the Israelites became restless. As they feared that Moses had disappeared, they approached Aaron with their request to see a visual earthly representation of God to lead them in his place. For this purpose, they gave their gold jewellery to Aaron, who fashioned an idol for them in the shape of a golden calf.[41] The following day, after presenting offerings to the Lord, they held festivities (Ex 32:1-6).[42]

Such idol worship, especially in the form of a bull or a calf, was commonplace among the various cultures of the ancient Near East. This cross-cultural influence, which the Israelites were exposed to, is evident here. In ancient Egypt, many gods were worshipped. This includes the bovine deity Apis, who was worshipped since the early Dynastic Period. He was considered as the most important of all bull deities (Wilkinson 2017:170). The Apis bull was typically associated with the Memphite god Ptah. Initially, it was seen as a herald or son of Ptah, but later became known as the 'living image or manifestation of the "glorious soul" of Ptah himself' (Wilkinson 2017:170). The Apis bull, as a symbol of fertility and power, was often associated with the power of the pharaoh. During the Sed festival, the king would stride next to a living bull, chosen to represent the Apis bull.[43] In this way, the power of the pharaoh would be 'equated with that of the god' (Wilkinson 2017:170). In other Near Eastern cultures, such as Canaanite worship, bulls were also venerated as religious idols. The chief god of the Canaanite pantheon was known as El, the so-called 'heavenly bull' (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:143). The storm god Baal was also associated with the bull as a symbol of fertility. Therefore, gods of the Canaanite pantheon were often represented in iconography by 'riding on bulls', thereby becoming 'living pedestals

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[41] It is unclear if the idol was cast from solid gold or carved from wood and plated with gold (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:142).

[42] Typically, Israelite males and females would not have intermingled during dancing. Instead, women would have performed a dance with the men looking on. Intermingling of the sexes would have only occurred with cross-cultural influences. However, throughout antiquity, sexual revelry frequently formed part of pagan rituals and festivals. It is unclear if this was also the case in this instance, but the phrase to 'indulge in revelry' (Ex 32:6) appears to have 'sexual connotations' (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:142).

[43] According to Wilkinson (2017:170), in the Apis bull cult there was only one living bull chosen at a time to represent the Apis bull. Upon reaching the age of 25, the bull would be ceremonially killed, embalmed and buried. According to its appearance, a new bull calf would be chosen as the embodiment of the Apis bull during its lifetime. It was kept in 'special quarters' directly to the south of the Ptah temple at Memphis with its own harem of cows, so that worshippers could visit it. Moreover, it would be present in religious rituals and processions (Wilkinson 2017:172). In iconography, it was depicted as black in appearance with distinctive white markings: a 'triangular blaze on its forehead' and 'wing-like markings on his back', which represented the wings of a hawk or vulture (Wilkinson 2017:171). Furthermore, it was presented as a walking bull, often bearing a 'rectangular cloth with a decorative diamond pattern' on its back, as well as a sun disk and an uraeus arising between its horns (Wilkinson 2017:171). In later dynastic periods, it was also depicted as a running bull, carrying the mummy of the deceased on its back *en route* to the tomb. After its death, the Apis bull was represented as the Apis-Osiris or Osirapis (or Serapis in Hellenistic Egypt). In the afterlife, the bull 'was said to thresh grain' and his 'power and virility … are tied to the deceased' (Wilkinson 2017:171).

emblematic of kingship and power over nature' (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:143).

Evidently, the creation of the golden calf is an indication of the cross-cultural influence that the Israelites were exposed to. Having emerged from Egypt and on their way to Canaan, they took on foreign iconography and adapted it to suit their own intentions and religion. Hence, this is the first known example of syncretism, which is 'the combining of faith in the one true God with pagan traditions' (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:143).

However, according to scripture, when Moses returned to the Israelite camp after descending from the mountain with the ten commandments, the festivities and dancing were in full swing. In a fit of anger, Moses broke the tablets with the commandments.[44] He also purposefully destroyed the golden calf by burning it, grinding it down into a powder, mixing it with water and making the Israelites drink it. The Second Commandment (Ex 20:4, 23) clearly states that both the creation of silver and gold idols and idol worship are prohibited. With the creation of the golden calf, this commandment was broken by the Israelites and Moses made them aware of it. With the purposeful destruction of the idol, this event could therefore be construed as an early form of religiously motivated Israelite iconoclasm.

In the aftermath of the Exodus, the way in which the Israelites conquered Canaan can also be viewed as an example of Israelite iconoclasm. When conquering an opposing force, destruction and looting are often commonplace, as was evident in Chapter Three with the destruction of Hazor and other Canaanite cities such as Jericho, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron and Debir (Jos 10 & 11). However, not only was looting rife during these events, but iconoclasm also seems to have taken place. The destruction of a city, once it has been conquered by an opposing force, would also have included the eradication of its icons, temples and other places that were important to the local community and the imposing of new rules and regulations on them. The conquering force would also have brought with them their own culture,

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[44] The first set of stone tablets were reputedly inscribed by God himself (Ex 31:18). Later, again on Mount Sinai, God commanded Moses to make two new stone tablets to replace the first ones, which he had broken in his fit of rage. With the second set, God commanded Moses to inscribe the words of the covenant on the stone tablets – these became known as the Ten Commandments (Ex 34:1-4, 27-28; Ex 20).

worldviews and religious beliefs. In Judges (Jdg 4), the Old Testament Bible recounts the time when Deborah was a prophetess of the Lord and the religious leader of the Israelites. After a period of oppression at the hand of Jabin, who was the king of Hazor,[45] Deborah and Barak (who is described as the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, see Jdg 4:6) rallied the Israelite forces and defeated the army of king Jabin, which was led by his war general Sisera (Jdg 4:14-16, 23). Past archaeological excavations at Tel Hazor have revealed evidence of the destruction of the city during the 13th century BCE (Kleiman 2022:28; Ben-Tor 2006:14; Zuckerman 2007:23-25; NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:350). The destruction seems to have been very severe, so much so that the city was rebuilt only during the tenth century BCE (Kleiman 2022:30; NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:350). As part of the destruction layer, there is pervasive evidence pointing to iconoclasm: Numerous statues were excavated at Hazor. All seventeen objects were mutilated, but with eleven of these, it is unclear when this occurred. The remaining six statues were most likely mutilated during the destruction of Hazor at the end of the Late Bronze Age, as they were found in the destruction debris in relation to this event (Ben-Tor 2006:14). Therefore, 'excavators suggest that this could have been the work of the Israelites, carrying out Moses' injunction to 'cut down the idols of their gods' (Dt 12:3; NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:350). This would imply that the temples, palaces and public places were not spared from looting, destruction or iconoclasm.

Owing to the numerous examples evident in the Hebrew Bible, it seems as though iconoclasm played a central role in the early Israelite policy during the conquest of Canaan and the Israelite migration into the southern Levant. In fact, the biblical text states that the Israelites were commanded to destroy the religious idols of any other opposing belief system that they encountered. As such, they destroyed iconographic images, idols, sacred trees and other cultic symbols, as well as places of worship of Canaanites and any other indigenous inhabitants that they encountered (Lv 26:1; Nm 33:52; Dt 7:25-26; Hurowitz 2012:263-264). As such, it appears that the Hebrew Bible maintains that idolatry should be forbidden at all costs, and where idols have been

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[45] Notably, Jabin was both the name of the king of Hazor during the defeat of Hazor by Joshua (Jos 11) and by Deborah and Barak (Jdg 4). Based on textual evidence from different period sources, all documents refer to the king of Hazor as Jabin – which would imply that it was a dynasty of Canaanite rulers, rather than the individual name of a certain king at a specific time (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:350).

created, these should be destroyed. This is a very outspoken view of iconoclasm as a solution against competing religious cults (Hurowitz 2012:263).

The aforementioned direct order to erase the religious symbols of their competitors seems to have culminated in a campaign to exterminate competing religious cults to achieve the ideal of monotheism during the later period of the 'Divided Monarchy' (Dever 2005:285). In the north, the Israelite king Jehu reportedly ordered not only the execution of the prophets and priests of Baal, but he also wiped out their centre of worship, namely the temple and alter of Baal at Samaria. As though the destruction of the cult centre would not have been enough, he subsequently humiliated the believers of the cult of Baal by turning the area where the temple had been located into a latrine. However, while he acted very harshly in this instance, he seems to have been laxer and more inconsistent in exterminating idolatry in other places, especially when noting that he did indeed allow for the continuation of idol worship at the shrines of Bethel and Dan (2 Ki 10:18-36; Currid 2020:76).

In the southern part of the Divided Monarchy, the iconoclasm of altars and places of worship of religions other than the belief in Yahwe has been attributed to the reign of the Judean king Hezekiah during the eighth century BCE (Am 3:14; Elitzur 2023:68-71; May 2014:702). Under the mentorship of the Prophet Isiah, the king attempted to perform a religious reform. According to Dever (2005:286-287), the cultic reform included the following aspects: Firstly, 'removing the high places', secondly 'tearing down the standing stones', thirdly, 'cutting down the "Asherah" trees or poles' and lastly 'breaking up a bronze serpent that was called "Nehushtan" and was used for burning incense'. The high places or *bāmôt* mentioned above refer to the sites of worship of idols, where sacrifices occurred or incense was burned outside of the Great Temple of Jerusalem (Fried 2002:437). Thus, during the reign of Hezekiah some altars and cultic centres were destroyed, whereas others were merely discontinued and abandoned. Elitzur (2023:68-69) states that the 'smashing of altar horns was considered a common method for performing desecration of unwanted cultic sites'. The elimination of competing religious cults thus made way for the development of a monotheistic belief system as the preferred state religion. Sites that can be traced to the religious reform of Hezekiah include the temple at the fortress of Arad. This site bears evidence of a temple that was decommissioned, probably during the reforms of

Hezekiah, and seems to have been deliberately covered up (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:299; Elitzur 2023:71-72). Another example is the horned altar at Beersheba.[46] One of the dressed altar stones bears a motif of a serpent, indicating that it was not used 'in line with the "official" cult as represented by the biblical tradition' (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:330). The altar seems to have been dismantled during the reign of Hezekiah and the horns and remains of the altar were incorporated into secular buildings at a later stage. However, there is no evidence of the remainder of the altar or where the temple would have been located, which could be an indication that these features were completely destroyed (Elitzur 2023:72).

Almost a century after Hezekiah, during the late seventh century BCE, the Judean king Josiah also instigated a religious reform. He appears to have been even more resolute and zealous than Hezekiah in his attempt to wipe out competing religious cults. His campaign affected cult sites throughout the southern Levant, even beyond the borders of Judah. According to 2 Kings 23 and 2 Chronicles 34, Josiah centralised worship at the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem by referring to it as the only legitimate place of sacrifice and he had all other shrines dismantled, including those in northern Israel (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:300; Elitzur 2023:68-71). In this regard, it brought about the destruction of altars and the desecration of cultic sites in many places, as well as caused temples to fall into disuse in other areas. Therefore, the Judean king 'dealt with the various places of worship with varying degrees of severity' (Elitzur 2023:69; Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:300).

An example here would be the Iron Age IIA temple at Tel Moẓa, dating to roughly the tenth and ninth centuries BCE. Within the temple's courtyard, broken cultic artefacts and pottery were excavated. These appear to have been deliberately broken and then buried underneath a thick layer of earth and plaster. Thereafter, the features within the courtyard, namely the altar, podium and refuse pit, were sealed under the stone walls and floor of an Iron Age IIB structure known as 'Building 500'. The broken vessels and figures in the cultic assemblage represent rituals that occurred at the temple, when cultic objects were decommissioned, ritually broken and then buried to be replaced by new items for carrying out rituals (Kisilevitz & Lipschits 2020:46-47; Kisilevitz

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[46] Alternative spellings for Tel Beersheba include Beer Sheba or Be'er Sheba, the Arabic version of Tell es-Seba (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:307).

2015:154-156). Elitzur (2023:77-79) claims that this temple may bear evidence of both the religious reforms mentioned above, with the reform of Hezekiah to be identified in the phase that contains the broken and buried cultic figurines and vessels, with the temple possibly having been reinstated thereafter, until it was completely shut down as a centre of worship during the reign of Josiah, as evidenced by the rebuilding over the temple precinct. However, other scholars dispute this notion since the religious structure appears to have coexisted in relatively close proximity to the Great Temple in Jerusalem and may have fallen as a result of other historic events (Kisilevitz & Lipschits 2020:49; Fried 2002). In fact, Kisilevitz (2015:162) maintains that 'both its proximity to Jerusalem and its considerable architectural scale strongly suggest that the Tel Moẓa temple was a legitimate part of the official religious system that prevailed in Judah during the Iron IIA'. Hence, it could have been evidence of a 'softer' treatment that the temple was not harshly destroyed, but rather respectfully discontinued by burying the cultic site (Elitzur 2023:87).

Another site that could possibly be traced to the religious reform of Josiah is the broken altar at Tel Dothan, which was located inside the courtyard of a house that probably acted as a ritual site. According to Elitzur (2023:87), the 'deliberate desecration of the altar, in conjunction with the insertion of various graves, bones and secondary burials into the ruins near the temple may well fit the biblical description of the religious activity of King Josiah'. However, according to Master, Monson, Lass and Pierce (2005:77), an extensive destruction layer dating to Iron II could be identified at Tel Dothan, which reflects the abandonment of the entire site as a settlement until the Hellenistic period. However, the authors acknowledge that the site was used for burials towards the end of the eighth century BCE, during the occupation gap (Master et al 2005:77; Fried 2002:437). Owing to the complex stratigraphy evident at the site, it remains unclear if the discontinuation of the cultic site would have occurred in accordance with this destruction layer or if it should be attributed to the religious reforms.

In contrast to Tel Dothan and Tel Moẓa, there are other sites that are more clearly indicative of the purposeful desecration, dismantling or destruction of competing cultic sites and that provide more convincing evidence in relation to the religious reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, such as the shrines at Arad and Beersheba (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:299-300, 330). Evidently, iconoclasm was a widespread practice that

Israelites and Judahites employed to transform the southern Levant from a region dominated by polytheistic folk religions and cults into an area where the monotheistic Yahwean belief remained the only accepted state religion during the later periods of the Divided Monarchy. However, this notion remains disputed by some scholars, who maintain that there is no historicity or not enough convincing archaeological evidence that accounts for the 'dismantling of cult sites under Hezekiah, their rebuilding under Manasseh and a second dismantling under Josiah' (Fried 2022:450). Instead, their destruction could be considered in relation to the conquest of the Egyptian pharaoh Sheshonq or the Assyrians under Sennacherib, or the purposeful dismantling and burying of sites of worship by the Israelites to prevent cultic objects from falling into the hands of their enemies (Fried 2022:437, 450, 457, 460). Hence, the notion of the religious reforms remains contested by archaeologists and requires further research for clarification and proper cross-referencing with the biblical tradition.

4.3.3 Iconoclasm of statues in ancient Mesopotamia

Iconoclasm was also a widespread practice in other areas of the Near East. Especially throughout ancient Mesopotamia there was a longstanding history of the destruction of both religious and political iconography, which stands in direct correlation with foreign invasions. Conquering an enemy force frequently caused the demise of the rulers and involved the subjugation of the subjects of the political figurehead. In addition, in the aftermath of armed conflict, the two- and three-dimensional imagery of the former rulers and their achievements were frequently destroyed. In addition, the spoliation or abduction of divine images occurred, adding a socio-cultural and religious dimension to the political conquest through religious imperialism (May 2012:2-3; May 2014:702, 723).

Iconoclasm certainly also had a political dimension in ancient Mesopotamia. Similarly to ancient Egypt, the image of a person was more than an artistic representation: it was the literal embodiment of that person (Bahrani 2003:171; Porter 2009:207; May 2014:718). By creating iconography in the form of two- or three-dimensional art and then performing the 'mouth-opening' or 'mouth-washing' ceremony, the depiction became ritually alive and it was considered to be able to breathe and receive sustenance (May 2014:719). However, when a statue was deliberately attacked and

beheaded, or when the noses and mouths of the artistic representations were mutilated, it became impossible for the statue or person depicted in a relief to continue to do this, causing the representations to be considered inanimate objects once more. As a result, iconoclasm is the reversal of the mouth-opening ceremony (May 2014:719). Hence, iconoclasm can be considered a ritualistic performance: the destruction of the image would also have served as a form of retaliation by transferring the punishment aimed at the living person onto the non-living object. This would symbolically strip the living person of power and ritually kill him or her (May 2014:719-722). Especially in the case of a royal person or a person of immense political power, the mutilation of their depiction would imply that they were attacked both 'symbolically [and] literally' (Bahrani 2003:182; Porter 2009:207; my inclusion). By beheading a statue or mutilating a two-dimensional image such as a relief, the person depicted in the image was killed and deprived of power. At the same time, the subjects under the protection of the ruling party would also have lost their political protection (May 2014:702). Therefore, iconoclasm can be interpreted as a ritual performance aimed at subjugating an enemy.

Among all the ancient Mesopotamian statues that have been recovered to date, the majority (up to 90%) were found either with their features mutilated or without heads or both, indicating that they had been deliberately damaged in antiquity (see Figure 4.26 below). According to May (2014:702-703), the sheer 'amount of decapitated and effaced statues … cannot be explained by natural causes' and the same phenomenon is not evident elsewhere to the same degree. The beheading of statues strongly resembles the 'decapitation of flesh and blood enemies' (May 2014:703; Suter 2012:71) and it seems to have been performed 'in order to make him completely dead' (May 2014). This obliteration was evident with both divine and human statues:

> The purpose of this practice was symbolic, magical and performative, resulting in the loss of power by, and 'murder' and humiliation of the depicted person. Images were perceived as living objects, parts of gods or persons. Thus, damage to an image was inflicting damage on the depicted, divine or human, alive or dead (May 2014:703).

Figure 4.26: Headless Assyrian statues (left, object number: VA Ass 2147; right, object number: VA Ass 2259) (Photos: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum/ Olaf M. Teßmer; CC-BY-SA 4.0)

In addition, when the heads were recovered, it appears that in most cases the facial features such as the noses and mouths had also been marred, and hack marks were often present at the top of the head or forehead. Furthermore, extremities such as hands were frequently cut off, especially hands that had been folded in a prayer gesture, and royal insignia such as headdresses, or symbolic features of deities such as horns, had also been hacked off or damaged (May 2014:703-706, 706-709). The damage to statues seems to have been quite consistent. However, the severity of the damage differed and in some cases the statues seem to have been smashed into pieces with even hack marks evident on the heart area of the chest (May 2014:708-709). The phenomenon of mutilating statues to annihilate the power of the depicted individual, be it a deity or a person with high social standing, was evident since the Uruk period in Mesopotamia and, thereafter, it persisted throughout almost all

historical phases in antiquity (May 2014:703). It can also be seen as a version of the *damnatio memoriae*, condemning the memory of a person, by causing that person to cease to exist even through iconography.

4.3.4 Iconoclasm of reliefs in ancient Mesopotamia

Depictions in reliefs had a similar fate to that of statues as hacking marks focused on the facial features through which the depictions would have been able to receive nourishment (May 2014:702-703, 706-709). Other symbols of power and royal status in relief depictions were also mutilated. However, with regard to two-dimensional images, a distinctive observation can be made of something that is not necessarily apparent when considering individual statues: With reliefs, the vandalism appears to be very deliberate in selecting one image over another. However, the iconoclasts mainly focused their attacks on the people in power, who were the main protagonists of the narrative in the relief. Damage seems to have been concentrated on persons with a higher social ranking, which could be an expression of anger or revenge on that person: 'The hierarchy of obliteration mirrors the hierarchy of the represented' (May 2014:717; Porter 2009:207).

In the case of the *Lachish Reliefs* mentioned earlier, damage was concentrated on the face of king Sennacherib (Porter 2009:203-204; May 2012:25; May 2014:712, 713; British Museum 2023a). More severe damage being dealt to persons of a higher social status is also evident in the so-called *Garden Scene* or *Banquet Scene*, which is a wall panel from the North Palace at Nineveh. Similarly to the *Lachish Reliefs*, this artefact (object number 124920) is currently located at the British Museum (Porter 2009:206-207; May 2014:717; British Museum 2023b). While the facial features of the servants in the relief were also damaged, the mutilation was nevertheless focused mainly on the effigies of Ashurbanipal and his queen. Some features in the relief were restored in the museum, so the damage is no longer as blatantly visible. This includes Ashurbanipal's right hand and the queen's cup (May 2014:715). However, the cup held by the king was completely demolished (Porter 2009:206-207; May 2014:715, 717). Since the faces of the servants in the depiction were also attacked, it is evident that, while the damage is more severe in the case of the royal representations, the people who higher-ranking persons draw power from, namely the servants, attendants and

officials serving under the king and queen, i.e. the people giving power to persons of a higher social status, were also targeted.

Figure 4.27: Mutilated alabaster relief from Nineveh (VA 955) (Photo: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum/ Olaf M. Teßmer, CC-BY-SA 4.0)

Similar damage is discernible at the Nineveh alabaster reliefs (see Figure 4.27 above), some of which are currently on display at the Vorderasiatisches Museum, a museum that belongs to the larger umbrella of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin in Germany.

These alabaster reliefs were originally located in the passage leading from Sennacherib's South-West Palace at Nineveh to the Ištar Temple, a prominent location for a wall mural to be situated. Not only were the majority of the royal effigies damaged during the sacking of the Assyrian city (May 2012:188), but in the case of these reliefs in particular, the 'slabs themselves [were] removed and probably buried in antiquity' after having been exposed to iconoclastic attacks (May 2014:712; my inclusion). The original location of the relief adds to its significance. The two sets of wall panels portray a ceremonial procession with the king and his subjects *en route* to and away from the Ištar Temple, scenes that are laden with religious symbolism and representative of rituals performed as part of the state cult:

> The king is shown in his wheeled throne pulled by courtiers and preceded by the crown prince and royal magnates. He is followed by attendants, bodyguards, and an orchestra of two kettle-drummers, five women beating tambourines and a sistrum, and four harpists, two of which are priests (May 2012:188).

These scenes illustrate the close connection between politics and state religion in the neo-Assyrian empire through the veneration of Assyrian gods by royalty.

The alabaster relief forms part of a sequence of several panels that were located uphill or downhill alongside a ramp and passage leading to the Ištar Temple. Following the excavation of the reliefs in Nineveh, the finds were distributed between the British Museum in London and the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin. According to May (2012:188), in these reliefs 'all the iconoclastic patterns are present' and every face in the depictions was damaged, although the mutilation was more severe in the depictions of persons of a higher social status such as the crown prince and the king, as compared to their subordinates. However, when considering the mutilation in the relief (VA 955, Figure 4.27) from the Vorderasiatisches Museum, it is evident that all the faces were mutilated with the face of the crown prince having experienced the most damage, especially to the nose and the mouth (May 2012:188; May 2014:712, 715). Interestingly, the horsehead decorations of the wheeled throne and the faces of the two eunuchs pulling it have unusually sharp hack marks and are uneven and rather widely distributed, which are not seen elsewhere. Hence, researchers have deduced that these marks originated from arrows (May 2012:189; May 2014:716). Moreover, the panel was broken right through the face of the crown prince and in several other places.

The other wall panels of the ceremonial procession were also broken, although, here it seems as though the panels with depictions of persons of a higher rank were more thoroughly broken. While it is impossible to determine whether the breaking of the stone slabs was intentional or not, it is noticeable that the panels with effigies of people with a lesser social status and less religious symbolism are seemingly more intact. This distinction would indicate that the breakage and removal of the panels could have been deliberate. Elsewhere in the palace, the murals seem to have been left in place, so the special treatment of this relief sequence indicates that the iconoclasts deliberately targeted it as it was of high symbolic value. However, as the panels were discovered where they had been buried in a pit 'halfway between the South-West Palace and the temple of Ištar', it would also make sense that the slabs had been broken to remove them from their original location to be able to afford them a 'ceremonial burial' (May 2012:189). Such a termination burial could have formed part of a termination ritual. Therefore, this aspect of the breakage and burial of the relief panels deserves further investigation to identify how they came to be buried.

4.3.5 Holding the gods hostage: The ancient Mesopotamian phenomenon of 'godnapping'

Throughout the history of ancient Mesopotamia, there have been contemporary textual sources in the form of cuneiform tablets and inscriptions on stelae and relief panels which attest to the fact that when the Assyrians conquered and subjugated their enemies, they would forcibly remove or destroy the cult statues of the subjugated people. The so-called 'divine deportation' of cult statues by the invaders as part of their spoils of war is a phenomenon that has become known as 'godnapping' (Zaia 2015:19-20; Livingstone 1997; Johnson 2011; Cogan 1974).[47]

Attacks on iconographic representations of persons with high social standing and deities were commonplace in an effort to demoralise an enemy, but the deportation of cult images was another tactic that ancient Mesopotamians employed. Thus, the phenomenon of 'godnapping' can be defined as the 'forcible removal of cult statues

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[47] This practice was also evident in ancient Egypt, where the fate of cult statues was similar to that of other places in the ancient Near East. Many of the statues were exiled, especially as a result of Assyrian incursions. It is known that, for example, 'during Ashurbanipal's sack of Thebes in 663 BC, statues were specifically targeted' (Teeter 2011:54).

by invading forces' and has occurred throughout 'ancient Mesopotamian history from the Isin-Larsa period at the start of the second millennium BCE until the last centuries BCE' during the Persian period (Zaia 2015:19; Johnson 2011; Johnson 2013:113). This practice can be considered a form of looting due to the kidnapping of divine images, and as iconoclasm due to the aggressive intent that deliberately targeted cult statues due to their socio-cultural, religious, mystical and symbolic significance.

Various civilisations such as the Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians were notorious for deporting cultic images as part of the loot following an invasion. They would then hold the cult statues at ransom to humiliate and punish their enemies and in an effort to be able to the control conquered nations and to hinder them from rising up and rebelling against their conquerors (Livingstone 1997; Johnson 2011; Johnson 2013:113; Gilan 2014; Zaia 2015:19-20). Cult statues and other religious icons were considered to be the physical manifestations of deities. Therefore, by abducting the gods and holding them at ransom, an attacking force was able to subjugate its enemy. Holding the gods of their opponents hostage was a powerful tool to instil fear into a conquered nation and to express superiority over them. Removing a cultic statue from its sanctuary or patron city had the consequence of divine abandonment of the people who worshipped there, as they would have lost the protection of their deity (Zaia 2015:20). Furthermore, the removal of a deity from the centre of worship was thought to bring about 'cosmic chaos', which is a notion that 'was manifested in literary works such as [the Assyrian written sources known as] *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* and *The Erra Epic*' (Johnson 2013:113; my inclusion). Moreover, the kidnapping of cult statues and their occasional return to cult centres, i.e. holding deities hostage, was also a theme that was noted in the Hittite Anitta-Text (Gilan 2014:195-196). The presence of contemporary textual references to the practice of 'godnapping' indicates that it was a widespread intimidation tactic used in ancient Mesopotamia.

Several examples are evident: In 720 BCE, Sargon II abducted divine symbols from Samaria, an event that was recorded in the so-called *Nimrud Prism* (DeGrado 2021:24). The biblical text in Isaiah 10:7-10 corroborates this account, stating that the Assyrian king deported cult statues during the sacking of Samaria. According to Isaiah 10:11, Sargon II warned that he would perform a similar attack on Jerusalem and loot their religious objects. During this period, the kingdom of Judah was a vassal state

under the auspices of the Neo-Assyrian empire and paying tribute. By voicing this threat, it is possible that he aimed to discourage Judah from engaging in a similar rebellion as the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the north, where he had just conquered the capital. As a result, the threat of invading and forcibly removing Judean cult statues can be viewed as a mechanism to intimidate the subjects of the vassal state. 'Godnapping' does not seem to have been merely conducted for political or propaganda purposes, but rather as a display of power over an opponent (DeGrado 2021:33-35).

In most cases, foreign gods were not incorporated into their own pantheon and despite the reluctance to worship the gods who were manifested in the cult statues that had been abducted, the looting of foreign cultic representations and, hence, kidnapping the gods was still considered sacrilegious, even more so when they represented deities that were in some way related to their own pantheon (Zaia 2015:19-23). Occasionally, the abduction of cult statues actually led to the expansion of the invading force's pantheon, something that was apparently not uncommon among the Hittites (Gilan 2014:196). Regardless, by removing the cult symbols from the sanctuary of their patron city, the invaders risked being exposed to the wrath of the respective gods. As a result, the majority of contemporary documentary references to 'godnapping' seem to have deliberately omitted the names of the abducted deities (Johnson 2013:113; Zaia 2015:22-23).

In addition to the exclusion of the names of abducted deities from documents, it appears that the invading forces were reluctant to destroy the abducted cult statues, or to admit that they had been demolished (May 2014:701). Indeed, although some abducted cult statues were returned to their centres of worship many years later, it appears that they were largely kept intact (Zaia 2015:33-36, 36-37). 'Godnapping' seems to have been a relatively common practice throughout ancient Mesopotamia. However, destroying the cultic representations after their kidnapping was perceived as an extremely heinous act, which was very unusual and rare. This seems to have occurred only in very extreme cases, and then only in the context of the total annihilation of the patron city of an enemy. Such cases have been noted with respect to the Neo-Assyrian Empire, namely Sennacherib's war against Babylonia and Assurbanipal's war with Elam (Richardson 2012:235-239; Berlejung 2012:151; May

2014:701; Zaia 2015:37-48; May 2022:237). While the complete destruction of abducted cult statues was notably rare, their iconoclastic mutilation did occur in an attempt to defile and ritually deprive the images of their power (Richardson 2012:238-239). Moreover, Assyrian texts rarely reference the deliberate destruction of places of worship such as temples. Similarly, such mentions only appear to correspond with the total wars of the Assyrians, resulting in the complete annihilation of places that have also referenced the destruction of cult statues (Zaia 2015:48). Hence, the destruction of cult statues and their sanctuaries, in combination with the patron city as the centre of worship, should be considered a form of iconoclasm.

In this context, the complete destruction of cities has also been referred to as 'urbicide', which would denote the literal killing of a city. The notion of 'urbicide' was coined in the 1960s as an architectural term that describes inner city decay as a result of inappropriate urban planning. The concept has only recently been 'introduced into the field of biblical studies and the ancient Near East', where its meaning has somewhat adapted to the context of armed conflict to denote the 'annihilation of human settlements parallel to the annihilation of human groups or societies (genocide or ethnocide)' (Schaudig 2022:259). The city is considered to be a living organism at the socio-cultural heart of a local community, which is killed by an invading enemy. When this social centre is wiped out, and 'in particular, if the destruction goes with symbolic acts that aim at tabooing the city and making it "barren for everyone"' by sowing the land with salt,[48] the destruction can be seen as particularly harmful to the urban society (Schaudig 2022:259). Since the Neo-Assyrian Empire was notorious for its brutal military campaigns, it is not surprising that 'urbicide' occurred as a part of its imperialistic propaganda, as noted above with Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon in 689 BCE and Assurbanipal's military campaign against Elam and the destruction of, among others, the city of Susa (May 2022:233-234, 245, 247). 'Urbicide' is also evident in the military campaign of the Neo-Babylonian Empire against the Assyrians in retaliation for their previous devastation of Babylonian cities. A notable example here is the destruction of the city of Nineveh (May 2022:245-249).

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[48] Instead of a practical act aimed at making land unfarmable by sowing it with salt, this should be considered as an ideological, ceremonial or symbolic action that forbade people from resettling in an area or city, as with the notion of the so-called 'biblical ban' or the *Herem* (Gevirtz 1963; Stern 1991; Del Monte 2005).

4.3.6 The aftermath of conquest

As is evident above, the aftermath of military campaigns in the ancient Near East was characterised by the deliberate destruction and levelling of cities and places of worship, as well as the iconoclasm of the representations of enemy rulers to ritually and performatively kill an enemy and to humiliate and subjugate the conquered population (Richardson 2012:236). As identified above, in addition to the purposeful destruction of cultural heritage, the abduction of cult statues was also commonplace.

Figure 4.28: Looted and overturned pillars found at Ashur (left: VA Ass 2015; right: VA Ass 2016) (Photo: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum / Olaf M. Teßmer, CC-BY-SA 4.0)

However, building components were also sometimes removed from their original location as spoils of war. This was the case with overturned steles or pillars that were deported. These looted objects would have been truly heavy and difficult to transport. Furthermore, in their new location they were erected upside-down. This carries heavy symbolism, as they were not only robbed of their original function, but also taken away from their intended location and then overturned in their new location. This figurative language seems to have denoted that an enemy was 'overthrown, overcome, or overturned' by inverting the 'power into impotence, of existence into non-existence' (Schaudig 2022:262). Thus, turning something upside-down indicates that an enemy has been conquered. The visual element of inverting something as stable as a pillar adds to this (VA Ass 2015 and VA Ass 2016, Vorderasiatisches Museum, see Figure 4.28). Additionally, it is a figurative language that is easily understood and portrays the triumph over an opponent. In this regard, it is especially humiliating and a shameful punishment (Schaudig 2022:262). Adding to this, the Hebrew Bible also mentions the overturning of thrones (Hg 2:22), indicating the end of an opposing regime and a display of power over the enemy. Hence, the notion of turning elements such as stelae, pillars and even thrones upside-down reflects powerful imagery and the absolute domination over a conquered enemy (Schaudig 2022:262-263).

In some instances, cult symbols were too large to be transported. Since they were central to the local society's identity and moral stability, they constituted too much of a threat for invading forces to leave them intact. In such cases, the conquering forces may have aimed not to only mutilate, but also to demolish or ceremonially bury a religious representation. This may have been the case with the damaged cult relief VA Ass 1358 (see Figure 4.29 below, currently on display at the Vorderasiatisches Museum). The relief possibly depicts the primary Assyrian god Assur himself as a bearded deity feeding two goats. Following the attack and ransacking of the city of Ashur in 614 BCE by the Babylonians (May 2022:248), the soldiers of the invading force plundered the city and its temples. It seems as though everything that was either deemed to be of negligible value, or that was too difficult to transport and that the military forces were unable to bring with them, was demolished. Since the relief quite possibly depicts the highest Assyrian god, the latter was probably the reason this cult relief was obliterated. Following the breakage of the wall panel, the fragments seem

to have been discarded into the well located in the centre of the main courtyard by the invaders. The fragmented cult relief was rediscovered in 1910.

Like the cult relief VA Ass 1358 (Figure 4.29 below), another significant archaeological feature from the Temple of Ashur was the massive cultic water basin (VA Ass 1835), which displays water deities (possibly the Sumerian god Enki among others), that was probably used for ritual purification purposes (see Figure 4.30 below). This water basin was carved from one massive monolithic block of basalt. When it was discovered in one of the temple courtyards, it was in a completely shattered state comprising hundreds of fragments. Some of the fragments still bear remnants of cuneiform script, referencing the Assyrian king Sennacherib. This degree of damage could have only occurred by deliberately smashing the basin into pieces. Currently, the reconstructed water basin is on display at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 2023a). In this regard, having been located alongside a ramp leading from Sennacherib's South-West Palace to the Ištar Temple at Nineveh, the aforementioned mutilated alabaster relief (VA 955, see Figure 4.27) could therefore have faced a similar fate: it was considered too ritually important to be left intact by the invaders and was therefore broken down from its original location and buried.

However, 'godnapping' as an intimidation tactic to instil fear, could have been more effective in controlling an opponent. This is evident from Richardson's statement that there seems to have been a 'low incidence of icon destruction' due to the low number of contemporary texts reflecting this, whereas there was a comparatively 'high incidence of icon abduction' (Richardson 2012:235).[49] This finding indicates that the 'abduction and possession, not destruction, of icons was the preferred method of control' (Richardson 2012:235-236).

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[49] According to Richardson (2012:236), there are two confirmed cases of the deliberate destruction of cult images during the total wars against Assyrian opponents with corresponding destruction of Babylon and Elamite cities mentioned in contemporary textual sources, while there are a minimum of 68 episodes that reference 'godnapping'. This implies that true iconoclasm of cultic images was rare.

Figure 4.29: Mutilated and fragmented cult relief from the Temple of Ashur (VA Ass 1358) (Photo: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum/ Olaf M. Teßmer, CC-BY-SA 4.0)

Figure 4.30: Cultic water basin from the Temple of Ashur that was found smashed (VA Ass 1835)
(Photo: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum / Olaf M. Teßmer, CC-BY-SA 4.0)

The threat of destroying the cult statues and centres of worship of a foreign polity, and the anxiety caused by holding the physical manifestation of a god hostage, where the belief system de facto formed an intrinsic part of the socio-cultural and religious identity of a society, was an immensely powerful tool that can be considered a form of psychological warfare. By effectively abducting the deities of their enemies, the ancient Mesopotamians were able to force their enemies to abandon any thought of rebellion or uprising against their colonial masters (in the case of vassal states) and to bring them to heel so that they would continue paying tribute as subjects to a mightier force.

Interestingly, according to some contemporary records, it seems that the oppressed and conquered people themselves did not necessarily consider the invaders at fault for abducting their gods. Instead, they felt abandoned by their deities and thus felt that they had to repent and atone for their sins to be able to bring about the favour of their gods through the return of their cult statues (Cogan 1974; Johnson 2013:113; Zaia 2015:20).

By not only mutilating but also kidnapping statues representing deities, the invaders increased the pressure on their enemies by holding their gods hostage. This was an act that was not only a propagandistic display of power, but also a ritual performance for the purpose of subjugating the people they had conquered by threatening to destroy their gods. Therefore, both iconoclasm and 'godnapping' were a means to impose imperial dominance to prevent rebellious uprisings, displaying changing dynamics that were at play to gain power over the conquered people (Richardson 2012:236). Therefore, the practice of 'godnapping' was the most effective and efficient tool for imperial control. It seems to have been more effective than the mutilation and symbolic killing of the statues and effigies of actual persons, which was a commonplace occurrence. In addition, the complete obliteration of cultic statues through deliberate iconoclasm could be considered a last resort effort to subjugate and punish opponents in the case of an uprising against their colonisers. This is indicative of the changing dynamics from iconoclasm to the 'godnapping' of cult symbols in the Near East.

4.4 CONCLUSION

By comparing the destruction of the cultural heritage of political leaders and religious icons in the ancient Near East, it becomes evident that there were no qualms to mutilate and ritually kill the images of political leaders and people of power. However, with respect to cultic symbols and imagery, the attackers seem to have been much more discriminative, possibly as they feared being exposed to divine retaliation for their violent acts. This would indicate that there were changing dynamics in place that had differentiated between the *damnatio memoriae* of political figureheads or rulers and the subjugation of an opposing faction through the attack of their belief system.

In both instances, the iconoclastic acts had ritualistic and performative characteristics, but the extent of destruction differed. The main motivation seems to have been socio-political in character, with the intention of intimidating conquered nations and to politically and culturally dominate the oppressed people. The main aim seems to have been the attempt to subjugate a defeated enemy by demoralising them through the removal of a part of their socio-cultural identity.

This is evident not only with the destruction of built heritage such as important cities and cultic centres, but also with the mutilation of two- and three-dimensional imagery of royal and divine figures. Moreover, occurrences of 'godnapping' add another dimension, as this is the direct attempt to subjugate, punish and humiliate a conquered population by holding their deities hostage. Therefore, performative destructive spectacles formed part of the attempt to control a defeated enemy or a vassal state. However, since the iconoclasm of cultural heritage in antiquity is still a fairly new research topic that originated in the 1980s, further in-depth studies are needed to better understand how ancient societies handled armed conflict (May 2012:2). In this context, a future avenue of research might be to determine whether conquered subjects or vassals also employed iconoclasm as a form of resistance to oppose the rule of their conquerors.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONTEMPORARY REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE FACE OF CONFLICT AND OTHER ISSUES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As was evident in the previous chapters, the looting and destruction of cultural heritage were rampant in ancient times, as well as during colonialism. However, these problems have persisted into the present, and the need for the protection of cultural, and more specifically, archaeological heritage is becoming increasingly apparent. Thus, this chapter explores the origins and development of cultural heritage policy frameworks and multilateral agreements at an international level, as well as their relevance to the Near East. In addition, current topics such as the impact of armed conflict, economic crisis and the effects of climate change on cultural heritage are considered, as are issues regarding the definition of 'cultural heritage' as opposed to 'cultural property', the loss of archaeological context or provenance and the detrimental effect of the illicit trade in antiquities are discussed here. By analysing these complexities, it is possible to determine whether existing measures and current legislation are sufficient to counteract negative issues impacting cultural heritage.

When considering the origins of cultural heritage protection, one of the first times this necessity was clearly voiced in recent history was during the mid-18th century by Emmerich de Vattel, who was a legal theorist during the colonial period (Keane 2004:2-3; Gerstenblith 2018:55). During the American Civil War (1861-1865), the *Manual of the Laws and Customs of War* also more commonly known as the *Lieber Code* (1863) was written. While this document was aimed at non-international conflict, it explicitly forbade the seizure of cultural property during events of war. The *Lieber Code* stated that unless cultural property was used for military purposes, it should be considered as private property, making it exempt from seizure. Moreover, it was the duty of both the attacking and defending forces to protect it (Poulos 2000:13-14; Keane 2004:3-4). In turn, this document influenced the *Hague Regulations* of 1899 and 1907, which were the first international policy documents for the protection of cultural heritage (Keane 2004:4-7; Gerstenblith 2018:55). Another early cultural heritage policy document was the *SPAB Manifesto* dating to 1877. Concerned with *The*

Principals of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings as Set Forth upon its Foundation, this document was intended to protect ancient buildings for posterity simultaneously questioning the authenticity of restoration work and promoting good practices regarding the continuous maintenance and preservation of heritage buildings (The SPAB Manifesto 2017; Yount 2005:1; Getty 2022). This sense of protecting cultural heritage for future generations has prevailed and is also evident in the developments leading up to current policy documents and legislation.

The *Athens Charter* of 1931 was one of the first international documents from the 20th century following the First World War (1914-1918) to state that it was important to protect and conserve artworks and archaeological heritage (Vecco 2010:322). Another notable policy document is the *Roerich Pact: Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments* (1935). This was the first convention, which that immovable cultural heritage should be protected and respected during times of peace as well as during periods of armed conflict, when it was especially threatened (Poulos 2000:19). It stated that, unless cultural property became embroiled in military action, these sites and their staff should be considered 'neutral' during war and protected places should be demarcated with a distinctive flag with a 'red circle on a white background' containing three red spheres inside the red circle (Getty 2022). While the success of this symbol is questionable, it could be considered the forerunner to the notion of the Blue Shield, which is elaborated on later in this chapter.

However, despite these early international policies, the extent of the destruction from the bombings and looting of cultural treasures during armed conflict became apparent only towards the end of World War II. Hence, during the 20th Century, the pressing need for the legal protection of cultural heritage became evident. The looting and destruction of cultural heritage became considered war crimes, resulting in the formalisation of international agreements and national legislation to safeguard cultural heritage (Poulos 2000:15; Gerstenblith 2018:55).

5.2 THE ORIGINS OF INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

In many instances, the adverse effects of colonialism due to the exploitation of resources within the subjugated regions and the destruction and plundering of cultural

heritage resources during the Second World War (1939-1945) are viewed as determining factors that led to the creation of regulatory frameworks for the protection of cultural heritage at the national and international levels. The colonial era greatly influenced European heritage perceptions, which eventually resulted in movements to protect cultural heritage. Not only did various European nations actively collect art and antiquities, but some countries such as Britain actively set aside funds for that purpose. Moreover, national museums and educational institutions such as universities collected 'exotic' and foreign cultural heritage, long before realising the intrinsic value of the artefacts located within their own national borders and establishing protective legislation within their own nations (Swenson 2013:5).

In Britain, the 1875 *Ancient Monuments Bill* became the foundation on which the National Trust was established twenty years later. In 1905, the art historian Gerald Baldwin Brown published his seminal study *The care of ancient monuments* and stressed the importance of legislation that protects cultural heritage (Swenson 2013:8-9). With these sentiments arising during the 19th and early 20th centuries, during a time when European countries scrambled for colonial territories, it is no surprise that imperialism, looting and preservationism were intricately linked. Indeed, the ability of Western nations to protect cultural heritage within their own countries and colonies became representative of their supremacy (Swenson 2013:10, 14):

> This meant that the more cultural heritage a country could boast, the better its international standing became. This could include the monuments already present within the country itself, or the cultural heritage located in the colonies or looted and imported from the colonies (Swenson 2013:10).

Thus, the appreciation and preservation of cultural heritage resulted in the creation of early heritage legislation frameworks. However, the colonisers saw themselves as superior to the native populations they had subjugated, as they did not believe that the colonised people had the capacity to preserve their own heritage. Hence, colonial nations both plundered resources and selectively preserved the heritage of the countries they had subjugated (Swenson 2013:6, 11).

While the imperial powers may have influenced the creation of heritage legislation to some extent, the regulations they implemented within and imposed on the colonies were not always appropriate. The protections afforded to the tangible and intangible

cultural (and natural) heritage were inconsistent and contradictory. This is evident in the colonial perception, where local communities were viewed as living remnants of a bygone era whose culture was believed to soon become extinct. Since their seemingly exotic and traditional way of life was possibly related to the archaeological sites of the region, the native people were considered to be 'noble savages' who required protection within their 'natural habitat' as the last of their kind (Basu & Damodaran 2015:270-271). By the 1940s, ethnographic objects from the colonies had become increasingly sought after in Western museums and art markets, which in turn created an impetus for their legal protection. However, eventually from the 1970s onwards 'a more informed discourse began to emerge, in which natural and cultural, tangible and intangible were at last reunited in a new heritage paradigm' (Basu & Damodaran 2015:271). This increased advocacy for the protection of cultural heritage by the international community.

5.3 INTERNATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS RELEVANT TO THE BIBLICAL WORLD

As a direct consequence of the destruction and plundering caused during the Second World War (1939-1945), which affected both natural and cultural heritage, this led to the codification and ratification of several important legal instruments and multilateral agreements (Poulos 2000; Keane 2004). Numerous non-governmental international organisations, such as the UNESCO, UNIDROIT or ICOMOS, have realised that to be able to protect cultural heritage, including archaeological sites and museums, regulatory frameworks were essential. The policy documents most relevant to the archaeological sites and cultural heritage located in the region of the Biblical World are discussed here.[50]

5.3.1 The Hague Convention (1954) and Second Protocol (1999)

In direct reaction to the large-scale destruction of cultural heritage that occurred during the Second World War, the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, or the *Hague Convention* in short, was adopted by the

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[50] It is worth noting that since underwater cultural heritage falls outside of the scope of this research, as mentioned in Chapter One, the two policy documents that were drawn up for the protection of underwater cultural heritage will not be discussed further, but are only mentioned here: the *ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* (1996) and the *UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage* (2001).

UNESCO in 1954 (Blake 2000:61; Poulos 2000:36-37; Keane 2004:12, 14; Forrest 2010:78). This comprehensive multilateral agreement is dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage during both peace and war. Movable and immovable cultural heritage should be respected as the universal inheritance of humanity. Therefore, vandalism, destruction, looting and theft thereof should be prevented (Keane 2004:13-14, 26; Forrest 2010:79).

Armed conflict often takes a harsh humanitarian toll, which includes damage to or the destruction of cultural heritage, which often embodies the identity and values of a society. Thus, the overarching aim of the convention is to protect movable and immovable cultural heritage. This should be done during times of peace, especially in preparation for emergencies and the creation of preventive measures. In this context, cultural properties of high value should be identified and registered on a list to enable the provision of special protection and immunity from hostilities, in addition to the general protection of cultural heritage. However, the convention also noted an exception, namely 'unavoidable military necessity' when this protective immunity would be withdrawn (Keane 2004:15-20; Forrest 2010:79, 97-99, 100-101). Both notions of 'special protection' and 'military necessity' have been criticised as they are very vague concepts that are too unspecific to be properly understood in the context of the convention (Forrest 2010:99-102).

Moreover, the convention stipulates that cultural property that should fall under special protection should be marked with an easily identifiable symbol, in this regard a blue and white emblem in the shape of a shield. Places that are able to shelter movable cultural property should also be identified and similarly marked. Moreover, the emblem should also be used to mark vehicles and personnel in charge of securing or moving cultural property to a previously identified location for sheltered cultural heritage. Thus, they should also be afforded respect and immunity to carry out their tasks (Poulos 2000:40-41; Forrest 2010:61, 79). Moreover, military units should be trained about the significance of cultural heritage and its protection, and the respect for and appreciation of cultural heritage should be promoted to the general public. This should enable appropriate action to be in place and ready to be taken in events of armed conflict when emergency action becomes necessary (Forrest 2010:89-93).

In the 1990s, the convention was formally reviewed due to inadequacies that were noted, to adapt and enhance the implementation of the existing regulations. In 1999, the *Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention*, which supplements and improves the original document, was then ratified (Forrest 2010:80). The *Second Protocol* (1999) provided for the creation of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which is a panel of twelve experts, who were proficient in matters concerning cultural heritage, international law and defence. This panel of specialists was tasked with 'developing guidelines for the implementation of the Second Protocol, granting, suspending or cancelling enhanced protection for cultural property and establishing, maintaining and promoting the list of cultural property under enhanced protection' (Keane 2004:27-28; Forrest 2010:126-127). The 1999 supplementary document also stated that preparations and precautions for the protection of cultural heritage should be put in place during times of peace in the form of inventories, emergency measures and regulations for the removal and safe storage of movable cultural property in the event of war (Keane 2004:28-29). Moreover, the *Second Protocol* states that cultural heritage may be targeted and that its protection may be waived only when its use or function changes and becomes a military objective, as opposed to the 1954 stipulation of 'unavoidable military necessity', which was considered too broad as a notion (Keane 2004:31-33; Forrest 2010:111).

Moreover, the *Second Protocol* (1999) also implemented a system of enhanced protection for cultural heritage sites, thereby replacing the previous system of special protection denoted under the 1954 *Hague Convention*. The difference between affording general and enhanced protection to cultural property lies in the defending party's obligations: Cultural heritage under general protection may be converted into a military objective, whereas cultural heritage sites under enhanced protection may not be used or misused for military purposes in any way, as this would be a serious infraction under the provisions of the *Second Protocol* (Keane 2004:33; Forrest 2010:110-111, 117-121). Generally, sites under enhanced protection are places that are considered to be of exceptional universal value for humanity, such as sites on the World Heritage List (Keane 2004:33; Timothy 2011:185-186). In addition to the clarification of the notion of enhanced protection, the *Second Protocol* also details the circumstances under which individual criminal responsibility can be sought in the case of intentional violations, where persons may then be prosecuted by the International

Criminal Court (ICC). In addition, since the *Second Protocol* as a supplement to the original *Hague Convention* applies to both international and domestic conflicts, it also states that parties that have ratified the document are required to take action for the implementation of the *Second Protocol* at the national level. This includes, among others, the preparation for emergencies during peacetime and the establishment of national legislation for criminal prosecution of infractions against cultural heritage within their own nations, if it is not yet in place (Keane 2004:34-35; Forrest 2010:111-112, 122-126).

Figure 5.1: The logo of *Blue Shield International* (The Blue Shield Logo 2021)

In accordance with the *Hague Convention* and the *Second Protocol*, the *Blue Shield International* organisation was created as the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross in 1996 to promote the protection of cultural heritage during hostilities, as well as 'supporting capacity-building among museum professionals to develop emergency planning procedures' (Hausler 2020:767). It was founded by four major international cultural organisations, namely the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Federation of Library and Information Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Together with its various partner institutions and organisations, this independent, non-profit, international organisation implements the 1954 *Hague Convention* and the *Second Protocol* as part of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), thereby providing aid to cultural heritage and protecting it

during armed conflict and other crises such as natural and human-made disasters, including the effects of climate change. Hence, it focuses on cultural property protection (CPP) to 'limit the effects of armed conflict on people and property' (About the Blue Shield 2021). As mentioned above, the 1954 *Hague Convention* designated a blue and white emblem in the shape of a shield to identify 'cultural property that should be protected, and for identification of those working to protect it' (About the Blue Shield 2021). In turn, the distinctive symbol of *Blue Shield International* and its respective national offices represents the protection of cultural heritage sites.

5.3.2 The UNESCO Convention (1970)

The rise of antiquities trafficking in the 1960s coincided with several countries in Africa and Asia gaining independence. To curb the exponential increase in the illicit trade of art and antiquities across national borders and to recover cultural heritage that had been taken out of the former colonies, the international community reacted by establishing a new international standard-setting legal tool (Shyllon 2020:231). The UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970), or, in short, the 1970 *UNESCO Convention*, has subsequently been recognised as 'the most important international instrument dealing with the problem of the illicit movement of cultural heritage' (Forrest 2010:166). Since the clandestine excavation and theft of antiquities, art and other cultural objects and their unlawful export have been deemed major causes for nations to become culturally impoverished, the intrinsic significance of cultural heritage was recognised and deemed worthy of protection from threats (Forrest 2010:167-168). In this context, the convention recognises public awareness campaigns as important tools for combatting the illicit trade in art and antiquities. Through educational efforts, the public can be enlightened about the significance of cultural objects, thereby enhancing their concern for and care of their cultural heritage. Moreover, they gain increased awareness of the detrimental consequences of the illicit trade of cultural property (Shyllon 2020:232).

Not only does the convention define the notion of 'cultural property', but also what is meant by 'country of origin' as the nation where the archaeological artefacts or arts were created or from where they originated. Hence, as per the convention, it is the

property of a state party (Forrest 2010:168-173). According to Articles Six and Seven of this policy document, the respective states parties are responsible for controlling the cross-border flow of cultural property by granting export certificates to authenticate their origin and provenance. If cultural objects are found not to have been issued the appropriate documentation, their export or import is considered illegal and should be prohibited. For this purpose, repositories such as museums and monuments are urged to keep updated inventories of movable cultural objects. However, a growing concern is the undocumented cultural heritage that is looted by means of illicit excavations, as it is not an easy task to trace these objects to their place of origin. To hinder the pillage of undocumented archaeological and ethnographic objects, each nation may request assistance from other nations in a concerted effort to recover cultural property which was illegally removed from their territory (Getty 2022; Forrest 2010:173-174; Shyllon 2020:232).

In addition, Article 11 of the 1970 *UNESCO Convention* supplements the provisions of the 1954 *Hague Convention* by stating that the removal of cultural heritage across borders during armed conflict is illegal and is considered to be in breach of the provisions of the convention (Shyllon 2020:233). However, it should be noted here that the convention does not make provisions for conflicts between non-states parties. However, as it turns out, Article 11 of the convention has in actual fact largely been ignored during conflict situations (Shyllon 2020:233). Therefore, while being noted as an important international document, the effectiveness of the convention has not been fully established.

5.3.3 The World Heritage Convention (1972)

The UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972), or, in short, the 1972 *World Heritage Convention*, promotes cultural and natural heritage as the universal inheritance and patrimony of humankind, i.e. of all people and nations. Once member nations that have ratified the convention have identified sites that are of outstanding universal significance, the aim is to preserve and protect these for future generations (Timothy 2011:185). As such, the convention identifies a list of ten criteria according to which natural or cultural, mixed or cross-border heritage can be identified, which is considered to be of exceptional universal

importance and thus worthy of being kept intact for posterity as the inheritance of humanity, i.e. the notion of 'world heritage' (Timothy 2011:185-187; World Heritage List 2021; Getty 2022).

Nations interested in having the heritage in their countries placed on the World Heritage List (WHL) need to meet these requirements as set out by the convention and nominate sites to be considered for inclusion in the list. Thereafter, the properties are entered into a 'tentative list' to be analysed by the two advisory bodies identified by the convention. These are the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). After evaluating the properties on the tentative list, the advisory bodies provide their results to the World Heritage Committee (WHC), which then makes the final decision about whether a property will be added to and inscribed on the WHL. If a site nominated by its country is successful during this process, it will be assigned World Heritage status (World Heritage List Nominations 2021).

Thus, the *World Heritage Convention* 'encourages national efforts at protecting cultural and natural heritage and promotes international recognition and cooperation in safeguarding the heritage of the world' (Getty 2022). Moreover, if any listed World Heritage Sites (WHS) become threatened by natural or human-made disasters, they are placed onto a list of World Heritage in Danger (WHD). There are also rules and regulations that sites inscribed on the list need to meet. If nations change these circumstances, the sites may be delisted, thereby losing their previous status. Currently, in October 2023, there are 1199 properties that are inscribed on the World Heritage List (WHL), 48 of which are transboundary sites, 933 are cultural sites, 227 are natural sites and 39 are mixed sites that have both significant cultural and natural elements. Moreover, the status of a WHS can also be revoked and a site can consequently be delisted, if the conditions under which it is inscribed significantly change. Currently, three sites have lost their world heritage status and have been removed from the WHL. In addition, 56 sites are currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (WHD) (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992-2023; Getty 2022).

The reasons why sites are in danger include armed conflict, natural disasters, as well as 'pollution, poaching, uncontrolled urbanisation and unchecked tourist development'

(World Heritage in Danger 2021). These threats fall into two categories: if they are 'ascertained', it means that the threat is imminent or already proven to have a negative effect on the properties that make a WHS unique and of outstanding value to humanity. This could be a serious deterioration that is currently occurring or has already occurred (possibly due to armed conflict), which threatens the authenticity and significance of a cultural site, a serious decline in biodiversity or a species population that threatens a natural site, or similar issues. Alternatively, it can be a 'potential' risk that will ultimately have a future negative effect, such as climate change or a fragile political situation that may lead to the outbreak of a war among others, on a WHS by affecting its integrity, authenticity and unique characteristics (World Heritage in Danger 2021).

Generally, it is highly desirable to have sites inscribed on the WHL, as the status lends prestige to nations, as well as due to the potential support that is offered for the maintenance and protection of those sites. In addition, after gaining world heritage status, various countries have noted an increase in the number of tourists to these sites, which may have the added benefit of boosting local economies. As a result, the WHS status is often used as a marketing tool to further the positive ripple effect of tourism (Timothy 2011:187-188).

5.3.4 The ICAHM Charter (1990)

Developed by the ICOMOS International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM), the *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* (1990),[51] also known as the *ICAHM Charter*, defines archaeological heritage as a fragile, non-renewable and finite resource. Owing to an increasing number of threats such as looting and destruction through land development, the charter advocates for the proper management and protection of archaeological heritage sites (Getty 2022). To achieve this goal, the charter suggests that all stakeholders must work together to protect archaeological heritage by using internationally accepted principles and guidelines and enhancing them at local level according to unique conditions prevalent at a site. Thus, integrated policies and national laws should protect and manage archaeological heritage and any

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[51] The success of the *Venice Charter* (1964), which is the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, significantly contributed to the development of this international legal tool (Getty 2022; ICOMOS 2023).

inappropriate action causing its destruction or deterioration should be prohibited by being a punishable offense. This extends to the temporary protection of yet undiscovered archaeological sites until research and excavations are possible. Therefore, land developers are obliged to carry out archaeological impact assessments before proceeding with the implementation of new building projects (ICOMOS 2023).

Moreover, all research at archaeological heritage sites should be conducted according to internationally accepted standards: Due to the invasive and destructive nature of excavations, systematic documentation is essential. Surveys and inventories form part of the documentation and are also essential tools for developing strategies for the long-term protection and management of archaeological sites, as well as for the curation and conservation of all research reports and excavated collections. Ideally, the local community should be engaged in this planning and management process (ICOMOS 2023).

Through research, information about archaeological heritage should be generated and subsequently interpreted to enhance public understanding and appreciation. For this purpose, reconstructions of archaeological structures and experimental research should enrich the interpretation of a site to the public. The public use of archaeological heritage, for example through education and tourism, enables access and conveys the significance of archaeological heritage. In turn, the public can be informed about the importance of protecting this heritage to promote its continued survival. In addition to the engagement of local stakeholders in the management of archaeological heritage, the charter identifies that international cooperation is necessary to manage archaeological heritage as the universal heritage of humanity and for the exchange of knowledge/information between specialists (ICOMOS 2023).

5.3.5 The UNIDROIT Convention (1995)

Another important international policy tackling the illicit trade of cultural objects is the *UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects*, which was a compromise that was reached in 1995 following multilateral negotiations between source and market countries (Shyllon 2020:233). Owing to the value of cultural objects

for the well-being of humanity and the need for the protection of cultural heritage, the convention sets out to fight illicit trade in cultural objects due to the detrimental effect this has on a non-renewable resource, which includes the looting of archaeological sites. As a result, the convention is 'determined to contribute effectively to the fight against illicit trade in cultural objects by taking the important step of establishing common, minimal legal rules for the restitution and return of cultural objects between Contracting States, with the objective of improving the preservation and protection of the cultural heritage in the interest of all' (UNIDROIT 2021). The multilateral agreement outlines the circumstances under which illegally traded cultural objects need to be returned, as well as conditions under which compensation may be sought from the guilty parties. The *UNIDROIT Convention* also states that upon learning of illegally traded cultural objects, official requests for the return and restitution need to be made within a period of three years, and in the case of illegally excavated archaeological objects, the time frame has been expanded to 50 years after a clandestine excavation occurred. However, 'with the agreement of the State requesting return, the possessor can also choose to retain the object' instead of accepting compensation (UNIDROIT 2021).

Ultimately, the document does not offer a satisfying solution to the consequences of the illicit trade and this is also a fact stated in the convention itself. However, it aims to promote international co-operation to hinder illegal transactions and promote the return of stolen cultural objects. Moreover, given that 'dealers in the art trade market play a major role in the illicit trade in cultural property', the convention establishes an ethical code of conduct for the private sector to ensure minimum standards for the legal trade of cultural objects and sanctioned exchanges of cultural goods between states (UNIDROIT 2021; Shyllon 2020:235).

5.4 PLUGGING LOOPHOLES IN LEGISLATION

International treaties undoubtedly have a valid place in the protection of the cultural heritage of the world. Numerous countries from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have embraced international conventions because of common threats to the numerous archaeological sites prevalent in the biblical world. In turn, they also adopted national legislation to be able to protect cultural heritage at a more national

level. These laws are in part 'the direct result of earlier colonial legal legacies' as they were derived from the laws that were already in place during the colonial period and that were carried over into their early independent statehood (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:932, 935). However, numerous states located in the MENA region have ratified the international conventions noted above (see Figure 5.2 below). Where the 1954 *Hague Convention* and its protocols or the 1970 *UNESCO Convention* were not ratified, the Table in the Figure has left an open space with no date (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:934).[52]

State	Statehood	1954 Hague[15]	1st Protocol[16]	2nd Protocol[17]	1970 UNESCO[18]
Algeria	1962				1974
Egypt	1922	1955	1955	2005	1973
Iraq	1931	1967	1967		1973
Israel	1948	1957	1958		
Jordan	1946	1957	1957	2009	1974
Lebanon	1943	1960	1960		1992
Libya	1951	1957	1957	2001	1973
Palestine	1988/2012[19]	2012	2012	2012	2012
Syria	1946	1958	1958		1975

Figure 5.2: Dates in which Near Eastern and North African states gained independence and ratified the 1954 *Hague Convention* and its protocols and the 1970 *UNESCO Convention* (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:934)

In recent years, the heritage legislation of most Near Eastern states has been revised, which is owing in part to the continued and increased archaeological interest in the region and to mitigate threats to cultural heritage as part of the national patrimony (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:935-940). In this regard, common elements that have been included in the national heritage legislation include a definition of cultural property. In general, these legal tools identify a governmental authority, department or ministry that is charged with 'the protection and preservation of archaeological objects,

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[52] It is evident from the table in Figure 5.2 above that Egypt and Palestine have both ratified the 1954 *Hague Convention* and its two protocols, as well the 1970 *UNESCO Convention*. However, in contrast, Israel has ratified the 1954 *Hague Convention* and only its first protocol, not the second one, nor the 1970 *UNESCO Convention*, which would have prevented the illicit trade in antiquities. As a result of this and of the countries legislative loopholes, the trade of antiquities has not been prohibited in Israel, allowing the system to be manipulated and indirectly promoting the illicit trade of looted artefacts (Kersel 2006; Kersel & Kletter 2006; Sheftel 2012; Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020).

sites, and landscapes' (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:941). In their advisory capacity, these special units not only are dedicated to combatting heritage crime by managing, inspecting and protecting the cultural patrimony of their nation, but are also relevant authorities that need to be approached to obtain excavation and research permits (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:941-942). To govern cultural heritage within a national territory, Near Eastern heritage laws have rather specific provisions regarding the ownership of movable cultural objects. The rules stipulate that artefacts that have been recovered since the laws came into force automatically become the property of the state, irrespective of whether they were found on public or private land. Therefore, the public has the duty to report archaeological finds (sites or movable objects) to the relevant authorities (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:944-945).

In the case of private collections of archaeological objects that were acquired prior to the date these national laws were put in place, most regulations state that collectors are obligated to register their possessions with the responsible government authorities by providing inventories that list all objects, including descriptions and photographs, but they are allowed to retain ownership. However, if owners neglect to declare or report any archaeological items in their possession, artefacts that are considered to be of national significance may be seized by the state. Moreover, the transfer of ownership may not occur without government approval (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:945).

In line with this, heritage laws also require inventories or databases to be kept of all cultural heritage resources (movable objects and immovable sites) located within the national territory of the state. Each record should comprise 'a description, a photograph, and more recently a bar code in order to tighten security measures to prevent the replacement of genuine artefacts with fakes' (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:946). By means of such exhaustive documentation, it may be possible to record the historical and socio-cultural information about an artefact, which is important proof of an object's authenticity, in the event that it is stolen. Moreover, evidence with regard to past transfers of ownership of objects, i.e. their provenance, would also form part of this documentation (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:946-947).

National heritage laws also provide regulations for archaeological excavations, research and surveys. In an effort to prevent clandestine excavations and the accompanying looting of archaeological sites that supply the black-market trade in antiquities, the laws specify that the government agencies in charge of cultural heritage must not only provide for the supervision of excavations, but also ensure that the archaeological features and objects *in situ* are preserved and protected. Moreover, to gain permission to excavate at all, researchers need to acquire permits from the relevant authorities (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:947-948). However, some of the heritage laws in the Near East differ regarding the treatment of excavated materials: 'A vestige of colonial expeditions and earlier legal arrangements, partage is now largely a thing of the past', as 'national ownership laws' have ended this practice (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:948).[53] Currently, most heritage laws state that the excavated artefacts are the property of the source country and are not given to the excavating parties, especially archaeological objects that are culturally and historically significant. However, some laws, such as those in Syria, state that an exception can be made, if large quantities of similar objects are found at the same site (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:948). However, other nations such as Egypt have entirely done away with partage agreements: 'A 2010 amendment to the Egyptian Law No 117 of 1983 annulled the partage arrangement, which consisted of 10 per cent of ownership granted to foreign missions carrying out survey and excavation in Egypt' (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:949). In other cases, artefacts may be exported when they are loaned to foreign institutions for research or exhibitions, but only when the relevant government authority grants permission to do so, or if an exchange agreement was reached between the country of origin and a museum or scientific institution outside the country of origin (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:949, 953).

National heritage laws in the Near East also govern matters pertaining to the trade in cultural objects. Most nations located in the biblical world have ratified the 1970 *UNESCO Convention*. As such, they are 'employing the rationale that if there is no legal trade there will be no looting' and have placed a 'ban on the trade in cultural

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[53] Partage is a practice that usually occurred at the end of a field season, when the excavated finds were divided between the source country, usually rich in archaeological heritage where the artefacts had been excavated, and the foreign institution that had performed and funded the excavation, as well as the land owners, in some cases. It was 'standard practice in the Middle East during the later 19th and earlier 20th centuries' and, in this way, many archaeological artefacts made their way to overseas universities and museums (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:948).

material' (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:949). In this context, they are attempting to retain excavated artefacts within their own national borders. To combat the illicit trade in antiquities, some states have even established special units dedicated solely to monitoring archaeological sites and preventing heritage crime. These work closely with both the government heritage departments and the police, and they cooperate with other agencies at the international level, such as Interpol (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:949).

However, while most nations in the Near East have prohibited the trade in antiquities, the fourth chapter of the Israeli *Antiquities Law 5738-1978* (or *AL 1978*) poses a conundrum. In fact, according to this law, it is 'legal to sell, buy, and export artefacts in IAA authorised shops' (Kersel 2006:89-90; Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:950; Kersel & Kletter 2006:320). Therefore, the stock of antiquities that legally sanctioned dealers have, dating prior to the 1978 law, inherited collections, as well as objects deaccessioned from museum collections may still be sold. To prove the legality of their stock, dealers need to submit an inventory of the stock in their stores annually. However, until recently these ledgers merely comprised handwritten lists or Excel spreadsheets that had relatively vague descriptions, a photograph (which was often not very distinctive or clear) and a unique number that had been assigned to an object. In turn, tourists would often visit antiquities shops to purchase such items (from the time of Jesus and the like) as souvenirs. For the export of archaeological objects that are not deemed to be of national significance, the *AL 1978* states that an antiquity may not leave the country without the written approval of the Director of the IAA (Kersel 2006:89-90; Kersel & Kletter 2006:320; Sheftel 2012:29-30; Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:951).

> This somewhat vague wording places the onus on the tourist to ask the dealer for the export permit, rather than obligating the dealer to offer an export licence with each antiquity sale. In order for the dealer to receive an export licence for a particular object, the dealer contacts the IAA with the registry number of each item being sold, the IAA issues a licence, and the sold item is deleted from the dealer's inventory. If the tourist does not ask for the export licence, and the dealer does not offer, there is no record of the sale. If there is no request for an export licence and no record of the sale, the original registry number can be reused for a similar "Roman oil lamp – clay with red slip", allowing recently looted material to be laundered and to enter the closed and supposedly regulated system in Israel (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:951).

Thus, the looting of archaeological sites by means of illegal and unscientific excavations is closely related to the legal trade in supposedly pre-1978 antiquities in

Israel (Kersel & Kletter 2006:320). This creates a challenge: it is strictly prohibited to excavate archaeological sites in Israel without having obtained a permit from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and all archaeological artefacts that have been excavated since 1978 are automatically the property of the state. However, trade in pre-1978 antiquities is still legally permitted. This contradictory situation allows for the easy manipulation of the system, thereby resulting in Israel being referred to as a 'collector's paradise' (Kersel 2006:91; Kersel & Kletter 2006:320; Sheftel 2012:29-30; Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:950; Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020:11). As such, it is evident, that there are significant loopholes or controversies present within the Israeli Antiquities Law, which appear to be averse to the goal of safeguarding the archaeological sites and artefacts and essentially encouraging illegal excavations and the illicit trade in antiquities.

A new legal tool known as the *Antiquities Authority Law 5749-1989* (*AL 1989*) established the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), which replaced the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM). This national authority became responsible for governing and overseeing all archaeological sites in the country, as well as underwater cultural heritage. It also empowered the IAA to prosecute wrongdoers, but it did not alter the conditions of the AL 1978 regarding the trade in antiquities (Kersel 2006:91-92; Kersel & Kletter 2006:320-321). Owing to the ongoing issues experienced with the trade in antiquities, the AL 1978 was then amended in 2002 by means of the *Amended Antiquities Law 5738-1978*. In accordance with the new provisions, dealers were required to register and report all the antiquities they had purchased. Moreover, new collectors of antiquities were obligated to notify the IAA when they became collectors and acquired collections, as well as if they intended to sell any of their antiquities (Kersel 2006:92-93). This law also restricted the trade in architectural elements, which are now considered to also fall into the category of movable cultural heritage. Architectural items had previously not been defined as movable or immovable and were thus unregulated, but they had become popular as 'garden statuary', which meant that sites were looted with heavy machinery to supply them (Kersel 2006:93-94; Kersel & Kletter 2006:321). In addition, the '2002 Amended Antiquities Law also prohibits the export of antiquities from the Occupied Territories into Israel' (Kersel & Kletter 2006:321; Kersel 2006:92-93). However, the other regulations pertaining to the antiquities trade remained unchanged.

In the meantime, the Antiquities Theft Prevention Unit of the IAA (created in 1985) recognised the shortcomings of the *AL 1978* (Kersel & Kletter 2006:320-321; Sheftel 2012:34; Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:951). In reaction, it has started enforcing new guidelines for the licencing of antiquities on a national database. In this context, each object in a dealer's inventory is issued a 'unique identification number', as well as more detailed descriptions and 'photographs from various angles, which should ensure a match between what is being sold and what is in the dealer's inventory' (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:951).

As a result of the legal trade in antiquities in Israel and the vagueness of sections of the *AL 1978*, antiquities could also legally enter Israel. Following the import of cultural objects, they were sold within the country and subsequently exported with a permit, with Israel acting as a legal transit zone, where so-called blood or illicit antiquities entered the legal trade. In this context, Israel emerged as a gateway for laundering antiquities from 'countries around the MENA area and eastern Mediterranean' to legally transfer them to the areas of demand in Europe and North America (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:951). In 2012, an attempt was made to bridge this gap by amending the *AL 1978*. The new provisions now require detailed provenance documentation to be provided with imported antiquities at customs to prove their legitimacy, history of ownership and origin. Reportedly, this amendment has already had a positive impact, as it has been largely successful in curbing the illicit trade in antiquities in the MENA region (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:951-952).

Another issue is the disputed ownership of the cultural heritage of the West Bank. It thus remains unclear whether the *AL 1978* actually applies to cultural heritage located in Israeli-occupied territories. Israeli authorities argue that archaeological sites with a connection to Jewish history fall under this national legislation, whereas their Palestinian counterpart argues that 'location, rather than religious identification, determines a site's sovereignty' and should thus be governed by the 1966 *Jordanian Law of Antiquities* (Sheftel 2012:30).

In addition to controlling and regulating the import and export of cultural objects, national heritage legislation in most Near Eastern countries also governs penalties for cultural heritage-related crime. In most cases, the punishments include monetary

fines, usually related to the value of the stolen or looted artefact, or a period of imprisonment ranging from two months to fifteen years, depending on the severity of the situation and whether it is a repetition of a prior offence. In countries such as Iraq, however, the legislation even advocates the death penalty. However, at present, it appears that this form of punishment has not been enforced (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:954-955). Regrettably, despite the provisions for punishments in national heritage legislation, looting and the illicit trade in antiquities remain rife in the Near East: 'The penalties do not act as deterrents, and rewards outweigh the potential risks. If there is demand for undocumented artefacts there will always be supply in the form of looting' (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:955). Notably, while the perpetrators of heritage crime, i.e. looters at grassroots level, are being addressed in these laws, the antiquities market evidently remains lucrative, and punishments do not affect other role-players in the illicit trade such as the middlemen, dealers or buyers (Gerstenblith 2007:174; Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:955).

5.5 ISSUES AND RECENT EVENTS AFFECTING ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

A multitude of factors continue to affect cultural heritage sites, more specifically archaeological sites and excavated objects located in museums. An overview of these concerns and recent events is provided here. These are relevant to the biblical world, but are also felt at an international level. Here the relevance of these issues to the Near East is explored: 'Agricultural practices, development, looting, local and regional instability, and conflict are ongoing and pernicious threats to the cultural heritage of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)' (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:931).

5.5.1 Conflict and political instability

However, despite the above-mentioned arsenal of legal tools that are already in place, they offer mainly theoretical protection. Moreover, rules and regulations are useful as training tools for informing and educating troops and other parties before they enter conflict zones on how to act on the basis of best practice when faced with cultural heritage in crisis. However, the legal tools mentioned above are 'applied inconsistently' and thus do not seem to offer significant practical protection during times of armed conflict (Keane 2004; Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:957). Moreover, they are often not

ratified by all states or parties that are involved in a conflict (Kersel & Bouchenaki 2020:932-934). Hence, legal tools such as international conventions and multilateral agreements only have a limited capacity for protection and only a few successes are evident whereby they have offered significant protection to archaeological heritage sites, historic monuments or museums and other repositories for documents and culturally significant objects. Thus, political instability is one of the major factors that negatively affects the preservation of cultural heritage and, in turn, encourages looting and destruction (Gordon 2020:19-23).

More often than not, cultural heritage located in conflict zones has not experienced significant protection. As is evident above, warfare is a primary cause of the destruction and deterioration of cultural (including archaeological) heritage. The results of war and civil unrest often cause extensive and 'intensive damage and destruction to archaeological sites, monuments, collections, and records' (Elia 1997:86). Destruction is caused by weapon attacks or results from the collateral damage of weaponry, as well as from the movement and stationing of troops and their vehicles. Moreover, cultural heritage is frequently plundered or deliberately destroyed in an effort towards intimidation, psychological warfare and cultural genocide (Elia 1997:86).

Some recent events, where cultural heritage was destroyed or plundered to supply the illicit trade in antiquities to fund extremist groups in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region include the purposeful iconoclasm of the colossal buddha statues that had been carved out of the sandstone rock face in the Bamiyan valley of Afghanistan. During the Afghan Civil War, the Taliban gained control over the vast majority of Afghan territories. In 2001, they destroyed the colossal pre-Islamic statues, as well as sculptures located in the Kabul Museum, due to the 'Islamic *Sharia* law', which was 'characterised by extreme fundamentalism and intolerance of other religions', in reaction to an edict of the Afghan Supreme Court to eradicate all non-Islamic idols (Forrest 2010:279; Turku 2018:37-38). The premeditated and intentional destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas using dynamite occurred by a non-state party, but did not occur in a territory that was engulfed in armed conflict at the time. This event is indicative of the powerlessness of UNESCO and the failure of the international community to dissuade the warring non-states parties from harming their cultural

heritage (Forrest 2010: 280-282, 284). At the time of the destruction, the Bamiyan Buddhas had not been inscribed on the World Heritage List. Two years later, the archaeological landscape of the Bamiyan valley and the remnants of the Bamiyan Buddhas were added to the World Heritage List in Danger (Forrest 2010:282-284).[54]

Similarly, the damage caused during the Iraq War (2003-2011) when the United States invaded Iraq is indicative of the failure of international conventions to effectively protect cultural heritage, which resulted in massive collateral damage. Not only was the National Museum in Baghdad plundered in April 2003 during the invasion, but other sites, such as the Iraqi National Library and Archives and the Ministry of Holy Endowments and Religious Affairs, which had been placed on a list of cultural properties that should have been protected were also looted and damaged and significant archaeological sites were severely pillaged and damaged as a result of military occupation (Bernhardsson 2005:1-3; Rothfield 2008; Rothfield 2009; Marston 2013:63-94, 95-115). In fact, the United States 'had an obligation as occupier to protect archaeological sites and to prevent the looting, devastation and destruction that took place. They chose not to do so' (Marston 2013:130). While the looting of the Baghdad Museum drew international attention to the theft and destruction of movable and inventoried cultural objects, the looting of archaeological sites resulted in an unprecedented loss of information as none of the artefacts that were pillaged there were recorded and the archaeological context they derived from, i.e. their proper provenance, resulted in an immeasurable loss of knowledge. Additionally, post-war monitoring did not occur efficiently, nor did it prevent the continued looting of Mesopotamian sites, and this archaeological heritage has remained under pressure since then (Rothfield 2008; Rothfield 2009; Marston 2013:131).

Other recent events include the Arab Spring of the early 2010s, which was an anti-government revolution and a series of protests that spread across Arabic countries such as Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain. In some instances, this

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[54] In this author's opinion, had the Bamiyan Buddhas of Afghanistan already been inscribed on the World Heritage List before their destruction, this would not necessarily have changed the events or hindered their destruction. After all, Afghanistan has been a UNESCO member since 1948 and, while having signed but not ratified the 1954 *Hague Convention*, Afghanistan did actually ratify the 1972 *World Heritage Convention* in 1979 (UNESCO Afghanistan). According to the reaction gained from this spectacle of destruction, similar to more recent events such as Da'esh's destruction in Syria, it is unlikely to have hindered the iconoclastic actions and may even have had the opposite effect of spurring the actions on. However, it is pure speculation whether or not the inscription on the World Heritage List would have made a difference.

resulted in an ongoing civil war, such as in Yemen and Libya. As part of the armed protest and civil unrest, the cultural heritage of some nations was also affected, as was the case in Egypt. On 28 January 2011, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo was looted when protestors entered the museum grounds, proceeding to steal and ransack artefacts. Another example is the looting and destruction of objects from the Malawi Museum in Minya in 2013 (Gordon 2020:1-2). Following the 'unfinished revolution', looting has drastically increased and other factors, such as uncontrolled land grabbing, also threaten and affect almost all archaeological sites in Egypt (Parcak 2015; Parcak et al 2016; Hanna 2013; Hanna 2015; Ikram 2013; Ikram & Hanna 2013; Gordon 2020).

With international politics frequently causing events to happen in frequent succession, it is not surprising, that other conflicts are ongoing or escalating in the Near East. This has also affected the continued survival of cultural heritage. The detrimental effects of armed conflict on archaeological heritage in museums and at sites in Syria as a result of the looting and destruction caused by Da'esh (or ISIS) during the 2010s will be discussed in the next chapter. Moreover, the sudden flare-up of armed conflict between Israel and the terrorist organisation Hamas, which escalated in October 2023, shows that no resolution is currently in sight. The situation between Israel, the annexed West Bank and Gaza is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

In light of such hostile clashes, the primary concern during armed conflict must remain the preservation of human life. However, at the same time, collateral damage to cultural heritage continues mostly unhindered and international agreements do not seem to make a difference at this stage, especially when the armed conflict affects non-states parties that are not bound by and have not ratified international agreements.

5.5.2 Economic crisis

The economic and financial value of cultural heritage and the resulting need to protect it is evident by means of the two tourism charters: Building on the *World Heritage Convention* of 1972, the *ICOMOS Charter on Tourism* (1976) considers cultural heritage as an economic resource that has much tourism potential, as well as great

educational value. Therefore, the 1976 charter encouraged tourists, especially children, to learn about the significance of cultural heritage sites and monuments. The document further states that those parties responsible for the development and implementation of cultural heritage resources for tourism purposes should ensure that people working in the tourism industries of the respective nations are educated about the significance of such resources. Moreover, they should respect and protect the authenticity and diversity of natural and cultural heritage, since the protection would be for the benefit of future generations. Therefore, this should also be integrated into the socio-economic planning of countries with regard to their archaeological heritage (ICOMOS 2023).

In 1976, various governments recognised that tourism formed an important economic basis for many countries, was unavoidable and irreversible and it would continue to have a great impact on archaeological sites, monuments, museums and other heritage sites. In the light of this, it could only be expected that tourism would continue to grow and, hence, would have a significant impact on the natural and cultural environment. Thus, to continue to benefit from tourism, the resources on which the tourism industry was based should be conserved and protected, and the negative impact of especially mass tourism on natural and cultural heritage should be contained and controlled. Thus, this charter identified the utmost importance of treating the world's natural and cultural heritage with respect (ICOMOS 2023).

The second international policy document, that identifies cultural tourism as a significant economic resource is the *ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter* (1999/2002). The value of this charter is that it maintains that natural and cultural heritage is the universal inheritance of the world. Since tourism enables cultural exchange between the host community and the visitors and since it enables access, all stakeholders should learn about the significance of the cultural and natural resource base for tourism and the importance of its protection. Thus, the management of cultural heritage should enhance opportunities for all to learn, understand and experience it. Therefore, the conservation and management of heritage sites should be aimed at delivering educational and pleasant visitor experiences (ICOMOS 2023).

In addition, tourism should be managed such that the value and authenticity of the heritage of a destination is respected and promoted. Thus, local stakeholders should be involved in the planning and management of tourism and cultural heritage for the benefit of current and future generations. These activities should benefit the local economy of a region by furthering sustainable development and generating employment opportunities. Well-managed tourism is increasingly recognised as beneficial for the national and local economy and may contribute to the development of a region. Thus, it can serve as a positive force for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage and for the associated communities through the generation of funds. However, tourism is also a double-edged sword. When badly managed, it may threaten the integrity of heritage and the host communities, as well as spoil the visitor experience of a destination (ICOMOS 2023).

More recently, in a revision of the previous charter, the ICOMOS *International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism* (2022) has reinforced the notion that the protection of cultural heritage and the resilience of host communities is strengthened through the sustainable management of tourism. The notion of cultural tourism has been expanded to include cultural heritage tourism, which is a more encompassing term. Through the responsible planning and the proper management of cultural heritage tourism, the protection of cultural heritage can be enhanced. Moreover, local communities become stewards for cultural resources and as stakeholders, they are able to collaborate to reach sustainability and climate action goals (ICOMOS 2023).

Since cultural heritage is perceived as a beneficial economic resource, numerous countries have realised that it is worth protecting, which is also evident by means of the three above-mentioned charters. It is seen not only within the terms of the antiquities and art markets, but also increasingly as a resource that may lead to socioeconomic development and sustainable economic growth (Korka 2014a:xix). As a tourist attraction, cultural heritage may be a 'tool to alleviate poverty and secure a source of income and employment' (Korka 2014a:xix). However, in countries that are struck by poverty and economic crisis, it seems unjustifiable to invest in cultural heritage and to spend valuable funds on the preservation and management when other societal needs seem much more urgent (Bouchenaki 2014:6). For this reason, economic recession has been identified as posing a severe human-made threat to

cultural heritage (Korka 2014a:xviii; Gordon 2020:24). The political instability experienced in the Near East is thus detrimental not only to the protection of cultural heritage, but also to tourism efforts, which causes a strain on a country's ability to recover from a shortage of foreign revenue and investment, resulting in inflation. Eventually, economic depression may lead to a lack of imports, an increase in the prices of essential goods, unemployment and poverty. When a country has previously been reliant on tourism and this form of income falls away, unemployment increases and the poor socio-economic circumstances consequently lead to a rise in looting activities. When people experience economic hardships, they often turn to 'easier' means of earning an income, such as looting and theft. This, in turn, has caused an increase in the illicit trade of antiquities owing to subsistence looting, which is the plundering of archaeological sites for antiquities by the poor in an effort for their day-to-day survival. Moreover, the government then lacks the necessary income to maintain and appropriately manage and secure the abundance of archaeological sites in their country (Gordon 2020:24-31).

Moreover, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the halting of many economic activities worldwide, leading to increased poverty and desperation. Since a poor economy undoubtedly causes people to turn to notorious means of gaining an income, such as the looting and non-scientific excavating of archaeological sites (subsistence looting), this in turn promotes the illicit trade in art and antiquities. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, under which nations were struggling and imposing lockdowns and other harsh measures in an attempt to control the waves of rising infections, some reports highlight 'COVID aided looting'. Together with the closing down of the tourism industry, archaeological sites, monuments, museums and even churches and other sites of devotion closed their doors. However, social distancing and self-isolation resulted in a limited public life, which was characteristic of much of the early period of the pandemic (especially in 2020 and 2021). Consequently, owing to a reduced workforce with only skeleton staff and an insufficient securitisation remaining behind at many cultural venues, looting increased at archaeological sites, as did theft and vandalism at museums and other cultural institutions (Latza Nadenau & Mortensen 2021; Fröhlich et al 2020; Wu 2020; Antiquities thieves… 2020; Looters destroy… 2020). With the pivot to online meetings and digital engagement through online learning instead of physical meetings and classes and the increased use of

online resources, it simultaneously exacerbated the sale of looted antiquities on social media networks. Thus, there were some people clearly 'capitalising on the pandemic' (Latza Nadenau & Mortensen 2021).

5.5.3 Climate change and natural- and human-made disasters

Recently, in celebration of their 25th anniversary, the Blue Shield International organisation offered an online conference that took place on 14 and 15 December 2021. During this time, global climate change, which has led to an increasing number of natural catastrophes facing cultural heritage, was identified as a 'new threat' that urgently needs to be addressed (Blue Shield 25th Anniversary Conference 2021). In light of this, climate protests and movements such as *Fridays for Future* (since 2018) have also increased the frequency in attempts to generate awareness about the threats of climate change and to protest the lack of action taken by governments to counteract further deterioration (Fridays for Future 2023). More recently, climate activists such as *Just Stop Oil* (JSO) and *Extinction Rebellion* (XR) in the UK and the so-called *Letzte Generation* or *Last Generation* (LG) in Germany and Austria have become more radical. Not only are they using adhesives to glue themselves to roads in an attempt to block traffic as a form of protest against the use of fossil fuels, but they also increasingly target cultural heritage to bring attention to the plight of climate change (Garland 2023).

Activists have started actively targeting artworks by spilling foodstuffs and other substances such as oil over renowned works of art located in museums. These actions have been classified as a form of 'iconoclash', a term coined by Bruno Latour owing to the ambiguity present in the performative act of apparent vandalism. The uncertainty of the action is due to the doubt of whether the performative act is actually constructive or destructive. Hence, there is ambiguity about the motivation behind these actions. With these protests, the climate activists spilled foodstuffs and liquid substances over significant artworks. Since the artworks in most cases were protected by glass or the protestors glued themselves to the frames of the paintings, the damage remained minimal. However, the imagery created by these actions is apparently destructive, almost visually iconoclastic and shocking, and it spreads rapidly through the use of social media, garnering abundant media attention and thereby being able to reach

wider audiences. In this context, the 'iconoclash' of these actions is able to create and construct new images about a novel form of climate protests (Garland 2023:5-7). However, more recently, the protestors such as the *Last Generation* (LG) have moved on to the actual, and not merely apparent, vandalism of built heritage, such as the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, causing lasting damage (Tagesschau 2023).[55]

Owing to the ambiguity of 'iconoclash', the protests polarise society by causing people to become preoccupied with their reactions to the shocking and striking imagery of these seemingly iconoclastic acts. On the one hand, persons who advocate for the protests claim that any type of media attention is good, even if it reflects negatively – as long as attention is given to the urgency of and concern about the issue of climate change. Hence, this is a 'radical wave of the climate movement in a context where grievances expressed towards government are not raised through formal channels which may … reflect their "closure" to activists following POS ideas, but by adopting visibly shocking and attention-generating direct action protest tactics instead' (Garland 2023:10). On the other hand, these protests also generate an abundance of resentment and a lack of appreciation. Coupled with climate activists gluing themselves to streets and blocking traffic, these forms of protest are also publicly perceived to be misguided and detrimental to the intentions of the activists, resulting in discussions that doubt the appropriateness and effectiveness of the protests (Garland 2023:10). Instead of creating art or employing visual art that proactively highlights the subject matter of climate change, to induce the public and the government to rethink (O'Neill & Smith 2014; Nurmis 2016),[56] the activists are actively vandalising priceless treasures in protest. Thus, despite generating awareness, these forms of protests offer no real resolution to existing problems. Moreover, while currently restricted to the Western world, this form of climate activism may eventually expand further to affect additional areas internationally.

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[55] The Brandenburg Gate in Berlin in itself is representative of dissonant heritage, as it is associated both with the separation and reunification of Germany. Thus, it is a very symbolically laden landmark. On 17 September 2023, the climate organisation *Last Generation* vandalised this landmark by spraying orange paint over all pillars of the gate. The damage caused and the effort to clean the paint off this cultural heritage site is estimated to reach an amount ranging into six digits in Euros (Tagesschau 2023).

[56] The photographic exhibition titled *The Fragile Paradise* in the Gasometer Oberhausen commenced on 01 October 2021 and is set to continue until 26 November 2023. In this artistic exhibition, award-winning photographs and other visual elements are employed to showcase the beauty and biodiversity present on Earth, as well as the destructive potential of natural elements such as fire, wind and water. The exhibition highlights the climate history of our planet, as well as the impact of humans on this 'fragile paradise' – highlighting the impact of climate change (Gasometer Oberhausen 2021-2023; Schmitz 2021).

However, what this radical wave of climate activism does achieve is to shed light on the increasing urgency and increasing severity of global warming and other climate-related issues, especially owing to the polarity these protests are generating in reaction. This indicates that climate change will continue to have an increasingly negative effect in the future not only on the environment, but also on cultural heritage. Once resources become scarce, and economies decline as a result, this may lead to rising tensions. These may ultimately escalate into episodes of armed conflict, which in turn affects cultural heritage and the communities that associate themselves with a certain cultural and natural landscape. Moreover, climate change may also cause the severity and frequency of natural disasters, such as wildfires, droughts, floods and storms, to increase drastically over time (Van Aalst 2006; Banholzer et al 2014), which would also negatively affect the continued survival of cultural resources internationally and affect the Near East.

5.5.4 Difficulties with the definition of cultural heritage

One of the issues that has been identified in connection with international policymaking is the definition of cultural heritage. In the *Venice Charter*, which is the abbreviated name of the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* created by ICOMOS in 1964, mention is made of historic monuments, which can both be great works of art, but also buildings that acquired cultural or historical significance and meaning over time (Vecco 2010:322). However, the definition of cultural heritage is much more complex. It not only includes physical, touchable objects, structures, buildings or landscapes (the tangible), but also has evolved over time to include diverse expressions of cultural heritage (the intangible), as is evident in Figure 5.3 below (Timothy 2011:49; Bouchenaki 2014:2-3).
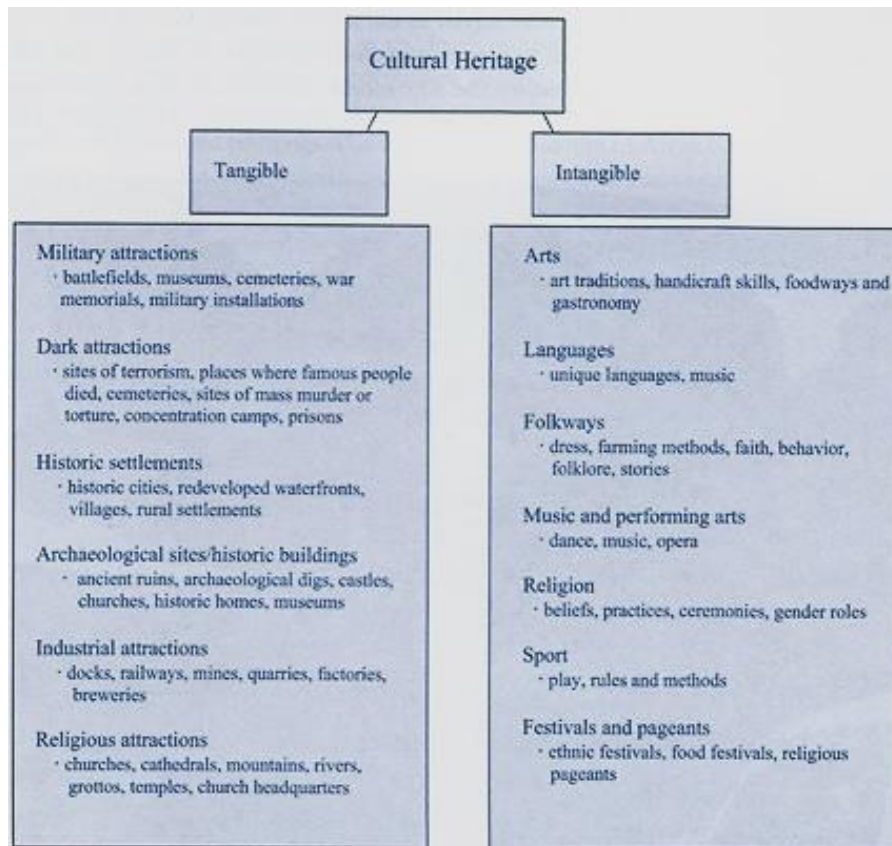
Figure 5.3: Some examples of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as tourism attractions (Timothy 2011:49)

This is evident from the creation of new policy documents in more recent times, which increasingly include references to protecting intangible forms of cultural heritage, such as cultural or religious traditions, and artforms such as dances, music and theatre (Vecco 2010:323-324). It also includes the protection of indigenous knowledge systems and the individuals who are entrusted with the knowledge and who are able to transfer these traditions (Vecco 2010:324). The *Burra Charter* or the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (originally created in 1979) states that sites should be protected on the basis of their cultural significance to a community, be it 'aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value' (Vecco 2010:323). In relation to the cultural significance of a site, the ICOMOS *Nara Document on Authenticity and Integrity* (1994) builds upon the Venice Charter and is concerned with the values and authenticity of cultural heritage. It states that the ability to comprehend the significance of cultural heritage depends on its authenticity. Furthermore, authenticity is an important consideration in identifying the value of heritage. Additionally, it plays a fundamental role in scientific research, the planning of conservation and restoration efforts and inscriptions into cultural inventories such as the World Heritage List. To

determine the authenticity of cultural heritage, each heritage site must be evaluated within its own unique context. Thus, diverse sources are necessary to establish the nature and authenticity of cultural heritage. While tangible and intangible aspects and expressions of cultural heritage are important to all communities, the charter ultimately ascribes the responsibility for its care and management to the culture that created it. Thus, the implication here is that a certain local community or nation is responsible for its 'own' cultural heritage and not necessarily the international community (Vecco 2010; Getty 2022).[57]

In addition to the tangible and intangible nature of cultural heritage, laws and policy documents increasingly acknowledge the close relationship between natural and cultural (as in human-made) heritage. The *World Heritage Convention* of 1972 protects both natural and cultural heritage, and in some cases cross-border or transboundary properties (shared by various nations) and mixed heritage, where both cultural and natural elements are present. In the latter case, it acknowledges that natural landscapes or areas may have gained cultural significance through their tangible and intangible associations and close links with certain societies, traditions or cultural groups (Bouchenaki 2014:2). This gives natural areas added value, which intensifies their need to be protected as part of cultural landscapes.

Evidently, the definition of cultural heritage is already challenging, and it continues evolving over time as our understanding of what the term encompasses is adapted (Bouchenaki 2014:2-3). In terms of policy and legislation, the definition is also exceedingly complex, which is the reason why the definition has frequently featured as a point of contention. In most legislation or international policy documentation, it has either been denoted as cultural property specific to a nation or as the universal heritage of the world (Bouchenaki 2014:4). Each of these has certain implications, especially since 'as yet no generally agreed definition of the content of these terms appears to exist' (Blake 2000:62-63).

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[57] Furthermore, the importance of protecting intangible cultural heritage is also evident in the ratification of further multilateral agreements such as the *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)* and *the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)* amongst others.

Various international policy documents such as the *Hague Convention* (1954) define culture as the property or estate of a certain nation. On the other hand, other multilateral agreements, such as the *World Heritage Convention* (1972), define culture as the universal inheritance or common patrimony of humankind, which is not owned only by one nation or community, but is of significance to all and should thus be cared for and protected by all. Consequently, these two definitions contrast with one another and have differing legal implications, where one is the responsibility of a certain nation or community, and the other falls into the responsibility far beyond the capacity of a single nation.

In this regard, it is worth noting that almost every policy document has identified its own definition of what cultural heritage is in the context of applying that specific set of recommendations, which makes it difficult to find a definition that is universal, as the scope of cultural heritage continues to expand and a definition of the term does not appear to be 'suitable for use in a variety of contexts' (Blake 2000:63). Additionally, the word 'property' itself implies legal ownership of something, thus it also denotes that it can be purchased or sold and assigned a monetary value. Hence, the term of cultural property 'carries with it a range of ideological baggage' such as ethical issues in connection with the associated commodification of cultural heritage and the authenticity thereof (Blake 2000:65, 66). Moreover, it is 'problematic to apply a legal concept involving the rights of the possessor to the protection of cultural resources which may involve a severe curtailment of such rights and the separation of access and control from ownership' (Blake 2000:65-66).

However, the term 'cultural property' is problematic, as it is too limited and cannot encompass all the tangible and intangible elements included in the definition of cultural heritage, as well as its close relationship with natural heritage. Moreover, the relationship between the terms 'cultural property' and 'cultural heritage' is unclear. In some instances, these concepts are used seemingly interchangeably with one another, in other cases 'cultural property' is deemed a subcategory of cultural heritage or one element within cultural heritage. It is clear, however, that the concept of 'cultural heritage' seems to be broader and encompasses a far greater range of elements from the movable and immovable to tangible and intangible and even natural in the form of a cultural landscape.

Thus, in the context of this research, it is certainly the preferred term to be used: In essence, cultural heritage can be deemed the property of a certain nation or community, but the international community also remains a stakeholder for its continued survival and protection.

5.5.5 The illicit trade in antiquities

As tangible and non-renewable resources, archaeological sites and artefacts are remnants of our shared human past. However, since archaeological resources are finite, they are also sought after on the antiquities market. By supplying the illicit trade in antiquities, looting has been identified as the greatest threat to the survival of archaeological heritage. Other contributing factors to the destruction of the archaeological resource base include environmental factors, warfare and vandalism (Elia 1997:85-86). However, looting as the 'deliberate, destructive, and non-archaeological removal of objects from archaeological sites to supply the demand of collectors for antiquities' is undoubtedly the 'most pernicious and difficult to control of all threats to the cultural heritage'; thus it 'constitutes one of the gravest threats' to archaeological heritage (Elia 1997:86). This is further compounded by the fact that looting, by means of the removal of artefacts from their context and provenance, and the resulting destruction of archaeological sites, is a problem that is global in scale (Elia 1997:86).

'Recent estimates suggest that antiquities collectors number in the hundreds of millions, feeding a booming multi-billion dollar trade in illegal ancient artifacts' (Timothy 2011:155). Globally, the black market in art and antiquities has often been described as the third most successful in volume and scale behind drugs and arms (Timothy 2011:155; Charney, Denton & Kleberg 2012:1-2). In contrast, 'INTERPOL ranks art crime as the fourth-highest-grossing criminal trade behind only drugs, arms, and human trafficking' (Charney, Denton & Kleberg 2012:4). However, these statements that rank the illicit trade in antiquities must be refuted. More recently, Yates and Brodie (2023) published a paper noting that these claims have been repeated so often in the media and in academia that they have become accepted and presented as a fact. Since it is ultimately extremely difficult to quantify the severity of the illegal market of art and antiquities in financial terms, the rhetoric of ranking the unlawful antiquities

market is in fact an unproven factoid that is not necessarily true. Thus, better means and research are necessary to enhance our understanding of the illicit trade in antiquities and its true extent (Yates & Brodie 2023).

In addition to grand and large-scale museum heists and individual reports of the theft of artworks and antiquities, many cases are unreported or unknown. When clandestine excavations are added to the equation, the scale of the trade in so-called blood antiquities is likely much greater than previously estimated. Moreover, international organised crime syndicates are also backing much of this illicit trade 'funding all manner of other serious offences, including those pertaining to the drug trade and terrorism', as well as arms and possibly money laundering, thereby becoming a serious threat at global scale (Charney, Denton & Kleberg 2012:1-3).

In an attempt to better understand the antiquities market, which is based on the looting of archaeological sites, it can be analysed by means of its three main components: the supply side, the demand side and the linkages between these two, as well as the people involved at the different levels of the looting hierarchy or pyramid (Sheftel 2012:31-34). Confoundingly, the antiquities market is both illegal (black) and legal – as will be explained by analysing the components below. For this reason, the illicit trade in antiquities is sometimes also referred to as a 'grey market' (Mackenzie & Yates 2016a:70) or a 'double market' (Elia 1997:87).

The supply side of the illicit trade involves the 'creation of an inventory or supply of antiquities' (Elia 1997:86). This is generated by means of illegal excavation of artefacts from archaeological sites, as well as through the creation of fakes, compound forgeries (where authentic artefacts have been supplemented with newer materials to 'complete' them) or the theft of artefacts from museums, monuments and other heritage places. This is an illegal activity that is punishable by law. Notably, while the model of the looting hierarchy in the form of a pyramidal structure in Figure 5.4 below is based on the situation in Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories, it is also representative of other parts of the Near East and of looting elsewhere in the world.
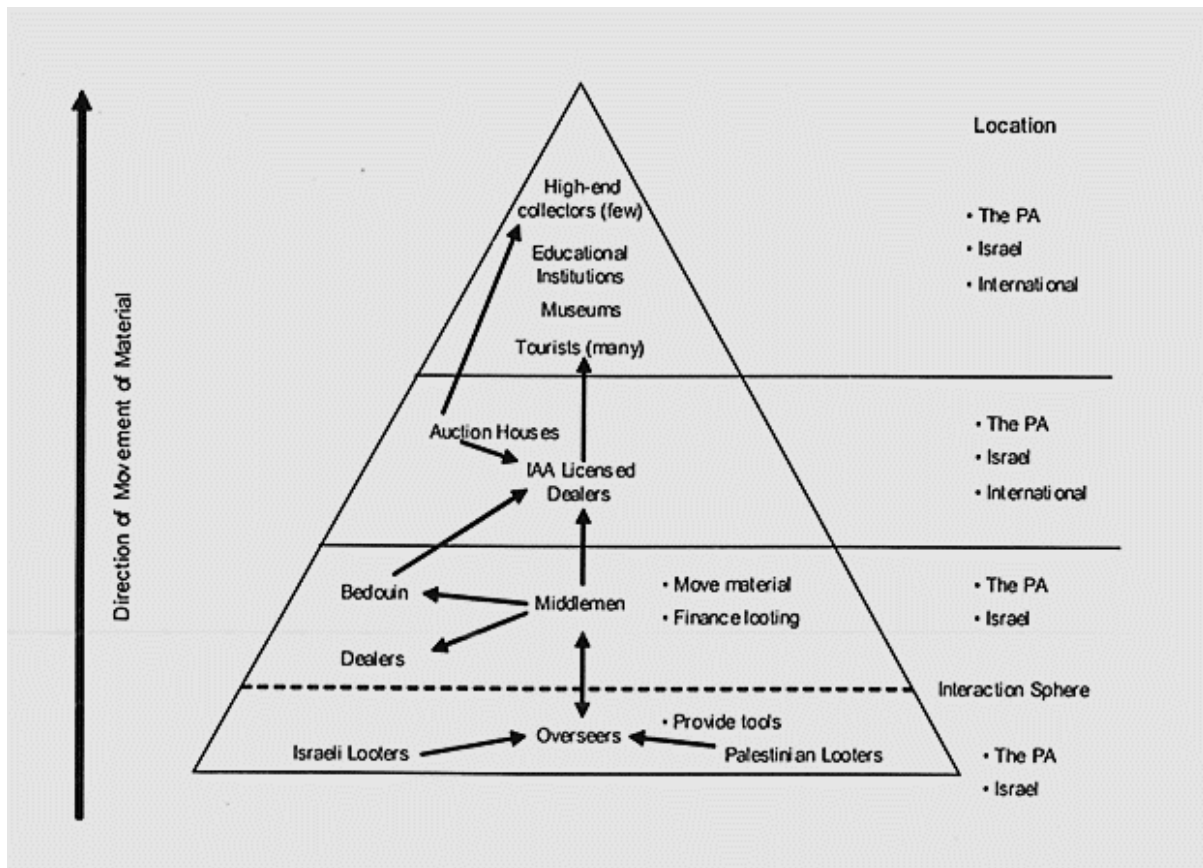
Figure 5.4: Looting pyramid focusing on the looting hierarchy prevalent in Israel and the Palestinian West Bank (Kersel 2006:57)

The bottommost level of the looting pyramid is comprised of the people who do the groundwork. Three different types of looters can be identified on the basis of the motivation behind the plundering of antiquities: When faced with the need to make a day-to-day living and the inconsistent prosecution of wrongdoers, subsistence looting may seem like a plausible short-term solution to many desperate people and these can be identified as the first group. Looters are either individuals or organised gangs and families. Usually, they are not politically motivated. Instead, they are willing to engage in the potential risk of this illegal activity to make a profit, since they typically struggle to make a living through other economic means. Frequently, they are even provided with the necessary tools for the trade by their overseers, and they gain an income from the sale of the artefacts from their pillages. Typically, this does not amount to a large sum, but it amounts to a steady income (Kersel 2006:57; Sheftel 2012:31; Al-Houdalieh 2018:246).

The second motivation would be recreational. Like a form of treasure hunting, these individuals disregard national heritage legislation, which claims that any

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archaeological remains are state-owned. Instead, they consider the antiquities found on their ancestral or family-owned land as their own property (Sheftel 2012:32).

The third group is comprised of so-called 'resistance looters'. These individuals have a more sinister motive, as they loot archaeological sites with the intention 'to find and remove all evidence of foreign occupation' (Sheftel 2012:32). Thus, their aim is to eradicate traces of Jewish or Christian archaeological heritage which would be indicative of the occupation of their land by another socio-cultural group beforehand, so that the ownership of their land would not be disputed. Incidentally, they also stand to make a profit on the black market for selling such objects (Sheftel 2012:32).

The looted artefacts are then handed over to the overseers of the looting gangs, who supply them to middlemen, or individuals directly contact known intermediaries in their villages (Sheftel 2012:32; Brodie 2011:412). The middlemen frequently support the overseers with the necessary financial support to operate the looting gangs and they themselves are 'usually from an old collecting/dealing family and from a higher socio-economic sphere' (Kersel 2006:57). In turn, the intermediaries liaise with and provide looted artefacts to antiquities dealers, who then offer the illegally excavated objects or so-called 'blood antiquities' to the demand side of the antiquities trade.[58] On the one hand, the demand side includes many tourists, who purchase these looted or stolen objects as souvenirs. These actually are the majority of the demand side, sometimes estimated to 'constitute 90 percent of antiquities buyers' (Sheftel 2012:33). Tourists, backpackers, students or religious pilgrims are considered low-end buyers of more commonplace antiquities, which are usually small and inexpensive keepsakes (Kersel 2023:264, 268). On the other hand, there are high-paying antiquities collectors or high-end buyers, who are willing to pay substantial sums for more exquisite and rare objects as a reflection of their social status (Kersel 2006:57-58; Sheftel 2012:32; Kersel 2023:264, 268-270).[59] In addition, official institutions such as museums or universities

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[58] It is worth noting that academic experts such as museum curators or universities may willingly or unwittingly also to some extent be involved in the antiquities trade due to their professional expertise. They could be consulted for the identification, authentication or with regard to the provenance of objects. Thes factors may play a role in the pricing of antiquities, the marketing of saleable objects or even obstruct official investigations from a scholarly or legal perspective (Brodie 2011:414-415).

[59] High-end collectors or buyers are often very influential public or political figures. This was the case in Israel with Teddy Kollek, who was a notable collector and the mayor of Jerusalem from 1965 until 1993. Another figurehead was General Moshe Dayan, a former military hero and Parliament member (Minister of Defense), who became renowned for assembling a large private collection of illegally excavated antiquities, which he accumulated through 'unauthorised and unscientific digs by Israeli soldiers' (Sheftel 2012:34; Kersel & Kletter 2006:320; Kersel

fall into the consumption or demand side of the antiquities trade. Therefore, provenance research becomes increasingly important for identifying whether all collections are acquired through legal means (Elia 1997:88, 92; Brodie 2011). Strictly speaking, the economic activity of purchasing an antiquity is not necessarily illegal and many middle-class tourists who aim to purchase a realistic souvenir are ignorant or do not necessarily care that they are supporting an illegal market (Sheftel 2012:33). However, the activity of collecting has long been identified as the primary cause of looting (Elia 1997:87). However, attempts to curb the illicit trade in antiquities are most frequently made by addressing the supply side (looting) of the illegal trade through legal means, and not necessarily the dealers and collectors who drive the trade from the demand side.

The linkage between the supply and demand sides occurs where the antiquities from the looters are handed over to middlemen and then to dealers, who distribute them to the collectors or sell them to tourists as souvenirs. Some aspects of this trade are illegal, especially when artefacts are smuggled out of their source country. However, once 'material enters the market, business transactions between looters and dealers' agents, dealers and collectors, and collectors and museums are protected by a tradition of secrecy and nondisclosure' (Elia 1997:87). Hence, this commerce, or 'causal link between looting and collecting', blurs the boundary of the illegal and becomes legally protected by national laws and international policies (Elia 1997:87). As a result, one can state that collecting is the main reason for the looting of antiquities and the illicit trade thereof, as the demand for antiquities promotes the supply thereof (Elia 1997:87). This confirms an earlier statement from *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena*, which noted that the demand from art collectors could be viewed as the driver of the art market (Alsop 1982:139).

Adding to the linkages between looting and collecting is the existence of 'freeports' or 'free zones'. Freeports at airports or seaports are areas that are exempt from normal tax and customs rules and regulations. Such places encourage economic activity and

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2023:268; Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020:11). Both, Teddy Kollek and Moshe Dayan, were also instrumental in preventing the strengthening of laws to safeguard Israel's cultural heritage and were in favour of the licensed trade in antiquities to sell 'surplus' antiquities (Sheftel 2012:34; Kersel & Kletter 2006:320; Kersel 2023:268). After the illicit activities of Dayan were noticed by the IAA, the majority of his collection was confiscated and given to the Israel Museum of Jerusalem, where it was put on public display. Dayan, however, was not arrested (Sheftel 2012:34).

lower the cost of customs paperwork and they have the added benefit of boosting job creation and trade. However, freeports and free zones have also been highly criticised. In April 2019 the European parliament maintained that freeports promote money laundering and tax evasion and that many parties view them as 'safe and widely disregarded storage space, where trade can be conducted untaxed and ownership can be concealed' (Trade: freeports and free zones 2021). In essence, this 'lack of scrutiny' means that the risk of illegal imports and the smuggling of art and antiquities is increased, as the usual economic and government controls are overcome during the import process and storage of goods at freeports (Trade: freeports and free zones 2021).

The scale of the antiquities market is difficult to investigate and estimate, especially because of the clandestine nature of the illicit trade in antiquities (Elia 1997:88; Yates & Brodie 2023). This is still evident today, as there remains a deficit in understanding the illicit trade in antiquities, as well as in quantifying it (Brodie et al 2021:3-6; Yates & Brodie 2023). However, the results are evident by means of the vast number of looted archaeological sites internationally, plundered museums and monuments, and art theft or so-called 'white collar' crime. In addition, antiquities without records or provenances continually surface in private collections, auction houses and museums, which provides circumstantial evidence of the extent of the antiquities market (Elia 1997:88, 92). In essence, it is a 'worldwide crisis' (Elia 1997:88). There are many recorded cases of looted archaeological sites internationally, ranging from Pre-Columbian sites in the USA and North America and even more so in Central and South America. Looting has also been recorded to a massive degree in Mediterranean countries in Europe (especially Italy, Greece and Turkey), the Middle East and Egypt, the countries surrounding the Black Sea, India, South-East Asia, specifically in Cambodia and China, and in West and Sub-Saharan Africa on an increasing scale (Elia 1997:88-91).

In addition to the rampant plundering of archaeological heritage in countries of origin, looting also seems to be 'highly systematic' (Elia 1997:88). It continues unabatedly in many parts of the world, so much so that it can be viewed as an organised crime and

has been compared to the trafficking of people, guns, drugs, blood diamonds and the poaching of wildlife.[60]

5.6 CONCLUSION

As a result of recent events caused by conflict, a poor economy and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as difficulties in connection with the definition of cultural heritage and the incessant continuation of the illicit trade in antiquities, international conceptual regulatory frameworks alone have not succeeded in preventing the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage. To date, international legislation has failed to effectively protect cultural heritage, especially during armed conflict when the focus remains on the protection and preservation of lives. Therefore, there appear to be gaps or loopholes in current policies and legislation, as these are unable to address new findings produced by research (Brodie et al 2021). Furthermore, current regulatory frameworks are rather reactive to situations than proactive and innovative in hindering the plundering of archaeological sites. Therefore, they are not always successful in hindering looting or the destruction of cultural heritage or are not enforced successfully to act as deterrents.

While the aim of this protective legislation and the above-mentioned regulatory frameworks is to establish minimum standards or ethics to enhance the prospects for the survival of cultural heritage, it seems that 'if war cannot be prevented, it may seem that the destruction of cultural property cannot be prevented' (Keane 2004:38). This statement does not mean that international agreements and national laws, as well as the prosecution of offenders, do not play an essential role. However, additional approaches are necessary to generate awareness, to monitor archaeological sites and museums and to record heritage, before it becomes lost for posterity. Therefore, finding a more comprehensive solution to this problem, which is based on more pillars than only the securitisation and legal protection of archaeological heritage, becomes increasingly important. This proposed four-pillar interdisciplinary solution is discussed in the next chapter.

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[60] With regard to the latter, the close connection and the potential to learn from the interdisciplinary similarities between the poaching of wildlife and the looting of archaeological sites, as well as the illicit trade pertaining to both illegal markets is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Moreover, what also becomes clear from the above discussion is that most international policies and national legislation address the illicit trade in antiquities from the supply side (the countries of origin or the nations where the cultural heritage sites are located), whereas the demand side for looted and illegally acquired archaeological artefacts is not addressed at all. Clearly, there is a gap between the supply and demand sides that has not yet been addressed, which requires bridging to be able to better control the illicit trade in antiquities. This breach was also confirmed by a recent publication by a range of seminal experts in the field of combating the illicit trade in antiquities and looting (Brodie et al 2021:1-14). Therefore, a different, more interdisciplinary approach is needed.

CHAPTER SIX

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH BASED ON FOUR PILLARS TO DETER PLUNDERING AND THE ILLICIT TRADE IN ANTIQUITIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In a recently published seminal journal article, Brodie, Kersel, Mackenzie, Sabrine, Smith and Yates (2021) asked *Why There Is Still an Illicit Trade in Cultural Objects and What We Can Do About It*? As is evident from the previous chapter, the current legal framework for protecting archaeological heritage is insufficient on its own. The illicit trade in archaeological artefacts, art and other cultural objects has persisted due to armed conflict and civil unrest, economic instability, natural disasters and a myriad of other factors, which have caused people to turn to illegal ways of earning an income. In turn, different actors exploit such circumstances, resulting in criminal activities and even the financial support of acts of terrorism. Therefore, current international policy documents and legal remedies are 'ill-informed, unrealistic, or unenforceable' (Brodie et al 2021:2). In addition, despite policy and legislation and various international efforts, some nations simply do not have the resources or capacity for the efficient preservation and policing of the cultural heritage sites under their administrative jurisdiction and located within their territory (Timothy 2011:212-214; Yates 2015:337).[61] In this context, the protection of cultural heritage appears to be reactive as international heritage legislation is updated and amended rather than proactive and forward-thinking.

Therefore, a more multifaceted resolution is needed, i.e. one that does not rely solely on present efforts at policymaking and policing, but that comprises a paradigm change. Hence, this chapter suggests an interdisciplinary four-pillar solution that combines

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[61] Moreover, while some countries do not have the means that are necessary to protect the cultural heritage prevalent within their territory, it actually may actually point to a scenario that it even worse: Some nations may consider cultural heritage as a resource to make economic gain, and if it does not fulfil this promise, they may choose to have it demolished in favour of something else, for example a construction project that appears to have more potential. This was the case with the site of Tell Es-Sakan located south of Gaza City in the Gaza Strip, which had been a fortified trade city in antiquity. The site was not one of 'Jewish' heritage at all, which Palestinians of the Hamas extremist group may have opposed to at an ideological level. Instead, they had no notion of its socio-cultural or historical value at any level. As such, they chose to have it demolished to be able to build high rise buildings and a military base at that location. Hence, the destruction was not driven of any ideological factors, but purely due to economic and administrative motives. In addition, the construction project was furthered by the local authorities. Therefore, the dismissal of the significance of the site possibly contributed to its destruction (Cultural Property News 2017).

different disciplines and perspectives for a proactive and more encompassing approach to safeguarding cultural heritage. It seems more likely that a grouping of efforts would make more of an impact, as singular elements are not appropriate or effective on their own. Thus, the aim is to explore if the combination of (i) monitoring sites through watchlists and remote sensing, (ii) documenting and digitising data about archaeological sites, (iii) employing public archaeology (in terms of tourism and job creation, public engagement, volunteering, museum education and school curriculums) and (iv) physical securitisation and legal protection, which might together have positive effects on curtailing looting and the destruction of archaeological heritage. Collectively, these four pillars make a difference, but they do not suffice individually or separately. A broader, more encompassing focus is needed, not a narrower focus. Thus, the interdisciplinarity of long-term funded and permanent research groups will hopefully enhance this proposed four-pillar solution.

6.2 MONITORING WITH WATCHLISTS AND REMOTE SENSING

One of the first steps, which should be implemented for the protection of archaeological heritage, is to create watchlists to identify archaeological sites and museums, monuments, heritage buildings and other cultural venues of significance that are under threat or facing extraordinary challenges.[62] Various such watchlists are already in existence and are updated by international organisations, such as the 'World Heritage in Danger' mentioned in the previous chapter, which is under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992-2023), or the 'World Monuments Watch', which operates under the World Monuments Fund (WMF) (World Monuments Fund 2022). It is important to establish such watchlists to be able to better monitor threatened sites, as this can enhance the means to generate awareness of sites that may require protection. These places can subsequently be brought to the attention of national, regional or local authorities within a specific country, or even to the international community. Once adverse events are reported, responsible authorities can determine and implement strategies that are necessary for the

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[62] Different forms of threats exist that may pose a danger to archaeological sites. These could include anything from urban or agricultural encroachment onto sites (uncontrolled farming and construction), natural erosion and the emerging threats of climate change, as well as conflict and looting (Renfrew & Bahn 2004:563-569; Timothy 2011:149-169, 208-227; EAMENA 2016). For the purposes of this thesis, the focus remains on the latter: destruction and looting of archaeological heritage due to armed conflict, civil unrest, economic hardships and the ripple effect of natural and human-made disasters, which in turn cause conflict and economic crises (Brodie et al 2021:2). However, sites on watchlists may be endangered by any of the threats noted here.

mitigation of a threat to augment the protection of a site and allocate the necessary resources in terms of manpower or budget for an intervention to take place.

In addition to watchlists for sites, international non-profit organisations and policing agencies have published watchlists for looted artefacts or stolen museum objects and artworks. These serve a similar purpose as watchlists for cultural venues, as they enable law enforcement agencies, heritage organisations, museums and auction houses to look out in the event that stolen objects reappear on the market and are offered for sale. In such cases, the objects can ideally be returned to the institute or private owner, where they went missing, or artefacts can be repatriated to the site or nation from which they were looted. These watchlists include the 'Art Loss Register', which is a resource for privately owned art, artefacts or collectables that were misappropriated; ICOMS's Red Lists, which is a database of known and recorded museum objects that were stolen; and Interpol's 'Stolen Works of Art Database' (ICOM 2023b; INTERPOL 2023; The Art Loss Register 2021; Brodie 2006b:223). By means of watchlists for both sites and objects, the aim is to curb looting, theft and the illicit trade in cultural heritage.

In an attempt to safeguard archaeological sites, not only are watchlists essential, but also 'remote sensing' to identify threats. Remote sensing can be described as 'a means to observe the surrounding landscape' by employing a variety of data sources including 'balloons, kites, aerial photographs, and satellite imagery' (Parcak 2009:13). As a field of research, it has developed separately from archaeology, but it is extremely useful for archaeology in many ways (Parcak 2009:13). Monitoring initially commenced for the purpose of prospecting for sites and identifying new features by means of archaeological surveys such as fieldwalking (or foot surveys). In many cases, such physical surveys are still performed in the present era and they remain important for archaeological research for numerous reasons. However, observing a site from a bird's eye view by means of aerial photography (first taken with the aid of hot air balloons or small aircraft) allows for a much broader understanding, not only of the site itself, but also its relation to the surrounding landscape (Parcak 2019:29, 32-33). Remote sensing for archaeology was pioneered during the early 1900s in the UK and in Italy, 'prior to and during World War I', rather than by accident, when British Lieutenant P.H. Sharpe veered 'off-course during an army exercise' due to winds and

'took photos of Salisbury Plain over Stonehenge in 1906' (Parcak 2009:14). The Italian archaeologist Giacomo Boni used a balloon for aerial photography to photograph Ostia Antiqua and Venice in 1908, and Pompeii in 1910. Moreover, early military aerial photographs taken just before and during the First World War also became useful for archaeological purposes (Parcak 2009:14-15).

However, the usefulness of this tool for archaeological research on known sites and for the discovery of previously undetected sites was firmly established by the 1920s and 1930s (Parcak 2009:15; Contreras & Brodie 2010a:102). Over time, aerial photography has evolved into drone imagery. More recently, since the 1970s and 1980s remote sensing with the application of satellite images or earth observation (EO) technologies has revolutionised archaeological research, especially when used as a 'prospection tool' (Masini & Lasaponara 2017:27; Parcak 2009:13; Contreras & Brodie 2010a:102; Parcak 2019:29-30). This technology, which employs satellite imagery, is invaluable for archaeology in many ways: through remote sensing, as well as other new methods,[63] archaeological sites or specific site features can be identified. Moreover, EO technologies are also emerging as cost- and time effective tools that allow researchers to focus their scientific analysis on certain aspects for a better understanding of a site through the improved quality and quantity of data that become available (Masini & Lasaponara 2017:24-25; Fradley & Hardouin 2019:2; Parcak 2019:5-6). While aerial prospection does not replace physical groundwork, satellite imagery and the resulting data that is produced can vastly expedite the research process by mapping and recording sites and their features, providing remote surveys instead of time-consuming foot exploration, also known as pedestrian surface surveys. Furthermore, so-called 'space archaeology' also allows for new insights into known sites by offering new perspectives or approaches to their study (Parcak 2019:5-6), as well as becoming an increasingly useful tool for the preservation of and management planning at archaeological sites (Parcak 2009:205).

> While governments do their best to guard known archaeological sites and lock museums, looters rob poorly guarded known sites and non-guarded unknown sites every day, thus fuelling the international illegal antiquities trade. How archaeologists can detect, protect and preserve the tens [if not hundreds] of thousands of unknown archaeological sites around the world to prevent this looting is an ongoing debate in

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[63] Other methods of remote sensing for the detection of archaeological sites include geographic information systems (GIS), geophysics, LiDAR (light detection and ranging), synthetic aperture radar (SAR), airborne laser scanning (ALS) and RADARSAT (airborne thermal radiometry) amongst others (Masini & Lasaponara 2017:44-51; Parcak 2009:vii, 3, Norstedt et al 2020:16-28; VanValkenburgh et al 2020:S75-S88).

archaeology, especially regarding resource management. Satellite remote sensing, in combination with aerial photography, allows, at present, for the fastest detection of larger archaeological sites across broad landscapes, due to the presence of many shallowly buried ancient features that enrich sites with organic or magnetic debris (Parcak 2009:206).

Until the 2010s, the 'potential of satellite imagery as a tool for assessing looting and destruction of archaeological sites [was] much less explored' (Contreras & Brodie 2010a:102; my inclusion). However, this has changed in the meantime. Currently, the ability of satellite imagery to identify the damage to archaeological sites during times of armed conflict and due to looting is becoming increasingly apparent, especially with Google Earth and similar tools becoming available to the public at no cost and it no longer depends on substantial funding (Contreras & Brodie 2010a:102).

Moreover, the utility of remote sensing for the risk estimation and monitoring of archaeological heritage has also been established (Masini & Lasaponara 2017:24). Cultural heritage is an important socio-political and economic asset that can be exploited for tourism. Therefore, enhancing the sustainability of cultural heritage is key. However, due to adverse human pressures, it is essential that sites be monitored and assessed for current and emerging threats. The data gained through observation may provide useful information, which can aid in the mitigation of negative effects by improving operational approaches and preservation tactics for the appropriate management of tangible cultural heritage (Lasaponara & Masini 2017:62, 64).

Aerial depictions or satellite images of archaeological sites become like a 'time capsule' that has the potential to record temporal changes at a site by documenting its overall condition at a certain point in time, which is similar to a 'snapshot' of a moment in the life cycle of a site (Lasaponara & Masini 2017:67; Parcak 2019:10). When these 'snapshots' are compared, changes become evident. Archaeological sites naturally change over time from their inception and expansion to their decline or rebuilding through the impacts of historical events and their natural deterioration or through deliberate destruction. Hence, remote sensing is particularly useful for monitoring archaeological sites to record how they change and whether this change has occurred due to human intervention. As such, damage to a site such as deliberate destruction or looting can be exposed. Thus, remote sensing enables scientists to understand the past and current conditions of an archaeological site and to compare

the footage over time intervals to understand and identify differences and degradation (Lasaponara & Masini 2017:67-68; Casana 2020:S89-S100). If areas of natural or human-made deterioration are identified, this information can aid decision-makers and stakeholders in their decisions regarding suitable interventions that may be necessary or possible. Thus, they can determine if a particular site may require enhanced management or protection, if the current measures being implemented are effective, or at the very least to keep a record of human activities that are adversely affecting archaeological sites. In this context, surveillance that employs EO technologies may assist in detecting patterns of a specific type of damage, such as looting, the location of looters' holes or their concentration in particular sections of a terrain (Lasaponara & Masini 2017:83-86). By monitoring archaeological landscapes that are already on watchlists, and by identifying other sites that may need to be added to these watchlists, remote sensing allows stakeholders to prioritise the protection of sites, depending on the severity of the destructive impact on the basis of the current condition of a site, the value and significance of that site, and by deciding which activities would be best suited for possible mitigation and intervention. For this purpose, interdisciplinary, interagency and even international collaboration may be beneficial for achieving the best results.

According to Contreras and Brodie (2010a; 2010b), physical field surveys are often prohibitive because they are time-consuming and costly. Moreover, accessibility may be hindered due to difficult terrain, armed conflict or other factors. Thus, on-the-ground research on looting is often very limited. Satellite imagery, on the other hand, is extremely useful for supporting the monitoring of archaeological sites and for obtaining reliable quantitative data that are indicative of the 'extent and intensity of looting or the damage being caused' (Contreras & Brodie 2010a:101; Lasaponara & Masini 2017:84). By means of remote sensing, not only can threats to archaeological heritage sites be identified,[64] but the severity of looting or the destruction of archaeological sites

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[64] Archaeological sites can be threatened by other factors as well, such as agricultural production and other biological resource use, encroachment through development projects or industry such as 'urban expansion, mineral extraction and infrastructure projects', which can also be identified with the use of remote sensing (Teutonico & Palumbo 2002:4-5; Lasaponara & Masini 2017:62; Parcak, 2009:205; Fradley & Hardouin 2019:2). In addition, the effect of both natural and human-made factors, such as pollution, natural weathering and aging, wear and tear from tourism and other socio-cultural uses of heritage sites, global warming and climate change, specific local conditions that adversely affect a site, extreme weather, ecological or geological events (natural catastrophes) and the like are also among the factors that threated cultural heritage. At many cultural venues such as archaeological sites, these threats become visible through remote sensing, which also makes it a tool suited for the management planning at archaeological sites (Lasaponara & Masini 2017:62; Parcak 2009:205).

as a result of armed conflict or political instability also becomes evident. By means of remote sensing, the magnitude and frequency of degradation[65] becomes apparent because of the availability of quantitative information about areas that may otherwise be inaccessible due to armed conflict or other limiting factors such as a difficult terrain or political restrictions (Lasaponara & Masini 2017:84). Thus, satellite imagery is very useful for monitoring sites during a crisis. In the case of armed conflict or civil unrest, it may not be safe for researchers to physically visit archaeological sites, monuments, museums or the like. If cultural venues are threatened by military activity, this can be seen remotely and closely scrutinised. This data becomes crucial in identifying war crimes and the destruction of cultural heritage as a crime against humanity, which in turn can be used to contribute to the prosecution of the perpetrators, should the incident eventually be tried at national level within the country where the event occurred or at the International Criminal Court in the case of international incidents.

Until recently, the utility of satellite imagery has remained problematic because of prohibitive factors such as cost, the inadequate availability of high-resolution images, limited areas covered by remote sensing and obstacles such as the surface visibility of the issues. However, while historical satellite images from the 1960s (CORONA), 1990s (SPOT) and 2000s (QuickBird), which are 'available from the United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) National Imagery and Mapping Agency and the Digital Globe Corporation' are useful because of their comparative quality with more recent and current images, these images can only be obtained at a relatively steep cost (Contreras & Brodie 2010a:101). This approach may be useful and affordable when observing single sites, but it becomes financially unfeasible for surveying multiple sites and larger regions or when monitoring cultural heritage at the national level. Fortunately, Google Earth has emerged. This tool is publicly available, free of charge and more user-friendly. Using satellite images from Google Earth has revolutionised remote sensing for archaeology, as this makes it possible to circumvent such costs and makes remote monitoring of archaeological sites much more convenient (Contreras & Brodie 2010a:101).

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[65] In many cases, pre- and postwar images of sites located in conflict zones are available and can be compared to identify damage and 'the chronology of looting' (Lasaponara & Masini 2017:85).

However, as is evident from the previous chapter, both looting and vandalism also occur during times of peace. Therefore, remote sensing would also be useful for maintaining the oversight of archaeological sites in more remote locations. Frequently, when a country can boast rich archaeological heritage, the monitoring of sites may become challenging, especially if some sites are not easily accessible or if the sheer abundance of sites makes it difficult to research, monitor and preserve them all owing to 'financial and human resource constraints' (Timothy 2011:212-214).[66] Thus, it would be useful to monitor them from afar in a time-, human resources- and cost-effective manner. This may enable stakeholders to act timeously by proactively investigating and securing sites to identify possible threats. Using the quantitative data obtained from remote sensing, adverse acts such as looting can be reported to the relevant authorities for intervention.

Hence, monitoring via watchlists and remote sensing constitutes the first important pillar that forms part of the possible solution to address the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage. Monitoring serves to generate awareness of potential threats to cultural heritage that may arise, as well as to observe current events and their often-detrimental impact on archaeological sites. Issues, such as looting and the destruction of archaeological heritage, can be identified and documented. In some cases, this may provide evidence for the prosecution of perpetrators. Through the media and academic research, the public can be made aware of these threats and the respective authorities can be notified for interventive action, where possible.

However, the easy access to and availability of satellite images may also pose a problem: the accessibility of these images for enhanced research also means that this resource is available to the general public and to looters (Parcak 2009:206-207). Once communities can detect and locate archaeological heritage sites via Google Earth and similar means, this might encourage looting. Therefore, it is essential not to address threats to archaeological heritage only on one front, but rather by combining the element of monitoring with documentation, public archaeology in the form of

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[66] In most cases, cultural heritage sites where looting takes place are actually known by heritage managers and authorities. The major problem is a lack of manpower to guard these places sufficiently, or funds to pay for the employment of security guards. Therefore, it may not be possible to hinder looting from taking place. Instead, by employing satellite monitoring it may instead be possible to respond in a timely manner, as soon as the perpetrators are at work and to catch them in the act of committing a crime, so that they can be arrested and may be prosecuted. In this regard, the threat of being arrested and subsequently prosecuted may function as a deterrent.

interpretation, participation and education and the securitisation of cultural venues. The interdisciplinary and multi-faceted approach can make a difference, while a single element hardly improves the situation.

6.3 THOROUGH DOCUMENTATION: INVENTORIES, RECORDS AND DIGITAL ARCHIVES

However, the 'pillar' of monitoring mentioned above does not exist in isolation. Owing to the complexity of issues revolving around looting and the destruction of cultural heritage, more factors need to be taken into account. The monitoring of cultural venues needs to be combined with the thorough documentation of sites and artefacts to establish a seamless archaeological record, making up the second pillar of the proposed interdisciplinary approach to address the plundering of archaeological heritage.

In archaeology, it is standard practice that artefacts that are removed during an excavation need to be recorded and labelled by means of notebooks and data sheets, so that appropriate laboratory work and analysis can follow at a later stage. However, the features and structures of an archaeological site remain in situ, or are removed and destroyed to gain access to lower lying layers. Therefore, it is necessary to record these as precisely as possible by taking copious notes and by means of drawings and photography. Together, the artefacts, in situ features of sites, notes, drawings and photographs make up a record, which in turn forms the basis of archaeological interpretations about the history of the site and the people who lived there (Renfrew & Bahn 2004:115). Satellite and drone imagery, as well as aerial photography, originating from the monitoring of sites also form part of this documentation. Together with surveys and other records, this information is also useful for determining the unique properties of a site and the conditions affecting it. This is necessary for integrated planning, so that appropriate decisions can be made to determine the best methods and approaches suited for the short-term to long-term management and protection of each archaeological site (Renfrew & Bahn 2004:538-540). Typically, the management planning process for archaeological sites includes three steps: the collection of information about an archaeological site, the analysis of that information and finally the formulation of a response through decision-making about the best way

forward (Teutonico & Palumbo 2002:29). According to Cleere (2000:11), the 'basis for all archaeological heritage management must be the identification and recording of that heritage'. Hence, this comprises an essential component of the four interdisciplinary pillars needed to ensure the conservation of archaeology and to curb the damage created by plundering the cultural resources of the past.

On the other hand, it is essential to document archaeological objects located in museums, research institutions and other repositories. Thorough documentation, available in electronic format, can be useful in tracking recorded artefacts that were stolen from a known repository. In the event that antiquities are plundered, there would be inventories with the necessary information readily recorded. Ideally, this data can be provided to law enforcement agencies nationally and internationally and the objects can be added to watchlists. Using reliable descriptive records and images, artefacts can be identified if they reappear on the antiquities market and the documentation can be used to prove their provenance. However, 'sufficient and comparable empirical data … is not available to scholars, police, or governments' (Tijhuis 2009:41; Ahern & Amore 2009:134-135; Korka 2014b:145). In many instances, inventories from museums and other repositories are incomplete or not up to date. Moreover, stolen art and antiquities are not always brought to the attention of the police, nor are they always registered on national or international art theft databases. In addition, 'no complete databases exist worldwide' and the information is also not readily disseminated to the public or to researchers and heritage practitioners (Tijhuis 2009:41). Evidently, there is a shortcoming here and there is a need for the long-term work of including artefacts in inventory lists in museums, art galleries and research institutions. Moreover, art theft registers need to be updated regularly and their accessibility to stakeholders needs to be better regulated to be able to facilitate the recovery of stolen objects through different channels. Not only do police units need to have access to such information, but also academic institutions, museums, art galleries and auction houses – to ensure that they are not purchasing or harbouring looted art and artefacts. Thus, long-term interdisciplinary collaboration is essential.

In the case of unprovenanced artefacts, the situation is even more complex. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, excavated artefacts lose their potential scientific, cultural and historical meaning without proper provenience about the context

from which they originated. Without being able to relate an artefact to its historical background and context, it becomes almost 'useless' to researchers and merely retains its aesthetic value appreciated by art collectors. In turn, an artefact's value 'will not be measured by the knowledge it can impart, but by the price it will fetch on the antiquities market' (Conradie 2016:1). Thus, proper documentation about an artefact's provenience is undisputedly important to archaeologists. This is essential so that an artefact will remain meaningful for academic research. This is why clandestine excavations, whereby undocumented artefacts are plundered, are so detrimental. Moreover, in the process of extracting cultural objects, plunderers do not take care of the immediate environment of the objects they are stealing, and they also destroy the features and structures that artefacts are associated with to get to them and to remove them (Conradie 2016:1; Brodie 2006a:1; Hanna 2015:48). Therefore, it is very difficult to trace artefacts looted from archaeological sites, precisely because they have not yet been recorded or inventoried. Researchers can thus only guess or roughly estimate what might have been taken, but they have no certainty and the archaeological heritage, in turn, is lost to posterity.

Hence, documenting the objects and sites for inclusion in the archaeological record is essential, to increase the accessibility and reproduction of available information to stakeholders. This can be achieved by establishing a digital record in the form of digitised inventory lists, digital archives and online archaeological databases. This forms part of the second pillar, which the safeguarding of cultural heritage is based upon. Maintaining and managing proper digital records of archaeological sites and objects is useful not only for research purposes, but also for heritage management and protection in the event that cultural heritage is plundered or damaged in some way. In this context, archaeological sites can be documented, and their conditions can also be recorded and compared with those of earlier entries. The benefits of online archaeological databases have long been recognised for archaeological research. However, while its effective use for archaeology has long been established, its application to heritage management and protection has been relatively slow (Drzewiecki & Arinat 2017:76; Brin, McManamon & Niven 2013). However, the potential benefits of having accessible data about archaeological sites for the safeguarding of cultural heritage are becoming evident. Therefore, the digitisation of analogue records is becoming crucial. With events such as fires, floods, earthquakes,

armed conflicts and other natural and human-made catastrophes, physical records of museum objects and archaeological sites can also be damaged or destroyed and thus lost. Creating digital copies, therefore, has a valid place to enhance their long-term use and access. In addition, in many countries, establishing digital inventories has already become a legal obligation (Brin, McManamon & Niven 2013:9-14, 15-22).[67]

More recently, newer technologies from other disciplinary domains have become increasingly useful in the context of archaeology and have supplemented analogue records. These include 3D scans of artefacts, features and even entire sites and landscapes, as well as remote sensing, as mentioned earlier, for an enhanced understanding of a cultural landscape. Together, researchers are able to form a comprehensive record using interdisciplinary data related to archaeological sites and their associated finds. By making this digital information available online, electronic copies of the information pertaining to archaeological heritage are accessible to all relevant stakeholders. Moreover, in the context of heritage management and protection, if a site is plundered and damaged, at least records of the earlier or original condition of a site would exist and survive.[68] As a result, this knowledge continues, even if the physical cultural heritage is lost. Therefore, comprehensive and thorough documentation of cultural heritage, especially in electronic formats, is needed.

Through the study of available electronic data, a site or an artefact can be digitally reconstructed or replicated. This can be used to give an impression of objects that were lost. Alternatively, by using existing documentation, including photographs or digital scans, it may be possible to physically reassemble, reconstruct or rebuild artefacts or features of sites that were completely or partially destroyed, or to assist in reassembling pieces to their original location that may have been shattered or to replace what was lost with replicas to fill in gaps, should this be deemed the way forward by heritage managers. Therefore, full records, which are stored digitally for

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[67] According to Brin, McManamon and Niven (2013:2), researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that information about archaeological heritage, including sites, artefacts and paper records such as field reports and survey data amongst others, should be perceived as comprising 'part of the primary collection and should be preserved and archived'.

[68] A digital record survives even if the physical archive, objects or sites are lost. This might be the case during times of armed conflict, whereby archaeological sites might become collateral damage or museum objects might be destroyed or become bounty during a museum raid. In addition, art theft remains a reality and museum heists do occur. In addition, natural disasters, the effects of climate change and other human-made catastrophes might damage and/or destroy cultural heritage.

long-term survival and accessibility, are essential if armed conflict or natural catastrophes result in the loss of any non-renewable cultural resources. If archaeological sites and their features are not recorded, it might not be possible to reconstruct or rebuild features that have been destroyed.[69]

In addition to digital records and inventories, risk management assessments and strategies should also form part of the documentation and policies in place at cultural venues. These should consider different possible natural and human-made risks for the mitigation of negative impacts. This includes building maintenance, security inspections and practice drills and action plans, amongst others, for the event of an emergency. As a result, 'risk management leads to the sustainability of a museum and its collections', as well as other cultural venues (Korka 2014b:143). Action plans should also form part of the general management plans of cultural venues, detailing specific guidelines to be implemented in the event of common threats such as 'fire, water, earthquake, theft, and vandalism' (Korka 2014b:145, 149-151).

As mentioned earlier, there is a need for long-term interdisciplinary and cooperative projects or heritage initiatives that combine the collection and inspection of data about archaeological heritage, as well as the monitoring of threatened sites and community engagement. Some programmes are already in place. These include the *Syrian Heritage Initiative*, which is based at the Museum für Islamische Kunst (Museum of Islamic Art), which falls under the auspices of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. This initiative incorporates six larger projects, including the *Syrian Heritage Archive Project* (SHAP), the *Built Heritage Documentation*, the *Aleppo Heritage Catalogue*. In addition, the project encourages community engagement, public contribution and interaction through the *Interactive Heritage Map of Syria*. While the project was launched in response to the war in Syria, as well as the destruction caused by Da'esh, it has subsequently expanded to collect information about city and rural life in Syria before the war. Therefore, this project includes not only records of built heritage and craftsmanship, but also records of intangible cultural traditions. By means of the

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[69] Issues concerning the authenticity of a reconstruction or replica do not fall within the scope of this research. However, for educational purposes, replicas of museum objects have their place: they can form part of travelling exhibitions, when the valuable original cannot travel. Replicas made with the aid of 3D scans can also be used for teaching purposes amongst others. However, authenticity is a valid concern that should be explored in more depth elsewhere.

project *Multaka: Museum as Meeting Point*, Syrian and Iraqi refugees are trained as museum guides to facilitate interaction and engagement with the topics presented in the museum, as well as the museum collections. Moreover, *Stunde Null Aleppo* also functions under the umbrella of the *Syrian Heritage Initiative*, documenting post-conflict recovery of urban heritage in Aleppo (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 2023b).

Another resource is the *Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa*, or *EAMENA*, which is a collaborative research project of several British academic institutions (Universities of Oxford, Leicester and Durham) with the Royal Jordanian Air Force and the Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology in the Middle East (APAAME). This research initiative follows a broader focus on the destruction of cultural heritage in the entire MENA region (EAMENA 2023).

RASHID International is the acronym for another long-term project based at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. The acronym RASHID stands for the Research, Assessment and Safeguarding of the Heritage of Iraq in Danger. Hence, this organisation has a legal focus that specialises in the cultural heritage of Iraq (RASHID International [sa]).

Another organisation is known as *Heritage for Peace*. This non-profit organisation comprises of international cultural heritage experts, 'who believe that cultural heritage is a common ground for dialogue and a tool to build peace' (Heritage for Peace [sa]). The aim of the organisation is to promote the protection of cultural heritage for future generations, as well as to encourage rebuilding efforts and peacebuilding through heritage. While the organisation focuses mainly on the aftermath of the war and heritage destruction in Syria, it also denounces the collateral damage of armed conflict in other regions, such as presently at Gaza (Heritage for Peace [sa]).

The *ALIPH Foundation* is the acronym for the 'Alliance internationale pour la protection du patrimoine dans les zones en conflit' or the 'International alliance for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict areas' and is based in Geneva, Switzerland (ALIPH 2023). The Foundation focuses on international cooperation for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict areas, by employing cultural heritage as a peacebuilding tool. According to the foundation's mission statement, 'ALIPH's three

areas of intervention are: preventive protection to limit the risks of destruction, emergency measures to ensure the security of heritage, and post-conflict actions to enable local populations to once again enjoy their cultural heritage' (ALIPH 2023). The organisation has a very broad focus, running 423 projects in 35 countries, basically in all conflict zones of the world (ALIPH 2023).

These and other non-profit organisations that have emerged, aim to address heritage issues in conflict zones by offering support and a type of emergency response. Many of these organisations specifically focus on the cultural heritage of the Near East, whereas others have a broader more international focus. However, many of these projects are faced with the difficulty obtaining funding and often depend on time-limited grants. Moreover, it is also frequently the case that these non-profit organisations or limited projects are only able to work on short-term projects because of limited grants and other forms of support or they work in isolation from one another, resulting in fragmentation (Brodie et al 2021). There is much more potential and a need for interdisciplinary collaboration, if the right government, inter-agency and government support are in place.

6.4 PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

The third important pillar, upon which the safeguarding of cultural heritage is based, is public archaeology. This approach has the potential to address the demand side of the illicit trade in antiquities, which is supplied by looting, as it includes the generation of awareness about the consequences of damaging archaeological sites through looting, vandalism and other forms of destruction. This is addressed at local communities in source countries: it can provide an understanding of the significance of archaeological heritage through school education (curriculums), museum interpretation and community participation. Moreover, the economic benefits of cultural heritage need to be realised through tourism, while at the same time attempting to maintain a balance by managing the impact of visitors on an archaeological site or museum. Additionally, it also speaks to persons located in the demand or tourism generating regions of the world: public archaeology can employ education and entertainment through tourism, combined as edutainment, as a driving force for the enhanced appreciation of cultural heritage.

6.4.1 Generating awareness through interpretation, participation, education and tourism

One of the fundamental responsibilities of archaeologists and other heritage practitioners is to inform the academic and non-academic public about research findings. This can be accomplished by disseminating knowledge as part of public archaeology in the form of publications. Moreover, generating awareness about current archaeological research and its relevance to society also includes informing stakeholders of any issues that affect society and the cultural heritage. This includes the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage. Only by understanding the significance of archaeological sites and artefacts can the finite, non-renewable nature of these sites and the need to protect archaeological heritage for posterity be explained.

One aspect of public archaeology is the interpretation of archaeological heritage to the public. Hereby, both education and public engagement play important roles:

> Interpretation refers to the act of revealing the significance of a place, person, artifact or event. It is telling the story in such a way that people will want to learn and perhaps return again and again. Heritage scholars also point out that high-quality interpretation can add value to an attraction, giving it a competitive advantage over other cultural offerings in an area (Timothy 2011: 228).

The interpretation of cultural heritage has the purpose and added benefit of 'education, entertainment, conservation, visitor management and income' (Timothy 2011:229). Whether on location at an archaeological site or off location at a museum that exhibits archaeological collections that were excavated elsewhere, interpretation forms part of the process of disseminating research findings to the public, thereby inferring the significance of archaeological heritage:

> Interpretation is a valuable management tool. It can help all cultural heritage sites manage crowds, conserve the past and educate the public, to name only a few uses. Interpretation aims to educate people with the ultimate goal of creating awareness of the need to conserve. It also creates an enjoyable, even fun, environment that helps guests remember their experiences (Timothy 2011:229).

However, 'there are two kinds of archaeology: archaeology as perceived by archaeologists, and archaeology as perceived by the man in the street' (Moshenska 2017:151). The public often has no conception of the significance and scientific value of archaeological heritage or of the function and work of archaeologists. This disparity

is concerning, but public archaeology can aid in changing perceptions about archaeological work (Moshenska 2017:151).

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, popular culture (gaming, motion images and literature) has largely cultivated a distorted image of archaeology as a treasure hunting expedition and not necessarily as a valid scientific endeavour. Often, characters as portrayed in film as archaeologists such as 'Lara Croft' or 'Indiana Jones' are essentially grave robbers, who loot and destroy archaeological sites in the process of acquiring rare artefacts.[70] It is evident that popular culture and fiction portray archaeologists in various stereotypes: they often feature in colonial settings as independently wealthy and in a male-dominated academic endeavour, such as travellers who explore exotic locations, as forensic anthropologists in a contemporary setting or in an academic ivory tower, who trigger booby traps and bring about curses and terrible consequences by disturbing the resting places of the dead, or who are on a quest to search for a lost place or unique artefact. Archaeologists thus are usually portrayed either as detectives, elitist scholars, recklessly adventuring explorers, tomb-raiders, bookworms hiding in libraries, archives, museums and antiquarian shops or as bumbling eccentric hippies (Moshenska 2017:155-161). These stereotypes shape public perception and understanding of archaeological heritage and the work of archaeologists. These public images may be the only way that some people have been exposed to archaeology. As such, it 'shapes the popular perception of archaeology and archaeologists, both positive and negative' (Moshenska 2017:154-155).

Interpretation helps shape the public image of archaeology. It educates about the significance of archaeological heritage in an entertaining and memorable manner and highlights the need to safeguard the shared universal heritage of humankind. Interpretation helps make archaeological heritage relevant to the present by informing the public how their present circumstances were shaped in and by the past and how cultural heritage remains a central concern in the present. Moreover, it can function as

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[70] Popular fiction and public and social media are very influential in inducing certain behaviour such as luring people to travel. This is evident by means of literary and film-induced tourism, whereby novels and films have the potential to induce travel to the locations, where a story or film is set or believed to be set, where it was filmed or places where authors lived, which they were inspired by and where they created their work. Thus, novels and films (motion pictures and series) and related media have the side benefit of being effective as destination marketing tools (Beeton 2005; Roesch 2009; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert 2010; Hoffmann 2013; Hoffmann 2015). As such, fiction is similarly influential in portraying archaeologists as treasure hunters or pseudo-scientists and not necessarily as serious scientific researchers.

a medium for managing visitors at an archaeological site or museum and facilitate the engagement of local communities (Timothy 2011:231, 235). This may promote the sustainability of museums and heritage sites by 'stimulating a sense of ownership and care' (Timothy 2011:235).

Another aspect of public archaeology is public participation and community engagement. When communities and other stakeholders are able to connect to and access cultural heritage, they are potentially empowered. Thus, their participation in and engagement with cultural heritage enables them to play a more active role in decision-making processes. In this manner, local communities gain a voice and stake in the planning and management of cultural heritage at the grassroots level, as opposed to a top down approach whereby decisions are imposed on them. Ultimately, community engagement can lead to social transformations, as tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage remain relevant to its stakeholders. However, appropriate mechanisms for the encompassing engagement of local communities in the governance of cultural heritage are still lacking and this requires more research and capacity building to be able to succeed in the long-term (Hassan 2021:23, 32-33).

In addition to the participation of local communities, community engagement also comprises internships, training and volunteering at cultural venues. With respect to volunteering, an interesting dynamic exists between volunteer work and tourism:

> Volunteer tourism, sometimes referred to as voluntourism or volunteer vacations, refers to people traveling to assist in unpaid charity efforts. There are many different types of volunteer travel experiences, including building houses and digging wells in third-world villages, planting trees and fixing fences in national parks, educating children in schools, cleaning up after a natural disaster, teaching women to read, instructing villagers how to plant certain disease-resistant vegetables, nurses and physicians travelling to offer free health care in less-developed regions, short-term missionaries sharing a religious message or short-term volunteer positions in national and state parks' (Timothy 2011:339).

Volunteers offer their free time and travel principally for altruistic purposes. In exchange, they hope to gain practical experience at an international level and to build their resumés in the process. Moreover, they are often interested in meeting like-minded individuals in the process of participating in a worthwhile task. Volunteering also usually encompasses an educational element: learning a (new) language, gaining work experience or gaining exposure to a new field of interest. Other benefits include self-discovery and fulfilling experiences (Timothy 2011:339-342). Volunteer travel also

extends to scientific endeavours such as archaeological excavations. As part of volunteer archaeology, the travellers are willing to participate in training, and they are supervised by experienced and professional heritage practitioners. Volunteer tourism is becoming increasingly organised and commercialised, and some travel intermediaries and tour agencies such as the *Earthwatch Institute* even offer volunteer package holidays (Timothy 2011:340, 341). On the other hand, archaeological research often relies on student volunteers or amateur archaeologists 'to meet … scientific and budget goals', so that tight research budgets 'can be stretched further and more work accomplished' (Timothy 2011:340-341). By aiding in the research process, volunteers closely engage and interact with cultural heritage. Through volunteering as a form of public engagement and participation, they become stakeholders of archaeological sites and museums with which they interact, as they become more sensitive to the issues affecting those cultural places in the process.

Cultural tourists are usually well-educated and usually travel for the main reason of visiting to experience culture, including archaeological sites. As such, they are prone to be more receptive to and sensitive to the safeguarding of cultural heritage sites. Since cultural heritage is the main motivation and justification for their trip, tourism can thus 'act as an impetus for creating public awareness of the need to preserve' this resource base (Timothy 2011:163).

6.4.2 Economic tourism benefits and visitor management

The exploitation of the cultural resource base for tourism significantly contributes to the socio-economic sustainability and development of a nation. Therefore, cultural heritage should be considered an 'important factor of economic growth' (Masini & Soldovieri 2017:2). Thus, since the heritage sector is crucial, ensuring appropriate visitor management so that the carrying capacity of a site is not exceeded and thereby ensuring the protection of cultural venues such as archaeological sites through adequate physical planning is necessary. In this context, the zoning of archaeological sites becomes important (see Figure 6.1 below), as it keeps traffic away from sensitive areas and has the potential to manage visitor flows and congestion by streamlining the movement of stakeholders through a site (Timothy 2011:342-343). Moreover, the interpretation of the significance and sensitivity of archaeological heritage can

contribute to positive tourist behaviour. Ensuring appropriate visitor behaviour is thus not only the domain of security staff, but also that of invigilators and tourist guides. Inappropriate activities should be indicated in a sensitive and friendly manner and the staff should set examples for best practice at sites. For example, to reinforce and instil appropriate behaviour, tourist guides, security or invigilating staff, as well as clear signage, could request that tourists should not climb on structures or continuously touch sensitive features at archaeological sites, to dispose of litter in the rubbish bins provided on sites and to remain on demarcated paths (Timothy 2011:306-311).
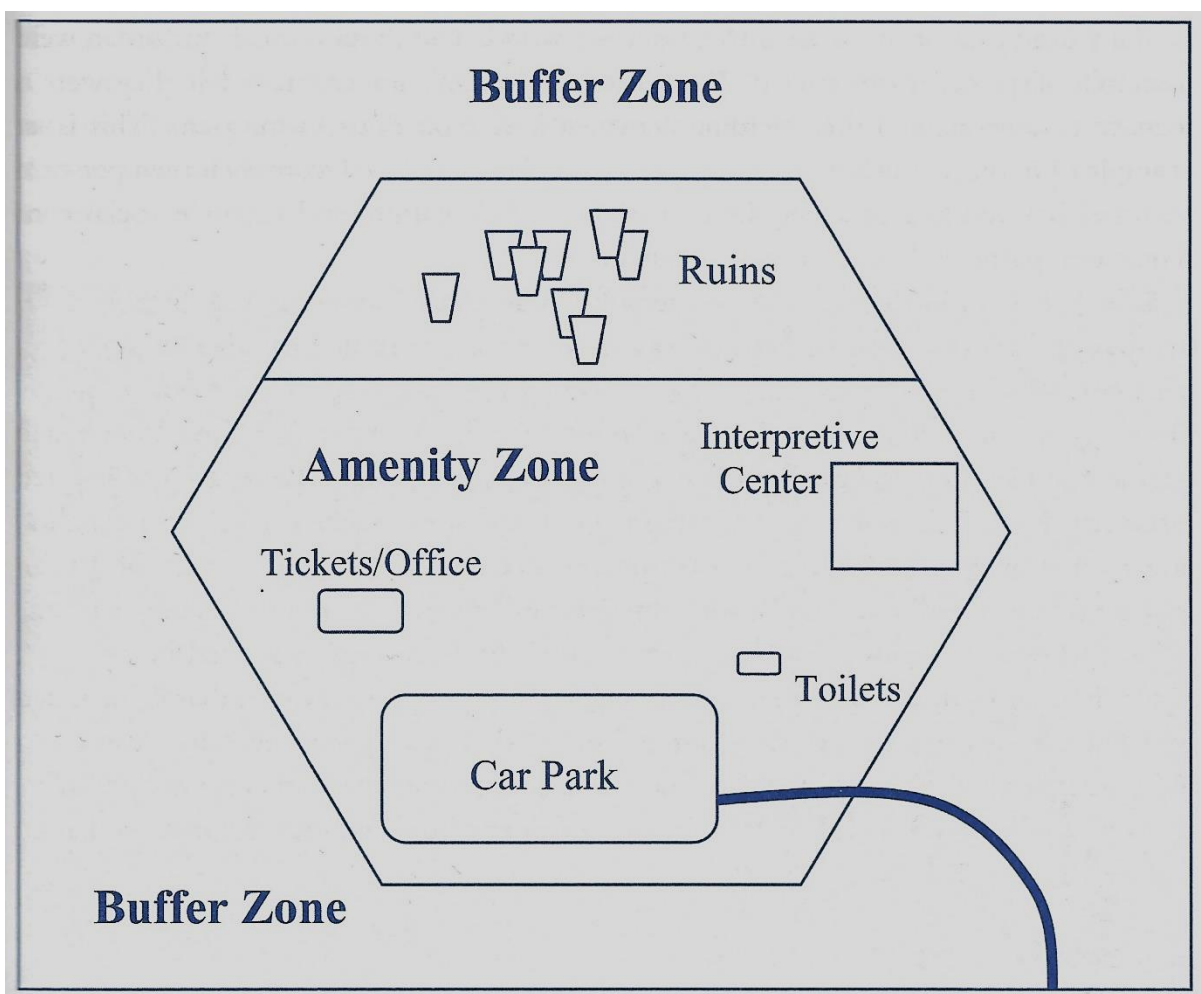

Figure 6.1: Zoning at archaeological sites (Timothy 2011:343)

Through interpretation, archaeological sites can also generate an income. While many heritage managers and researchers perceive tourism as an unnecessary evil, since

tourism has many side effects that can negatively affect archaeological sites[71] (Timothy 2011:149-163), others concede that entrance fees and donations gained from the tourism industry can be invested back into the archaeological site to fund its maintenance, preservation, protection and research at the site. This can have many positive ripple effects through direct and indirect employment opportunities generated through the tourism industry (Timothy 2011:163-164).[72] Therefore, archaeology can become a source of income for a region, not only through tourism and interpretation (entrance fees to sites and museums, as well as guided tours), but also through foreign archaeological missions: 'The employment of local people on archaeological expeditions is another way to improve the economies of poor villages and towns' (Parcak 2009:207). Foreign specialists can also aid in the training of local archaeologists. Local heritage practitioners can learn from and gain exposure to the methods and practices employed by international researchers, thereby enhancing their own skill sets through capacity building. This also enhances conservation and heritage management at the local level (Parcak 2009:207).

Further economic benefits of tourism include income generation, which in turn can be employed to support the employment of staff and the preservation of heritage places (Timothy 2011:163). Moreover, since tourism is labour intensive, it creates opportunities for direct and indirect employment. Therefore, tourism can offer job creation and act as an economic multiplier for a region (Timothy 2011:163-164). This can result in regional income growth (Timothy 2011:164-165) and the generation of tax revenue (Timothy 2011:165), as well as the improvement of regional infrastructure

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[71] The negative effects of tourism on cultural heritage sites include socio-cultural impacts such as the 'conflicting use of social space', 'cultural change', 'cultural commodification', 'cultural theft' or appropriation, 'forced displacement' and conflicting host-guest relationships (Timothy 2011:150-157). Tourism also has some negative impacts that physically affect cultural venues: wear and tear is caused by the strain of crowds and masses of people visiting heritage attractions as they often climb on structures, touch statues and the large amount of foot traffic through sites. Large numbers of visitors may further strain the fabric of a site due to an increase in humidity from body heat and breathing (Renfrew & Bahn 2004:569). Related to wear and tear is erosion caused by soil compaction, when visitors leave designated walkways and compact the soil in green areas that buffer heritage sites. Moreover, pollution and littering are harmful, as well as vandalism by leaving behind markings or graffiti. Moreover, picking up and collecting 'souvenirs' such as rocks, potsherds, mosaic or even damaging heritage by breaking off pieces of statues is not only illegal, but also very unscrupulous and harmful and results in the loss of artefacts, and their context or provenience and their provenance (Teutonico & Palumbo 2002:6-7; Timothy 2011:158-163).

[72] In most cases, the entrance fees and interpretation fees, as well as sales of publications and souvenirs on-site may be insufficient to cover the upkeep, research and preservation of a site and would need to be subsidised by government grants or funds. Tourism may have benefits for the region as a whole, but the cultural resource that draws tourism may need additional funding, especially if it is not a site attracting mass tourism. In Israel, the national archaeological parks managed, conserved and protected by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority would thus be subsidised by the government (Israel Nature and Parks Authority 2019a).

to support local communities and tourism initiatives – resulting in the development of the broader tourist destinations. However, the host communities need to be receptive to these initiatives, and tourism has to be beneficial for them, so that they will support tourism based on archaeological attractions. Therefore, the development of archaeological sites for tourism needs to be community-based.

6.5 SAFETY AND SECURITY

The fourth pillar comprises safety and security. While archaeology has sought to study the lives of earlier societies, it has also been equated with imperial dominance in the past. In addition, Western regimes previously used the insights gained from archaeologists to subvert local communities, which in turn compromised the reputation of archaeology and anthropology as a field of study, kindling mistrust among locals. In addition, archaeology has also long been entangled with the military, with known cases of espionage carried out by archaeologists during the World Wars to serve and further the cause of their nations. This further 'damaged the integrity of scholarship and the credibility of anthropologists everywhere' (Emberling 2008:446).

While certainly not all archaeologists have engaged in misconduct or such nefarious activities, it is nevertheless not surprising that host communities in archaeological source countries often treat foreign academic missions with suspicion. This is especially the case, when such ethical misconduct occurred while researchers acted against 'the basic ethical principles of anthropological fieldwork' (Emberling 2008:447).[73] Regardless, academics have worked with the military in the past and frequently continue to do so at present, as it is evident that 'the military has realised the importance of understanding culture in the abstract as well as specific cultures, and that they will incorporate their understandings into training and planning whether

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[73] During World War II, archaeologists and other researchers did not consider it problematic to support their own nations within a foreign territory by offering their forces knowledge gained from working with local communities. Thereafter, during the Vietnam War, it was a vastly different situation. The army of the United States faced a guerilla warfare and did not have the ability to distinguish 'combatants from civilians' (Emberling 2008:447). In this regard they specifically consulted anthropologists due to their fieldwork experience to inform their tactics, which led to the defeat of their opponents with many lives lost (Emberling 2008:447). It was as a result of actions such as these, which were not at all in line with the ethical principles of anthropological fieldwork, namely 'doing no harm to those we study and openness and transparency about our purposes in conducting fieldwork', and in terms of past military collaboration that researchers (not only anthropologists) would be subsequently mistrusted by host communities (Emberling 2008:447).

professional anthropologists are involved or not' (Emberling 2008:448). Therefore, the relationship between archaeology and the military is often fraught with tension.

However, there are mutually beneficial ways in which archaeologists and heritage practitioners, the public and the military can work together for the goal of protecting and respecting cultural heritage, even in extreme situations such as conflict and disaster (Rush 2010a:1). It is paramount that armed forces should be trained in the history and significance of cultural heritage. Moreover, military personnel should learn about the necessary *modus operandi*, ethical practices and moral obligations in the treatment of cultural heritage before, during and after armed conflict. Thus, deployed soldiers should be sensitised about the need to protect cultural heritage from looting and destruction, as well as the needs and priorities of the associated local communities as stakeholders (Radcliffe 2010:28-33; Brown 2010:60-72; Zeidler & Rush 2010:73-85; Rush 2010b:86-97; Rush 2010c:98-107; Siebrandt 2010:126-137; Rush 2015:163-165, 172-173). This can facilitate engagement and dialogue, as well as cooperation for safeguarding archaeological sites. Moreover, it would be possible to raise the awareness of military personnel of the fundamental humanitarian rights of local communities to retain access to tangible and intangible forms of their cultural heritage, so that they are not excluded from it but rather engaged in its protection. This aspect of securitisation and raising awareness within the armed forces of the need to protect cultural heritage interlinks with, and is closely related to the benefits of public archaeology as discussed above.

6.5.1 Training and imparting an ethical code of conduct

Notably, securing archaeological heritage extends far beyond the domain of the military. To enable the protection of cultural heritage in diverse settings, such as an archaeological site or landscape, a historical monument or objects in a museum, the behaviour of all persons who interact with it should be directed at its protection and to prevent harmful behaviour. Since this would serve the continued safeguarding of archaeological heritage in particular, various stakeholders should have an ethical code of conduct ingrained in them to further this purpose.

Tourists and tourism practitioners should also adhere to the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* (GCET), as set out by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). This code of conduct comprises ten Articles that are concerned with the 'economic, social, cultural and environmental components of travel and tourism', so that tourism as an industry and activity may take place responsibly and sustainably (UNWTO [sa]). Article Four is particularly applicable in this context, which stresses that tangible and intangible cultural heritage is the universal inheritance of humanity and should be accessible for respectful public engagement, but also protected and preserved for posterity (UNWTO [sa]).

Therefore, excursionists and tourists visiting cultural venues should behave in a respectful way so that they do not damage the site. Typically, the request is to take only photographs and memories with you and to leave behind only footprints. Picking up or, in any other way removing artefacts from an archaeological site as a souvenir, is in most instances punishable by fines or legal action (Timothy 2011:155, 217). Similarly, leaving marks behind in the form of writing, painting or carving, such as graffiti of names, dates or comments, is extremely harmful to cultural heritage sites and may even cause irreparable damage. It also detracts from the spiritual quality and aesthetic beauty of a site. Both, collecting and graffiti, are considered vandalism (Timothy 2011:160-161). These actions not only are highly unethical, but also have punitive or legal ramifications.

In addition, in most countries purchasing antiquities as souvenirs, whether from a licenced dealer, vendor or digger, is not only unethical, as this may support the illicit trade in antiquities, but also illegal. Having purchased souvenirs or small antiquities, many tourists are not aware that this is against the law and are shocked, when they are detained for seemingly smuggling artefacts, even if these were obtained in a legal sale. Therefore, tourists should be made aware that this may have serious negative consequences (Timothy 2011:155, 217).

In line with this, heritage practitioners are guided by national legislation and international policy documents on how to conduct research and safeguard heritage in an ethically professional, responsible and consultative manner (Vitelli 1996: 20-21; Renfrew & Bahn 2004:554), as is also evident in Chapter Five of this thesis. With

stakeholders utilising cultural heritage for a myriad of reasons, heritage practitioners and any other staff working at heritage sites should set a positive example by encouraging and demonstrating ethical and appropriate behaviour. Thus, policy and legislation are ethical guidelines for all employees at cultural heritage sites not only to protect and safeguard, but also to provide access to sites so that local communities, tourists and other stakeholders are able to have meaningful experiences and interactions. Only through opportunities to engage with cultural heritage, can audiences gain an enhanced awareness of heritage issues and generate a better understanding and appreciation of the significance and meaning of archaeological sites, monuments and museums. This element is closely related to generating awareness through public archaeology, as noted above (see section 6.4 of this chapter).

In addition to ethical codes of conduct, all employees at cultural venues should receive at least basic security training as part of their continuous development skills. This especially includes heritage practitioners at cultural venues, who may be in direct contact with the public. They need to understand the concept of situational awareness to be able to notify security staff in case something seems to be out of the ordinary and so that they are equipped to react to situations in a friendly and deescalating manner. Conversely, security staff should ideally receive training about the significance of the cultural heritage they are protecting, so that they gain a stake in protecting it through this empowering knowledge. Recently, cultural venues such as museums, art galleries and archaeological sites have increasingly become targets of crime,[74] environmental activists and terrorists. Examples here include the infamous 'Luxor massacre' at the Temple of Hatshepsut in Egypt on 17 November 1997 (Stock 2001/2002) and the Bardo National Museum terrorist attack in Tunisia on 18 March 2015 (BBC News 2015), as well as the environmentalist iconoclash mentioned in the previous chapter. Therefore, while heritage protection has focused mainly on conservation in the past, additional measures have subsequently become necessary. Thus, in addition to trained security personnel, all invigilators at museums, site guides and reception staff should attempt to, when applicable, interact directly with visitors at cultural venues. As such, they should learn to develop situational awareness through

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[74] Burglaries and armed robberies in cultural venues, and even thefts perpetrated by museum staff, have also increasingly made the news in recent times (Layne 2009:137; Drent 2009:143).

observation and non-racial behavioural profiling, or simply use their gut feelings, to realise when a situation is not part of normal visitor behaviour. In addition, they should be trained on how to respond to such situations in an appropriate, sensitive and proactive manner (Ahern & Amore 2009:135; Drent 2009).

6.5.2 Security measures and risk management

In addition to security training to promote situational awareness and ethical codes of conduct, heritage practitioners (should) strive to conduct their work in a way that ensures the continued safeguarding of archaeological heritage. However, in practice, further measures at archaeological sites, museums and other cultural venues should be implemented to secure these sites. To reduce the vulnerability of cultural venues to theft, organisational, constructional and electronic (OCE) security measures should be introduced where feasible (Drent 2009:143). Remedies to the internal and external theft of museum objects are 'available to institutions of any size, scope, or budget' through a number of basic steps (Layne 2009:139). Often, in the absence of sufficient funds to implement technical equipment and due to limited staff, improved operational procedures and the frequent repetition of security instructions can help reinforce appropriate staff behaviour and can be an invaluable component for better security. While each cultural venue is unique in size, layout and budgetary and staff requirements, pre-emptive prevention is better than finding a cure after a problem has already occurred. Thus, risk prevention measures need to be proactive rather than reactive and it is essential to have methods, procedures and measures in place before a bad situation occurs (Layne 2009:139).

Cultural venues such as archaeological sites and museums should be proactively managed and protected against possible threats. This includes the employment of security staff[75] to implement these measures and continuous professional skills development. Moreover, in the event of theft or other security threats, they need to collaborate with law enforcement agencies so that wrongdoers can be prosecuted

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[75] When security staff is employed from the local community, they would gain a stake in the cultural venue, as their livelihood depends on the safeguarding of the cultural assets. Moreover, when their training not only includes the security of the art, artefacts and/or archaeological site, but also informs them about the significance of the cultural heritage that is under protection, it may be even more beneficial as they themselves become stakeholders. Thus, the aim for such continued educational efforts is that employees gain loyalty and a sense of ownership that would benefit the safeguarding of the cultural assets.

according to national or international laws (as is evident in the previous chapter). In addition, to be able to effectively secure archaeological heritage and associated cultural venues to address cultural heritage crime, it is essential to have a better understanding of the illicit trade in art and antiquities, which has often been directly associated with other forms of organised crime (Teutonico & Palumbo 2002:7).

6.6 AN IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF THE ILLICIT TRADE IN ANTIQUITIES AND FACTORS PROMOTING PLUNDERING

The four pillars (monitoring, recording, public archaeology and security) proposed above require the collaboration of different academic disciplines, as well as international agencies and organisations. However, to effectively address the problem of the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage in the Near East, the proposed four-pillar approach needs to go hand-in-hand with a better understanding of the illicit trade in antiquities – especially at an interdisciplinary and collaborative level. The four pillars also play a substantial role in monitoring and remote sensing, documenting of past heritage-related crimes, criminology and public engagement, which are all components that are necessary for an enhanced and more in-depth understanding of the illicit trade in antiquities.

6.6.1 Case study: The Arab Spring in Egypt – The disconnectedness of communities from their heritage

Ever since the 2009 international economic crisis, but even more so the revolution in Egypt in conjunction with the 2011 Arab Spring, looting activities driving the illicit trade in antiquities have dramatically increased (Hanna 2013; Hanna 2015; Parcak 2015; Parcak et al 2016; Gordon 2020). While looting was already present during the Mubarak regime, albeit to a lesser degree, a marked rise was noted thereafter, especially in light of continued civil unrest and a lack of security presence at archaeological sites due to increased security demands elsewhere (Hanna 2013:371; Ikram 2013:367; Parcak et al 2016:189; Gordon 2020:19-23).

This seems to stem from the disconnection of the Egyptian people from the archaeological (and other cultural heritage) sites. According to Hanna (2015:47) and Gordon (2020:66-70), the Egyptian people were denied access to their heritage in

multiple ways. They were physically deprived of access to their archaeological sites, while tourists were allowed to enter. Moreover, in an attempt to halt urban encroachment, walls were constructed around archaeological sites, which in turn became barriers that severed interactive communal ties to these heritage places. In addition, research into archaeological sites was dominated by non-Egyptians and published in foreign languages. Thus, the Egyptian people were marginalised from their cultural heritage as they did not gain access to new knowledge that was generated about that heritage (Hanna 2015:47; Gordon 2020:66-70).

In addition to the absence of physical access, local communities also lacked economic access to their heritage, as they rarely benefitted from tourism activities to the cultural attractions within their country. Instead of local enterprises, major international companies dominated economic relations and entrepreneurship concerning archaeological sites. In this regard, the host community was not only denied access to and enjoyment of the archaeological heritage sites, but could also not benefit financially (Sayej 2010:59; Ikram & Hanna 2013:39; Hanna 2015:47; Gordon 2020:66-70).

Furthermore, this lack of engagement with archaeological heritage continued at the educational level, whereby only fragmented parts of Egyptian history were taught as part of the school curriculum. Therefore, the value and significance of the archaeological heritage in Egypt was not effectively communicated to the populace, hindering them from forming ties with their cultural heritage, as they literally and figuratively could not find value in it (Ikram & Hanna 2013:39; Hanna 2015:47; Gordon 2020:64-65).

The resulting lack of access to and engagement of the local community with their archaeological heritage proved to be devastating. This disconnectedness allowed for a rise in some cases of religious fanaticism and denounced archaeological heritage as contradictory to the teachings of Islam or Christianity, thereby condoning the destruction of the archaeological sites (Ikram & Hanna 2013:39; Hanna 2015:47; Gordon 2020:61-63). In addition to radical influences, there were individual cases where it became known that prominent public figures had escaped with the illicit trafficking of antiquities (Hanna 2015:47).

All the above facets compounded into a mindset among the Egyptian people who did not deem illegal excavations serious criminal activities, but rather a scheme to become rich quickly (Hanna 2015:47-48). Owing to economic instability, recession and the difficulty of earning an income due to high levels of unemployment and a decrease in tourism, subsistence looting thus also increased (Ikram & Hanna 2013:39; Gordon 2020:24-35). Moreover, the increasing political instability has been a fruitful feeding ground for the emergence of organised gangs and land-grabbing mafias involved in looting (Hanna 2013:372; Ikram & Hanna 2013:35; Ikram 2013:367-369; Hanna 2015:48; Gordon 2020:51-56).

Hence, this destructive mentality stemming from socio-political and economic factors needs to be changed so that closer connections can be forged between local communities and their heritage. This is not something that can necessarily be done at the policy or policing level. Instead, owing to the multitude of factors that have led to this demise in the relationship between local communities and their cultural heritage, the efforts of public archaeology, one of the four pillars mentioned above, are needed to reconnect people to their heritage. Local communities not only need to regain access to their heritage, but they also need to find reasons to protect it by noting its socio-cultural and historical value, as well as its long-term economic value. In this context, groups were formed by civil society members with the aim 'to advocate cultural rights and salvage of heritage', thereby fostering a mentality to safeguard cultural heritage (Hanna 2015:56). Despite the increasing rate of looting in Egypt, these civic movements have shown some success (Hanna 2015:56).

6.6.2 Case study: Da'esh in Syria and Iraq – The media and the market

While iconoclasm and looting have frequently formed part of collateral damage during armed conflict in the past eras, this has also increasingly featured in contemporary 'hostilities between different identity groups … and acts of ideologically motivated terrorism' (Nankivell 2016:4). Recently, the destruction of archaeological heritage in Syria and Iraq was highlighted in the media. However, media attention can become a double-edged sword and sensationalism can be especially harmful.

In the case of the so-called Islamic State[76] conquering and occupying territories, they not only became known for their exceedingly harsh treatment of the conquered people, but also for destroying monuments and looting archaeological objects to fund their terrorist activities by selling blood antiquities on the black market. The extremist group recorded their demolition of archaeological sites and spread the films and images via media networks. As a result, the 'topic of heritage destruction was brought to the forefront of mainstream media coverage and concern over the fate of heritage sites and objects in the Middle East became an international talking point' (Nankivell 2016:3).

Drawing the attention of the world to such outrageous wrongdoings is essential to encourage society to rethink and induce change. However, in some instances 'international heritage politics and advocacy for protecting cultural property may sometimes generate adverse effects and even instigate destruction' (Rosén 2020:496). Thus, efforts to protect and generate awareness of the significance of archaeological heritage may also drive its destruction. This creates a dilemma:

> … the more we speak about the value of cultural heritage and the importance of protecting it, the more we stress how the destruction of cultural heritage means a loss to humanity as such, the more interesting it becomes for some groups to destroy cultural heritage as a strategy of war. The political focus simply contributes to pulling cultural heritage into the heart of armed conflicts (Rosén 2020:496).

This may also be the result of media attention and its portrayal of heritage destruction, which can also aggravate a situation due to several detrimental side effects: It can draw the attention of the perpetrators to the subject at hand and further incite them as they gain media attention with their acts of destruction. This was the case with the archaeological heritage at Palmyra in Syria. The oasis city has been a site of considerable historical importance. Initially, Da'esh did not pay much attention to the ancient monuments as such, but rather to Palmyra as a strategic location due to the Tadmur military prison, an airstrip and gas resource located there. Moreover, early propaganda did not consider Palmyra in terms of a cultural heritage site (Rosén 2020:497; Terrill 2017:13-14). However, this changed after the public outcry in response to the destruction of statues in the Mosul Museum in 2014. This media

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[76] The so-called Islamic State (IS), or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is also known by the Arabic acronym Da'esh or Daesh. These terms will all be used interchangeably in this thesis.

attention resulted in the international community condemning the acts of violence against cultural heritage when these images 'went viral', and Da'esh realised the effect iconoclasm had in driving their agenda, thereby evolving into a signature of their extremism (Rosén 2020:497; Tugendhaft 2020:1-8).

Therefore, it is essential that 'heritage professionals and archaeologists are aware of how their reactions to the damaging of cultural sites and objects are represented through mass media and how these normative responses may influence foreign policy and military strategy' (Nankivell 2016:6-7). In this case, prominent political leaders and heads of well-known international organisations spoke out against the destruction, and they stressed the significance of archaeological sites such as Palmyra. This served to solidify the value that the Western world, as well as the Syrian government, placed on the archaeological site. Thus, Palmyra's status as an archaeological site of great significance for history and humanity, and the need to protect it, was made abundantly clear in the media (Rosén 2020:498-499; Terrill 2017:13-15).

Once the destruction of cultural heritage as collateral in the conflict was raised to the forefront of public awareness, iconoclasm became a central tool to be employed by Da'esh. During the first round of occupying Palmyra 'from 13 May 2015 to 27 March 2016', Da'esh destroyed the temples of Baalshamim and Bel, as well as seven tower-tombs (Rosén 2020:500).[77] International organisations released satellite images conveying the extent of destruction, and UNESCO condemned the iconoclastic acts by publishing press releases. Thus, it becomes evident, that the media plays a significant role, since it has the potential to aggravate a situation. After all, sensationalistic images of heritage destruction are iconic and dramatically visible, whereas 'images of human atrocities … get filtered out' (Rosén 2020:500).

Syrian forces, with Russian backing, were able to push Da'esh back from Palmyra in May 2016. To celebrate this triumph, 'Russian President Vladimir Putin flew in an entire symphonic orchestra led by a famous Russian conductor to perform a liberation concert in the amphitheatre at Palmyra, with the same backdrop that Da'esh had just

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[77] To add to the destruction of archaeological structures and features of the Palmyrene landscape, Da'esh also used the location of the amphitheatre to publicly execute opposing soldiers and Khaled al-Asaad, a prominent archaeologist and the head of antiquities at the ancient city of Palmyra (Rosén 2020:499).

used to stage mass executions' (Rosén 2020:500). This again gained vast media attention. However, once Da'esh retook control over the region by March 2017, it almost immediately targeted the amphitheatre and destroyed the iconic façade in 'response to the concert' (Rosén 2020:500; Terrill 2017:17). This is indicative of the complexity of international heritage politics and the media attention that drives the discourse. In this case, the media attention stressing the need to save Palmyra caused the opposite reaction by bringing the cultural significance of the site into the focus of Da'esh. As stated by Rosén (2020:501), the 'international community simply served Palmyra to Da'esh on a silver plate and subsequently helped them to trumpet their message to a global audience'. Thus, current political and media efforts in generating awareness of the need to protect cultural heritage may have unintentional and unwanted side effects, whereby cultural heritage becomes a weapon to be used for psychological warfare (Nankivell 2016:4). The public could be better informed through accurate investigative reporting and less sensationalism.

As is evident above, politics often reacts to an outcry in the media. In turn, sensationalism can also distort the truthfulness of events, which can affect policymaking. When public attention shifts from one crisis to another, it might appear as though the previous problem is forgotten. However, this does not mean that the problem was resolved. Instead, the focus has simply shifted to another topic. While one topic dominates the headlines, other matters often do not receive enough limelight, resulting in an imbalance in the heritage discourse. Moreover, not all archaeological sites threatened by armed conflict gain the same level of media interest or are 'deemed newsworthy and therefore worth saving' (Nankivell 2016:7).

During the Syrian civil war, the Syrian government with its armed forces and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) was also responsible for damaging and destroying cultural heritage (Rosén 2020:500; Sabrine, Abdo & Brodie 2022:118, 122). In addition, parts of the ancient city of Palmyra were used for military purposes by the Syrian regime, causing serious damage to archaeology well before the advent of the Da'esh occupation. However, this was collectively blamed on Da'esh and the 'images of the Syrian regime's soldiers looting at Palmyra became widely circulated as proof of Da'esh's looting' (Rosén 2020:500).

Furthermore, recent research has indicated that the looting and trafficking of antiquities as perpetrated by Da'esh was rather systematic in nature and much more organised than originally assumed, which is also contrary to the picture presented by the media. Sabrine, Abdo and Brodie (2022) interviewed witnesses in connection with the non-scientific excavations of and the illicit trade in antiquities during the occupation by Da'esh to be able to better understand how the market functioned during this period. They were also able to deduce that this problem was already rampant well before the so-called Islamic State seized control over large territories in Syria and Iraq. Moreover, it is evident from these interviews and administrative documents that were recovered from investigating a Da'esh government building that ISIS regulated and controlled the non-scientific excavations and the illicit trade in antiquities (Sabrine, Abdo & Brodie 2022:129-133).

Evidently, understanding the intricacies of the illicit trade will be helpful in its curtailment. Thus, interdisciplinary, inter-agency and inter-governmental support in this endeavour is highly important. This also extends to the political dimensions of cultural heritage. Since cultural heritage forms part of basic human rights (Higgins 2020:19-21) and has often been used as a weapon to further political agendas, it is essential to understand 'how heritage is used discursively in the service of such power' (Nankivell 2016:7). Thorough interdisciplinary research can provide information about the context and background that brought about certain events to accurately inform political decision makers and the media. Consequently, the media should focus on accurate investigative reporting on these issues, so as not to present a distorted image of the facts to the public or replicate sensationalistic patterns.

6.6.3 Comparisons with other forms of illicit trade

As is evident from Chapter Five and the discussion above, the illicit trade in art and antiquities remains poorly understood. However, what becomes more apparent is that it does not exist in isolation. While it is very difficult to estimate the true extent of the illegal antiquities market, valuable knowledge can be gained by comparing it to other forms of illicit trade and organised crime. One example is poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife (both fauna and flora), or 'green criminology', which includes other environmental crimes (Mackenzie & Yates 2016b:343). In the past, the trafficking of

natural and cultural objects has not necessarily been considered in the same light, neither by criminology nor by regulatory frameworks (Mackenzie & Yates 2016b:340, 343).

However, many similarities can be found between both black markets that deal with illicit collecting. While few studies that have compared the trafficking of natural and cultural objects currently exist, the dynamics of trade are remarkably similar (Mackenzie & Yates 2016b:340-341). In both cases, collectors value rare and valuable objects and they claim to be tempted by 'an attachment to certain loyalties perceived by them to be higher than the law' or 'higher loyalties', which include 'preservation, appreciation of aesthetic beauty and cultural edification' (Mackenzie & Yates 2016b:340-341, 352). In most cases, the collectors seem to be aware of the moral ambiguity of the nature of the trade and of their actions creating a demand for the market. Despite this, they are motivated by their passion for collecting and possessing rare objects. They frequently consider themselves saviours or safekeepers of cultural and natural heritage objects that are unique and beautiful and they are quite content to operate outside of the normative regulations (Mackenzie & Yates 2016b:352). In this context, the illicit trade in looted antiquities (and other cultural heritage) and poached wildlife has resulted in a so-called 'neocolonial hegemony'. In other words, the source nations from which cultural and natural heritage is extracted are at a disadvantage. This is further exasperated by the fact that regulatory frameworks continue to 'prioritise the rational interests and cultural norms of the more powerful market nations over the local interests and cultural histories of communities at the source of the supply chain' (Mackenzie, Hübschle & Yates 2021:419). Essentially, this reinforces the colonial stigma, as it means that the demand or 'developed' nations more often than not benefit at the expense of the supply or 'developing' nations (Mackenzie, Hübschle & Yates 2021:419).[78]

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[78] However, it is important to note that source countries for natural and cultural objects are not necessarily always located in the Global South or Asia, i.e. non-Western nations. Looted antiquities and poached wildlife can also originate from Europe or North America. Hence, it is a myth that biodiverse-rich and culturally rich nations are not 'Western' nations. Regardless, there is a discrepancy between the source region and the destination of export, where the main demand is located, which means that these illegal markets and criminal networks reinforce a 'neocolonial hegemony' (Mackenzie, Hübschle & Yates 2021:424-425). In addition, it is a fact that both the 'antiquities and wildlife markets are funded in colonialism', a trend of exploitation that has perpetuated into the present (Mackenzie, Hübschle & Yates 2021:428).

In addition, there is also some degree of overlap between nature and culture: various cultural heritage sites are located within a protected environment. Hence, they form part of a larger cultural landscape, whereby the landscape and natural environment may have cultural meaning attached to it and the cultural heritage may have become integrated into the landscape and living environment. Therefore, looting cultural heritage and poaching wildlife is also an interlinked crime. Illegal and unscientific excavations can thus be seen as extracting a resource from the ground within a possibly fragile ecosystem, which is environmentally destructive and may negatively affect local biodiversity. Hence, it is increasingly recognised that culture, nature and the environment coexist. Thus, a crime that affects one element actually impacts all groups of interest within this 'culture-nature nexus'. This contradicts the 'earlier notion of a culture-nature divide, which pervades much of scholarly thinking' (Mackenzie, Hübschle & Yates 2021:421-422).

Therefore, by considering the lessons learned from both forms of illicit trade, as evident in Table 6.1 below, it may be possible to work together and combine efforts to better understand these different markets, so that experiences and knowledge can be shared that might also be applicable to different settings.

TABLE 6.1: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ILLICIT TRADE IN CULTURAL AND NATURAL OBJECTS		
	Looting of Antiquities/Art Theft	**Wildlife Poaching/Collecting**
Nature of products	Cultural objects (art & antiquities)	Natural objects (fauna & flora)
Origins	Colonialism	Colonialism
Socio-cultural and economic structures	• Subsistence looting (supply) • Collectors (demand)	• Subsistence poaching (supply) • Collectors (demand)
Collector/dealer motivations	• Higher loyalties: rarity/uniqueness, beauty, value, age • Capacity to ignore/circumvent law	• Higher loyalties: rarity/uniqueness, beauty, value, last of its kind • Capacity to ignore/circumvent the law
Other reasons	• Market demand • Funding of terrorism • Money laundering	• Market demand • Supposed medicinal uses
Main regulatory frameworks (apart from national legislation)	UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970)	*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) (1975)
Geographical scale	International	International
Patterns of activity	• Higher demand than supply • Looting and illegal excavations: destructive & causes loss of knowledge/context	• Higher demand than supply • Poaching: destructive due to over-collecting & spoiling of fragile ecosystems & causes loss of biodiversity

Means of curbing the trade	• Monitoring & remote sensing (limited)
	• Documenting for possible reconstruction
	• Public archaeology (including tourism, museum interpretation and education, public engagement)
	• Securitisation and prosecution (INTERPOL, ICC, art and culture task teams/units)
	• Need for economic alternatives within cultural heritage domain (heritage practitioners, tourism and security guards)
	• Promoting the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
		• More financial support available for monitoring & remote sensing technology (e.g. drones)
		• More financial support available for securitisation and prosecution
		  ○ Equipping and training rangers/anti-poaching units
		  ○ Employing public and private military and private security/investigation services
		• Nature conservation and interpretation to promote the notion of environmental education, public engagement
		• Need for economic alternatives within nature conservation (environmental research, tourism, game ranger training, environmental interpretation centres)
		• Promoting the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Table 6.1: Adapted from Renfrew & Bahn 2004:563-569; Timothy 2011:149-167, 208-221; Mackenzie & Yates 2016b; Mackenzie, Hübschle & Yates 2021

There are many lessons that can be learned by sharing knowledge in tackling both forms of illicit trade, which extends to enhancing the sustainability of cultural and natural heritage as set out by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals identified by the United Nations (see Figure 6.2 below). Therefore, special consideration should be given to the destruction of archaeological sites and the loss of natural habitats, biodiversity and the resulting increasing rate of species decline that is encompassed by the larger ambit of 'green criminology' (Mackenzie & Yates 2016b:343). In this regard, SDG 11, namely 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', includes the preservation, conservation and protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage (SDG 11.4). Thus, both are considered essential for a sustainable future (Mackenzie, Hübschle & Yates 2021:419-420).

Figure 6.2: United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations SDGs [sa])

These issues are closely related and necessitate a more in-depth study of how protective measures and mechanisms can be used for interdisciplinary collaboration. Recently, a guideline for 'Green Culture' with the aim of achieving climate neutrality within cultural institutions by 2030, as well as freedom of art (and culture) and climate

protection, was published by the Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst Baden-Württemberg (Ministry for Science, Research and Art in Baden-Württemberg, Germany) (MWK [sa]). This indicates that the relationship between culture, nature and sustainability is also gaining momentum at political level, especially considering the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) (United Nations [sa]). Hence, cultural protection and nature conservation are essential components that form part of sustainable development. In addition, the illicit markets of natural and cultural objects clearly have similar elements. By means of interdisciplinary interaction, researchers and practitioners may be able to exchange knowledge to curb both poaching and looting.

6.6.4 The need for long-term interdisciplinary collaboration

In this context, an interdisciplinary approach to pool resources and share knowledge is plausible for a better understanding of the black market in antiquities, but also for the prosecution and curbing of the crime. As stated by Charney, Denton and Kleberg (2012:3), '[few] police understand the art world and few members of the art community work as police officers'. Hence, increased interdisciplinary collaboration is essential. There are some cases of collaborative task teams or units within law enforcement. These include the Scotland Yard Arts and Antiquities Unit (since 1969, disbanded and then re-established in 1989); Italy's Carabinieri Division for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, known as the *Tutela Patrimonio Culturale (TPC)*, which also originated in 1969; the FBI Art Crime Team (since 2004); and the *Korps landelijke politiediensten (KLPD)*, which is the Dutch Art Crime Team that was founded in 2006. Other countries such as Canada, Spain and France also have specific police squads dealing with art crime (Charney, Denton & Kleberg 2012: 3-5).

While some countries have law enforcement officers that are dedicated to art theft and the illicit trade in antiquities, others might not necessarily consider this type of crime a priority in the light of more pressing needs and a paucity of resources (Charney, Denton & Kleberg 2012:3). Therefore, it is not surprising that 'the recovery rate for stolen art remains particularly low', and it is 'even rarer to both recover stolen art and successfully prosecute' owing to the lack of data available about the illicit trade in art and antiquities (Charney, Denton & Kleberg 2012:3). Ideally, academic scholars

should assist intergovernmental organisations (IGOs, e.g. UNESCO) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs, e.g. ICOM), as well as international and national law enforcement agencies to 'monitor the market for illegally traded objects', but this is 'rarely achieved' for a multitude of reasons (Brodie et al 2021:3, 7). Archaeologists, art historians and other academics within a university setting must carry out their primary functions of teaching and researching. As such, they only have limited time and funding available to achieve the tasks in their job description. Unless academics are directly involved in research projects that set out to investigate the illegal antiquities trade, there is also often the expectation that they should conduct additional work for altruistic purposes in their free time. However, this 'expectation of unpaid scholarly labour' is unrealistic, 'offering the appearance of action while failing to fund and develop something more substantial, sustainable, and effective' (Brodie et al 2021:7).

In addition, various research institutions have time-limited projects or academic programmes that investigate the looting and the destruction of cultural heritage. It takes time to become familiar with the subject matter, to develop an understanding of the illicit trade in antiquities and to be able to identify evidence of wrongdoing by monitoring the antiquities market, so that the police can become involved in prosecuting criminals. However, with this kind of research, ethical issues may come to the fore, since 'research subject anonymity' should be guaranteed during the research process. Therefore, a university setting would be an ideal research environment to be able to conduct this type of long-term research and to monitor the antiquities trade, since proper research protocols are already in place with regard to 'human rights, privacy, and data-sharing laws and broader ethical injunctions about the protection of research subjects' (Brodie et al 2021:7).

Evidently, there is a definite need for more long-term interdisciplinary and collaborative investigations with interdisciplinary, interagency and intergovernmental collaboration in an urgent attempt to curb the illicit trade in art and antiquities. Academic research can contribute vital data for developing more effective policy documents. However, dedicated long-term funding needs to be secured for such an endeavour, which is not the case at present. As stated by Brodie, Kersel, Mackenzie, Sabrine, Smith and Yates (2021:9), current 'funding models supporting research into the illicit trade in cultural

objects are woefully inadequate in terms both of accessibility and sustainability'. In essence, two types of funding for research into illicit trade exist. Firstly, academic funding is geared towards universities and other research institutes, but it frequently does not support the practical application of that research. Secondly, humanitarian agencies support 'practical action aimed at public education, training, technical development or assessment, networking', but they usually do not fund research into matters that shape the illicit trade in antiquities (Brodie et al 2021:9). Therefore, funding is currently ill-suited and unsustainable. In addition, the parameters for grants are not interdisciplinary, permissive, interactive or broad enough to support the type of long-term research and collaboration needed for preventative action.

Moreover, where collaborative projects do exist to investigate issues such as the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage and the closely related illicit trade in antiquities and where some researchers are able to obtain funding, the projects are usually once-off, time limited endeavours. Follow-up research, related to the initial project, is rarely funded, making the investigative projects unsustainable in the long run.

> These projects generate a short burst of activity, training students and new researchers and developing research capacity, but then fade away once the funding expires. Training and then dismissing and dispersing researchers is not how research capacity is built (Brodie et al 2021:10).

Moreover, this inadequacy in funding and the related short-term or reactive nature of research projects does not allow for the 'development of a critical mass of experienced and active researchers who are ready and able to conduct good quality research', which results in 'serious methodological, logistical, and ethical difficulties in conducting empirical research into the illicit trade in cultural objects' (Brodie et al 2021:10). Owing to the difficulties noted above, as well as the inaccessibility of reliable data, which are often difficult or even risky to acquire, and the lack of opportunities to learn from experienced supervisors, many early career scholars turn away from this enquiry into 'safer' and better funded career avenues (Brodie et al 2021:10).

Therefore, the lack of long-term projects and permanent interdisciplinary, interagency and intergovernmental research units comprising representatives from IGOs and INGOs, law enforcement officers, lawyers and academic researchers from a broad

spectrum of relevant disciplines[79] severely hinders the identification of usable approaches to curb the illicit trade in antiquities that results from looting and other deeper issues as mentioned in the previous chapter. As described by Brodie, Kersel, Mackenzie, Sabrine, Smith and Yates (2021:10), the 'creation of one or more permanently established collaborative groups conducting theoretically informed, evidence-based research into the trade in cultural objects that would provide the ongoing platform needed to close these gaps and make up shortfalls' is lacking. Permanent research groups, which are 'distributed among one or more universities or equivalent research institutions around the world and spread across different disciplines and would include in-country co-creators', will be able to not only consolidate knowledge to inform policy makers, but also 'develop sustainable strategies of collaboration and coordination between different groups of stakeholders' to become proactive and no longer reactive to international events and disasters (Brodie et al 2021:10-11).

Hence, new paradigms are necessary to address and curb looting, illicit trade and the destruction of archaeological heritage in the long run. Looting and the destruction of archaeological heritage has a long history. Thus, it requires a long-term multifaceted solution. This would be achievable by means of permanent research groups, as mentioned above.

6.7 CONCLUSION

Looting and the destruction of archaeological heritage is not a problem that can be easily resolved. Since, realistically, it cannot be permanently eliminated, it can and should be better controlled, which is what this chapter suggests by means of proposing the four-pillar solution noted above: monitoring through remote sensing, keeping digital documentation/records of archaeological sites, engaging in public archaeology and physically and legally securing archaeological sites. Moreover, these individual facets interlink and overlap with one another. Satellite images not only are useful for observing change, but also showcase changes at archaeological sites in the form of destruction caused by looting and iconoclasm to the public and thus have the potential

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[79] These would include researchers from a variety of disciplines and research fields such as archaeologists, anthropologists, art historians and other historians, architects and specialists in town and regional planning, heritage managers, criminologists, sociologists, environmentalists and nature conservationists, and more.

to influence policymaking. At the same time, they also form part of the digital record of a site.

Similarly, digital documentation can be used for educational purposes, to create digital and physical reconstructions and to provide an indication of the scientific value of a site or object to legal authorities. In addition, these records are able to support law enforcement efforts to recover stolen art and antiquities.

Laws and policies, in turn dictate conduct at archaeological sites. Not only do they influence the ethical behaviour of heritage managers in their care for and oversight of archaeological sites, but they should also regulate the appropriate behaviour of tourists at archaeological sites and museums. In addition, they physically protect cultural heritage in combination with on-site security measures and allow for the prosecution of wrongdoers.

Public archaeology combines most of these aspects: it makes use of satellite images and digital records to raise public awareness about issues such as the looting and destruction of cultural heritage. Moreover, it informs the public of the national laws that protect cultural heritage and promotes ethical behaviour as promoted through international cultural heritage policies. Public archaeology may generate a better understanding and appreciation of archaeology by including it in the school curriculum, through museum education, exhibitions and tourism. Through public engagement programmes, as well as through job creation generated by tourism, local communities may become advocates for archaeological sites, instead of looting them.

Thus, the combination of these four pillars may provide a positive way forward. A single element, such as the securitisation of archaeological sites through legal means is simply no longer sufficient. These four pillars do not operate in isolation, but rather in conjunction with one another – they complement each other.

In addition to the paradigm change suggested above, comprehending the illicit trade in antiquities and how it relates to other forms of organised crime is essential. The illegal trade from a supply and a demand side (evident from the looting pyramid in Chapter Five) drives the plundering of archaeological sites, but remains rather poorly

understood to date. Therefore, long-term collaboration and an interdisciplinary approach to the protection of archaeological heritage are needed. Experts from a variety of fields should work together to achieve this goal through bundling their resources and knowledge and by determining innovative methods of securing cultural heritage during times of peace and armed conflict. It is essential that experts share their knowledge and experience, as views from different disciplines can enrich and complement each other. Inherently, archaeology, CRM practice and heritage studies are multidisciplinary in nature. This strength can be used to generate broader perspectives and approaches towards the best protection of cultural heritage for posterity.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE HERITAGE SITUATION IN ISRAEL AND THE PILOT STUDY OF TEL HAZOR

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Considering the endemic problem of the looting of archaeological heritage during both peace and war, and the accompanying damage to and destruction thereof, as well as the associated loss of scientific data (Greenland et al 2019:21), the proposed four-pillar solution should be considered in terms of a specific case study. Since this study forms part of the broader ambit of Biblical Archaeology, the settings mentioned in the Bible are central to this research. Previous chapters focused mainly on sites and situations within Egypt and the Levant. These form part of the broader Biblical World. However, this chapter focuses more closely on the Holy Land and the case of Tel Hazor in Israel, the largest tell site in the country and a well-known Biblical Archaeology terrain, which was chosen as a pilot study. A site of this scale is ideally suited for the application of the interdisciplinary solution to curb the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage. Should interdisciplinarity contribute to the safeguarding of archaeological heritage sites in the long-term, it would be possible to ensure the survival of cultural heritage remains for archaeological study.

However, to be able to clearly analyse the site of Hazor, it is necessary to place it within the broader socio-political, cultural and economic context of Israel and Palestine. Each country worldwide faces its own unique set of issues, which play a role in the protection and continued safeguarding of cultural heritage. As such, this chapter first examines archaeology as a national cultural practice in Israel and the closely related ongoing debate about the ownership of Israeli-Palestinian cultural heritage. In this regard, a closer look at the situation of the West Bank (Palestine) with respect to archaeological heritage, the Israeli heritage legislation that is aimed at protecting archaeological heritage, but also fails to do so, and introducing the national archaeological parks system and associated site museums is necessary. Once this background had been established, Hazor was viewed as a best-practice example for the application of the four-pillar interdisciplinary solution.

Nevertheless, in light of the recent resurgence of hostilities in Israel, the situation has become much more acute. Not only are human lives being lost in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, but the extremist group Hamas also plays a significant role in the humanitarian crisis. Once more, both innocent civilians and cultural heritage are lost in the crossfire, both becoming collateral from the war. Despite a shared heritage, at this stage it seems as though parallel historical narratives divide people and are located at the centre of the conflict. With no reconciliation in sight, human lives and their associated cultural heritage remain threatened.

7.1.1. Archaeology as a national pastime and the aftermath of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

There has long been a strong correlation between archaeology and the creation of national identities. Indeed, 'archaeology does not function independently of the societies in which it is practiced' and, as a result, academic research and heritage management are directly influenced by the political situation within a country and by the relationships of that country with other nations. In this context, Trigger (1984) identified three types of archaeological practice, namely nationalist, colonialist and imperialist. When placing Israeli archaeological practice into this theoretical context, it could be considered a 'mixture of colonialism and nationalism' (Gori 2013:217; Trigger 1984:358).

Nationalistic influences on archaeology are evident by means of the presence of bureaucratic organisations that oversee the protection and administration of archaeological practice and heritage. This means that they 'guard and develop archaeological sites, control museums, regulate foreign archaeologists working in the country, and perform rescue excavations' at the national level, as is the case in many Middle Eastern countries (Trigger 2006:271; Conradie 2021:39-40). Moreover, nationalist archaeology is selective in nature. In Israel, this polarity or bias in interpreting archaeological data to further a political ideology is evident by means of a preferential focus on Jewish archaeological heritage, somewhat at the expense of Christian or Islamic heritage, historical archaeology or even the palaeolithic (Trigger 2006:274; Conradie 2016:4; Conradie 2021:4-6, 8). The close relation between national identity creation and the politicisation of archaeology has become even more striking since archaeology has frequently been described as a 'national hobby' of the

Jewish people of Israel (Abu El-Haj 2001:1; Elon 1997:34-47; Silberman 1997:62-81; Conradie 2021:8). The widespread interest of Israeli society in the study of the human past is grounded in the fact that archaeology has played a significant role in the placemaking of Israel. More specifically, it has long been intertwined with the creation of Israeli nationhood and of a national identity. Essentially, the practice of archaeology aided in confirming and legitimising the 'connection between the homeland and the nation that desired to inhabit it anew' (Abu El-Haj 2001:10; Elon 1997:34-47; Silberman 1997:70). Hence, material evidence has served to reinforce the social ideologies and meaning-making of Israeli society:

> At the most fundamental level, archaeology produced this place as the Jewish national home (with its ever-expanding territorial boundaries) and created the *fact* of an Israelite/Jewish nation and nation-state rooted therein. The work of archaeology incrementally reformulated political, geographic, historical, and epistemological truths (Abu El-Hai 2001:10).

However, since the 1990s this ideology has started unravelling owing to 'critical Israeli scholars and journalists, Palestinians opposing the Israeli occupation, and Ultra-Orthodox Jews fighting against the secularisation of (much of) the Israeli state' (Abu El-Haj 2001:239). Several issues have arisen concerning the rightful claim to archaeological heritage, including 'Palestinian rights to archaeological artifacts and sites' (Abu El-Haj 2001:239). According to international law, more specifically Article 9 of the *Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict The Hague* (1999), the powers occupying a territory are prohibited from excavating 'cultural property' and from removing it from occupied territory unless it is aimed at the protection of cultural heritage. Any actions and protective measures that are taken must occur in close collaboration with the authorities of the occupied territory. However, this has given rise to the problem of ownership, namely 'the question of who actually is the legitimate *national-cultural* heir to specific archaeological relics is precisely what is at stake in determining what will happen to artifacts excavated by Israeli archaeologists or seized by the Israeli state since the 1967 war' (Abu El-Haj 2001:242).

On the one hand, the Israeli state occupying the Palestinian territories could be regarded as a hostile power that has excavated and removed Palestinian cultural property from the occupied territory, which clearly contradicts the stipulations of the *Hague Convention* (Abu El-Haj 2001:242). However, on the other hand, the Israeli

state can also be described as a colonial power that has taken charge of and subjugated the Palestinian territories (Starzmann 2013:548). As such, it has continued placemaking within a conquered territory, and it identifies some of the archaeological heritage of the Palestinian territory as an embodiment and justification of Jewish national identity and history.[80] Evidently, the dispute of Israeli-Palestinian ownership of the concerned sites and artefacts remains unclear (Abu El-Haj 2001:242). This extends to the management of archaeological sites on the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, which is reflective of these hegemonic relations. In essence, during the attempt to overcome its own colonial past and in forging a national identity, Israel is ironically falling into the same trap, whereby the 'creation of a polity where the nation and the colony are articulations of the same political project' (Starzmann 2013:548-549; Abu El-Haj 2001). Therefore, employing archaeology as a means to build a national identity to legitimise an 'ancient Israeli(te) nation' is fraught with tensions (Starzmann 2013:548).

Compounding this issue is the fact that the Arab Spring increased tensions in the region even more, since 'Israel lost many important allies among its direct neighbours' (Gori 2013:215). The rise of Islamic populism politically isolates Israel. Additionally, it 'exacerbates the hostility toward the Jewish state', especially because Israel 'does not consider itself as an occupying power in the West Bank', but instead sees those territories as intrinsically Jewish in origin and heritage (Gori 2013:215). Indeed, the practice of archaeology and the identity of Israel as a nation are inextricably linked, with religion playing a central role in the way this political and ideological identity is shaped through biased research and the preferential management of archaeological heritage.[81] Thus, according to Gori (2013:216-217), Biblical Archaeology is exploited for the purpose of legitimising a Jewish presence in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, thereby 'shaping a contemporary Jewish landscape in assumed continuity with the

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[80] Many cultural heritage sites within the occupied territories bear clear evidence of an Israelite and Judahite archaeological record. Therefore, the Jewish population has had a continuous presence within the region encompassing the Holy Land throughout history, though with the Jewish people at times as a minority population.
[81] While there is an emphasis on sites of Jewish archaeological heritage within Israel and the West Bank, this does not mean to imply that other archaeological sites are neglected. The value of Christian, Islamic, Canaanite, Philistine, prehistoric and other archaeological resources have also long been recognised, many of which are also located in national parks and are thus researched, managed and protected. Palestinian archaeologists tend to accuse Near Eastern and Biblical Archaeologists of overlooking and neglecting Islamic sites. However, this is not the case. Israeli archaeologists have noticed the 'need to insulate their studies from political and religious influences' and do not discriminate against archaeological heritage through the utilisation of scientific methodologies (Yahya 2005:71).

ancient one' and supporting 'territorial and politic claims based upon precedence of Jews over Arabs'. For a map of modern Israel with Israeli occupied territories, please see Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1: Map of modern Israel with the Israeli occupied territories (Price & House 2017:349)

7.1.2. The archaeological heritage on the West Bank

The situation of the archaeological heritage on the West Bank is actually much more complicated than mentioned above. The State of Israel was established in 1948. It was during this time that the West Bank had been annexed by Jordan. As such, the region became subject to Jordanian heritage legislation and governance. However, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel commenced its military occupation of the West Bank, which meant that the West Bank was also governed by the Israeli military at a legal and administrative level. However, the cultural heritage on the West Bank continued to be governed by the Israeli military according to an augmented version of the *Jordanian Temporary Law no. 51 on Antiquities of 1966* (Kersel 2015:27; Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020:9). During the 1990s, the occupied region gained relative peace and the *Oslo II Agreement*, or the so-called *Oslo Accords*, came into being, more specifically *The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.* As a result, with the aim of achieving 'a phased autonomy and self-rule for Palestine' over a course of 18 months, the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B and C, whereby Area A was placed under 'complete Palestinian civil and military control', Area B was under 'Palestinian civil control but Israeli military control'; and Area C remained under 'complete Israeli civil and military control' (Kersel 2015:27; see Figure 7.2 below). This included the aim of the gradual transfer of jurisdiction over archaeological sites and artefacts (Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020:12).

However, Israel has retained control over Area C, and its archaeological sites, which constitutes the majority of the Palestinian territory on the West Bank (see Figure 7.2 below). Moreover, these agreements not only made the general administration of the region rather complex, but also fractured the management and protection of the cultural heritage sites located within the West Bank. Hence, in Areas A and B, the Palestinian civil authorities are responsible for archaeological heritage management and protection, whereas the archaeological sites in Area C comprising approximately 60% of those located in the West Bank fall under the auspices of the Israeli entity known as the Archaeology Department of the Civil Administration (ADCA) (Kersel 2015; Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020). However, owing to the inconsistent governance of cultural heritage in the West Bank, 'there remains 'no real legal framework in pace to protect cultural heritage and very few government initiatives to preserve and to protect Palestinian resources' (Kersel 2015:28).
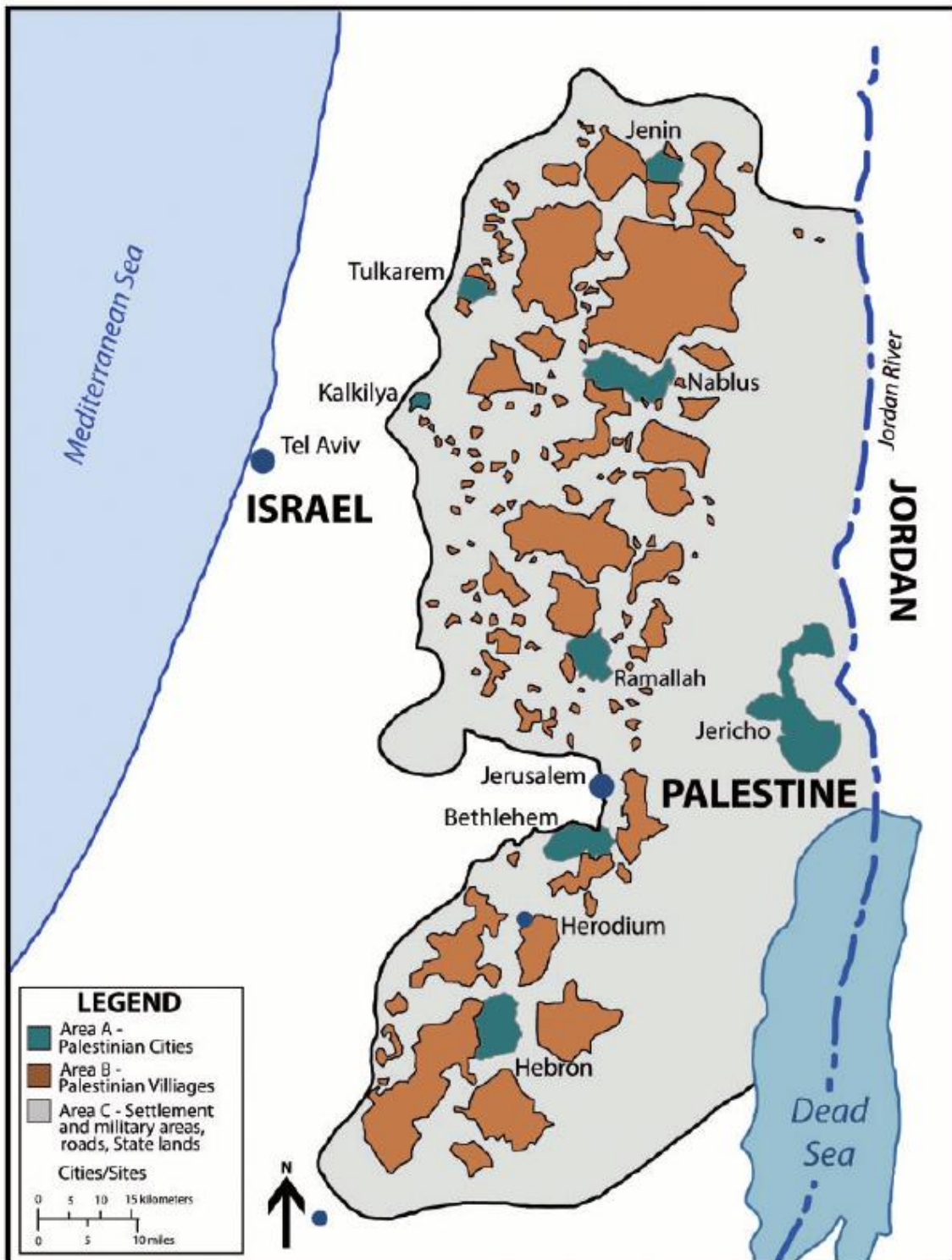
Figure 7.2: Map of Areas A, B and C in the West Bank (Kersel 2015:28)

However, since the amended Jordanian law employed in the territories under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority (PA) was insufficient for protecting archaeology, the new *Palestinian Tangible Cultural Heritage Law* No. 11 of 2018 was enforced in 2018, which aims at addressing issues such as accessibility, hindering encroachment and issues of ownership, as well as legislative protection against

vandalism and destruction, unlicensed excavations and illicit trade (Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020:15-33).[82] However, with different heritage legislation prevalent in Israel itself, and again differences in the management of the cultural heritage in Areas A and B compared with Area C, the current situation with respect to the management and protection of archaeological heritage in the West Bank resembles a 'complex mosaic of areas' with a 'fractured oversight of heritage sites and objects', which has profound consequences (Kersel 2015:24). To properly understand the current situation of archaeological heritage in the West Bank (as well as Gaza), it is essential to comprehend the mechanisms that are currently in place by considering Israeli and Palestinian placemaking efforts, which employ archaeological heritage, both of which are aimed at legitimising their territorial claims.

7.1.2.1.   *Israeli placemaking efforts*

As mentioned above, the tensions of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict are rooted in the legitimising claim of the Israeli people that they are the original inhabitants of the land, promoting the ideology that they are returning to their cultural roots. Hence, they are employing a 'set of ideological tools … to lay claim to Palestinian territories', while they themselves have settled there following a traumatic past and coming from elsewhere 'in the search for land to establish a Jewish state for Jewish people' (Starzmann 2013:555). This essentially makes Israel a modern socio-historical construct, which assumes continuity to camouflage and undermine parallel and/or contradictory historical narratives (Gori 2013:217-219; Starzmann 2013:555-556; Conradie 2021:1). Moreover, archaeological practice and heritage management have been employed as a tool to further this goal at the expense of alternative histories.

Thus, archaeological and heritage management practices are essentially expressions of colonial power. While reinforcing universal values for the research and safeguarding of cultural heritage, they also 'intensify the tension between coloniser and colonised' (Starzmann 2013:556-557). Accordingly, Biblical Archaeology studies and preserves cultural heritage, which mainly expresses the history of the Israelites and the subsequent emergence of the Jewish people. Therefore, the focus is placed on the

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[82] While the Palestinian Authority aimed at banning trade in antiquities, it was still legal in Israel according to the *AL 1978* (see Chapter 5). This created a very contradictory situation. As a result, many archaeological artefacts stemming from illegal excavations in the West Bank and Gaza have entered 'into the legitimate marketplace through a system of laundering and reuse of inventory numbers' (Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020:12; Kersel 2006).

Jewish people and their peaceful interactions with their neighbours or conflicting relations with their conquerors. Consequently, it is the link to ancient Jewish history that ties the historical narrative together, which again reflects the Israeli placemaking agenda (Gori 2013:216-217, 218-219; Starzmann 2013:558). These placemaking efforts are further evident by means of the recent virtual address by the President of Israel, Isaac Herzog:

> Much of the Jewish People's history in this land is rooted in the hills and valleys of Judea and Samaria. … Here our Patriarchs and Matriarchs lived and were laid to rest. Here Joshua led the Sons and Daughters of Israel, Bnei Yisrael, into the land; King David began his rule; our prophets spread their teachings, which we teach today, and every Shabbat; and Jewish rebels – from the Maccabees to Bar Kochva – fought for what they believed in (Lazaroff 2022).

The tactical creation of Jewish identity in the West Bank by means of archaeological heritage management has occurred in three ways, which also served to sever or disconnect Palestinian ties from archaeological sites, namely occupation, confiscation and demolition. The first issue, which Starzmann (2013:558-559) referred to as occupation, is the ideological appropriation of an archaeological site as part of Israeli national heritage (Kersel 2015:33). In the process, Hebrew place names replace Arabic names, which also occurs at the expense of oral narratives connected to those places. Hence, the archaeological sites on the West Bank become symbols of Israeli colonial domination. As such, these sites are 'under occupation', which is the physical control by 'Israeli settlers whose presence on the land is illegal' (Starzmann 2013:559).

Secondly, Starzmann (2013:559) noted the issue of 'confiscation', whereby 'sites along the green line, the internationally recognised border between Israel and Palestine, have been confiscated by Israel. Some sites were lost because of the construction of the boundary wall, whereas in other places the separation wall was rerouted into the West Bank so as not to affect archaeological heritage. In the process, Israel gained more land and the archaeological sites located on the green line. Furthermore, the separation wall both hides the Palestinian territories from direct view, and segregates and alienates the people of the West Bank from their heritage. Moreover, it has allowed a larger number of archaeological sites to be appropriated under Israeli control (Starzmann 2013:559; Abu Alsaud & Abu El Ezz 2020:12-13; Kersel 2015:33).

Lastly, the complete or partial demolition of archaeological sites by Israeli authorities on the West Bank has been noted. Hereby, it appears that sites were not merely lost due to the construction of the separation wall, but also due to excessive military force, which 'resulted in great damages to Palestinian archaeological or heritage sites' (Starzmann 2013:559; Yahya 2010:96). While even well-known sites such as Bethlehem and Hebron (among others) have become casualties of military assault, it is evident that these sites are 'important tourist attractions in the West Bank, and, therefore, essential for the generation of future tourism revenues for Palestinians' (Starzmann 2013:560). However, in the long run, these events are claimed to be 'part of a systematic effort at erasing Palestinian cultural identity' (Starzmann 2013:560). In essence, Israeli colonial power is transforming the entire landscape by 'rendering Palestinian history invisible' and by 'demolishing Palestinian history before constructing an Israeli past' (Starzmann 2013:560).

7.1.2.2.   Palestinian placemaking efforts

One should bear in mind that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank is not without costs to Jewish archaeological heritage, and it is therefore not surprising that Palestinians are lashing out against their perceived oppressors. There are repeated occurrences of looting, vandalism and destruction occurring at declared Jewish heritage sites in the West Bank. A prominent example of vandalism occurring at Jewish heritage and revered holy sites includes arson and destructive events at Joseph's tomb in Nablus (Shechem), which were carried out by Palestinian rioters on different occasions in 2000, 2015 and 2022 (Baker 2022; BBC News 2022; Ben Kimon 2022; Siegal 2022). Such actions often occur amid other Israeli-Palestinian hostilities. They are frequently aimed at violating sites that hold deep meaning to Jewish people, causing affront and stirring tensions, thereby further aggravating volatile situations (BBC News 2022; Staff 2022).

The continued existence of some archaeological sites in Judea and Samaria is also threatened by so-called land theft or land grabbing or the transformation of 'Jewish' into 'Palestinian' heritage. A recent example here includes the remnants of a Hasmonean fortress located at Tel Aroma, which is in Area B – a region that is administered by the Palestinian civil administration. According to Israeli media, the 'Palestinian Authority (PA) has commandeered another archaeological site in Samaria

and has converted it into a "Palestinian National Archaeological Park," the latest in a series of Israeli heritage sites in the area lost to the PA' (Savir 2022). According to the news article, the site was seized by the PA in February 2020 and is being transformed from a Jewish heritage site into a Palestinian heritage site by 'systematically demolishing archaeological findings', which provided evidence that connects the archaeological site to Jewish history (Savir 2022). These proceedings seemingly took advantage of recent COVID-19-related lockdowns. The events reportedly occurred 'under the cover of a Coronavirus [COVID-19] shutdown, during which Israeli Civil Administration inspectors were kept home', and the Palestinian Authority supposedly grasped the opportunity of a lack of supervision and 'rolled heavy machinery over the remains of the ancient fortress, paving an access road that has destroyed the remains of the 3,000-year-old fortress walls and water cisterns' (Savir 2022). This appears to have occurred in an effort to eliminate competing Jewish historical narratives from the site and to promote a single narrative for the place as a tourist destination. The report accused the PA of deliberately targeting, harming and destroying Jewish cultural heritage in Samaria, thereby extinguishing physical evidence of a Jewish presence in, and in connection with, the region throughout history. According to this same news report, 'a staggering 95% of archaeological sites' in the West Bank are threatened by vandalism, unsupervised developments, land grabs and illegal excavations: 'Findings presented to the Knesset in January show that 90% of the sites that are destroyed are being destroyed by the PA for development purposes, and 10% are destroyed for robbery purposes' (Savir 2022).[83]

7.1.2.3.   Consequences

In general, the continued political instability has harmed all cultural heritage on the West Bank. According to Al-Houdalieh (2018:246), the sustained Israeli control of Palestinian territories also has a profoundly detrimental effect on the local economy, forcing numerous people who are struggling financially to turn to subsistence looting as an 'attractive alternative' to be able to provide for their families. This has resulted

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[83] This report was written from an Israeli standpoint. This article therefore clearly showcases the Israeli point of view, and in this author's opinion, it therefore appears to be somewhat biased towards Israeli nation building. Similarly, Palestinian news articles would be biased towards the Palestinian views. Hence, all news reports on the subject should be read with the knowledge that they were written either from an Israeli or Palestinian perspective and it should be kept in mind that news reports, though informative, are hardly ever objective – especially about sensitive subjects such as the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Reading and considering such information should always be filtered against that background.

in decades of uncontrolled looting, and the accompanying destruction of the archaeological context and structures at archaeological heritage sites, to supply the illicit trade in antiquities (Yahya 2010:96; Al-Houdalieh 2018:244-249). Subsistence looting and the vandalism of archaeological sites on the West Bank are in part due to the hope for fast economic relief on the part of the looters themselves. In addition, the negligence of landowners in protecting and regularly inspecting archaeological remains located on their property, with some landowners even encouraging or participating in plundering, is another factor. Moreover, the lack of protection of many known archaeological sites by Israeli authorities also provides an opportunity for looters (Al-Houdalieh 2018:248).

While the aim should be preserving and protecting all cultural heritage sites, irrespective of their religious or cultural affiliations and indeed of 'all humanity in the Holy Land' (Lazaroff 2022), this is clearly not the case. The above examples of both Israeli and Palestinian placemaking highlight the back and forth of lashing out against each other at socio-religious and geopolitical levels, through which the archaeological heritage from both parties has suffered and been abused during the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the West Bank. Evidently, this means that archaeological heritage is threatened by various levels of continued looting, vandalism, economic development and destruction – all performed to obliterate any opposing historical and cultural connections to a place. In turn, placemaking endeavours cause much harm since the competing parties aim to induce social amnesia by denying parallel historical narratives in an effort to validate their own goals and presence in the region. Since the identity of the people and their opposing sentiments are tied so closely to the land and the presence of archaeological heritage, this is not a situation that has the potential to be easily resolved or reconciled. Thus, it is expected that the archaeological heritage will continue to yield and decline from these tensions. In this deep-rooted conflict, efforts to gain a better understanding of the other and to generate a public awareness of a shared history and parallel heritage may continue to be futile, especially in the short term.

Recently, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has escalated again with the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas War. On the seventh of October 2023, the radical Islamic group Hamas, based in the Gaza Strip, attacked Israel. In response to the offensive of the extremist

Palestinian group, whereby hundreds of civilians were killed and many hostages were abducted into Gaza, Israel retaliated by mobilising troops and reserves and started a massive military operation striking against the Hamas in Gaza. In turn, the counteroffensive with the aim of eradicating the extremist group by the Israeli government has also cost thousands of lives on the Palestinian side, marking the beginning of a renewed war between non-states parties, which brought many deeply rooted socio-political and religious issues to the surface. As a result, thousands of lives are lost on both sides of the front, residences and infrastructure are destroyed and basic necessities are lacking (Geranpayeh 2023; Veltman 2023). A temporary ceasefire could be negotiated by the end of November 2023, allowing for the release of hostages from Gaza in exchange for the freeing of Palestinian prisoners. However, this does not imply the end of the armed conflict, and hostilities have resumed in the meantime (Geranpayeh 2023; Veltman 2023). In light of this humanitarian crisis, further antagonism may arise, causing the Holy Land to be the powder keg of the Near East.

In addition, cultural heritage is also in the crossfire again. Amid such a hostile situation, the safeguarding of cultural heritage seems almost like an afterthought. Owing to successive periods, where the rule over the region changed, Gaza has been referred to as a 'palimpsest of cultures', much of which has not yet been researched or excavated (Geranpayeh 2023; Veltman 2023). Since cultural heritage continues to be contested owing to parallel and even opposing historical narratives, it currently appears to be a source of contention and division, instead of a motivating factor for peacebuilding due to a shared socio-cultural heritage. Therefore, the public outcry for both the protection of human lives and the preservation of cultural heritage currently seems futile. International non-profit organisations such as the ICOM have issued statements to express concern and to demand that international laws and conventions should be respected since the ripple effect of the conflict would imply a severe upsurge of the looting and destruction of archaeological sites and artefacts (ICOM 2023a).

Initial reports are now coming to the forefront with respect to the destruction of cultural heritage in Gaza. Some of the threatened sites in the Gaza Strip are indicated in Figure 7.3 below. Currently, it is too dangerous for staff from the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to travel to the affected sites to assess the damage. However,

it has been estimated that over 100 sites have been damaged or destroyed by Israeli air strikes (Geranpayeh 2023; Veltman 2023; Diaz 2023). Threatened sites caught in the crossfire and bombings include, among others, the seventh century CE Great Omari Mosque in the Jabaliya area, the 15th century CE Ibn Uthman Mosque and the Sayed Hashem Mosque, 'where prophet Muhammad's great-grandfather is believed to be buried', as well as a recently-discovered Roman cemetery dating to the turn of the century located in northern Gaza and the Church of Saint Porphyrius, which is 'believed to be the third oldest church in the world' (Geranpayeh 2023; Veltman 2023; Diaz 2023). In addition, museums located in Gaza, such as the Rafah Museum, the Al Qarara Cultural Museum and the Deir Al Balah Museum, have also suffered damage from collapsed buildings or destroyed collections (Geranpayeh 2023; Veltman 2023).

Figure 7.3: Some prominent cultural heritage sites in Gaza threatened by the Israel-Hamas War (Geranpayeh 2023)[84]

Moreover, sites included in UNESCO's Tentative List, which are considered for the future inclusion in the World Heritage List, have also suffered damage. While the

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[84] This doctoral research has a time limit to the end of 2023/beginning of 2024. As a result, the outcome of the conflict, which is still ongoing, is at this stage still uncertain as the armed conflict continues. Therefore, the events discussed here only relate to the situation up until, and including, December 2023. Undoubtedly, as the hostilities continue, more destruction of cultural heritage is bound to occur, but this is the domain of future research.

UNESCO continues to monitor the region through remote satellite sensing and data reported to them by non-profit organisations, such as *Heritage for Peace* which gathers information through local collaboration and remote sensing, it is difficult to estimate how much cultural heritage has been lost at this stage. Most likely, it will only be possible to verify the full extent of the damage once the hostilities have been resolved and once the region is accessible for on-site inspections. At this stage, it is impossible to continue archaeological research, to protect the terrestrial, coastal and maritime sites where these projects are carried out, to send staff to assess the damage *in situ* or to determine plans for the salvage of museum objects (Geranpayeh 2023; Veltman 2023). Therefore, the 1954 *Hague Convention* has again been unsuccessful in its ideological approach to protect cultural heritage in practice. However, notably, the international legal tool was ratified by states parties and not by non-states parties.

At the same time, measures are now also being taken in an attempt to secure sites and museum objects in Israel and the Palestinian territories as they 'scramble to preserve museum works in the middle of an ongoing war' (Diaz 2023). On the one hand, museum staff from the Tel Aviv Art Museum and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem have been removing artworks and artefacts from museum displays to relocate them to underground bunkers in an attempt to safeguard and secure them from possible future damage in light of the Israeli-Hamas War. On the other hand, museums in Gaza did not have the option of removing museum objects to safe spaces and as a result of the damage caused by war, much of the cultural heritage, as mentioned above has already been lost (Diaz 2023). On the West Bank, many museums, such as the Yasser Arafat Museum in Ramallah, with its collection of contemporary Palestinian history, remain open to visitors at this stage, even though tourist traffic has become scarce at present. However, since 'there is no safe place in Palestine for the museum objects and their history' due to the West Bank as an ongoing conflict area, there was always a threat to the cultural heritage in the region and the directors of the Yasser Arafat Museum planned ahead. As such, the museum staff 'took 3D photos and digitised the objects it shows in the museum to preserve them for the future and to reproduce them if need be' (Diaz 2023). This is indicative of a different reaction to the immediate threat of war and shows a different form of crisis planning. The museum's plans to open a satellite museum in Arafat's former residence

in Gaza may now have been halted in their tracks, as it remains unclear if the site was destroyed or not (Diaz 2023).

What is evident is that massive damage has already been caused, both to the people and the cultural heritage of Gaza and there is not yet any prospect of reaching a resolution to the conflict or a compromise. In addition, crisis planning for archaeological sites and museums is essential. These salvage and emergency plans need to be updated regularly, and staff training is also needed to be able to deal with not only armed conflict, but also other emergency situations. It is necessary to put such plans in place during peacetime so that staff can act proactively and not merely be forced to react when tragedy strikes.

7.1.3. The National Archaeological Parks System in Israel and benefits of a local site museum

In contrast to the current conflict, the National Archaeological Parks System instituted by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority has become well established in recent decades, developing into popular tourist attractions. Archaeological parks do not only offer significant tourism potential, but also engage and inform the public by disseminating knowledge about their respective archaeological sites, their history and their significance. In addition, archaeological research is presented through the physical remains at a site and reconstructions of important structures (Vieweger 2012:426-427). By making the sites accessible to the public and presenting the local archaeological heritage, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority fulfils its educational obligation to both the Israeli public and foreign tourists (Vieweger 2012:428).

While this provides the necessary infrastructure for tourism and for safeguarding archaeological heritage during times of peace, it has also been criticised for its Disneyfication of the archaeology of the Holy Land: Archaeological sites are exploited primarily for economic gain as a type of tourism-attracting theme park, and not for the pursuit of knowledge or for political agendas (Silberman 1995:259-260). Moreover, Silberman (1997:75) criticises that archaeological sites have been selectively incorporated into the national archaeological parks system, providing a distorted image of the past that focuses on the 'material narrative of the history of the people of Israel and the rise of the State of Israel'. In addition to the religious and political

meaning of archaeological heritage, the purpose of the archaeological parks is to present Israeli history to tourists with the main goal of economic exploitation and consumption. In this context, the past is presented subjectively to appeal to tourists' expectations. Providing a balanced account of the past is not necessarily the main purpose of archaeological parks. Instead, economic potential has become a prime motivating factor for the planning and presentation of archaeological heritage to the public (Silberman 1997:74-76). Nevertheless, the national archaeological parks system in Israel currently succeeds in presenting an archaeological, historical and/or religious narrative to the public. In this regard, one could state that the end justifies the means, as the presentation of archaeological heritage ensures the generation of public awareness thereof, and in turn it almost guarantees the protection of archaeological sites.

Many national archaeological parks in Israel have the added benefit of exhibiting excavated artefacts in local site museums, which are usually located in the nearby kibbutz. One example is the Glass House at the Kibbutz Nahsḥolim. The former glass factory at Tantura was abandoned and derelict. However, once archaeological excavations resumed at Tel Dor in the 1980s, the building gained a new purpose. It was renovated and converted into a museum with its own dedicated staff and strong support from the local kibbutz. It became known as the 'Center for Nautical and Regional Archaeology' (Stern 2000:333-335). Apart from a studio for members of the kibbutz and a museum section in the building, which houses the administrative area and the exhibitions, the building also provides research laboratories and storage for excavated artefacts. Since the majority of the excavated Tel Dor finds are located at the site museum (the remainder are to be found at the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology and the Israel Museum), tourists and other visitors can 'view the finds, so to speak, *in situ*' (Stern 2000:336). This undoubtedly enriches the site visits of the interested public, as the objects and the site remain in close relation to one another.

7.2 THE SITE OF TEL HAZOR: HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Tel Hazor was initially a large Canaanite capital, and later a significant Israelite city that evolved into an important administrative centre. The archaeological site is located 'on the eastern spur of the Naphtali mountains' in the Huleh Valley basin,

approximately 14 kilometres northwards of the Sea of Galilee (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:57; Dever 2012:58, 60). As a result of the fertile soil and abundance of water present in the valley, the region could support a large population, and it is estimated that approximately 20,000 inhabitants lived at Hazor (Hazor Excavations 2018). This is reflected historically since the tell site grew into a large city at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:57). Moreover, as an outstanding example of an urban centre during the Iron Age, which was able to support a large society with the ready availability of a steady water supply by means of a water reservoir, Hazor was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List (WHL) in 2005 as one of three biblical tell sites in the Levant, together with Megiddo and Beersheba (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992-2024a). According to UNESCO, out of the ten selection criteria (six cultural and four natural criteria) denoted by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the following apply for the inscription of the three biblical tell sites as World Heritage Sites (WHS):

> Criterion (ii): The three tels represent an interchange of human values throughout the ancient [Near East], forged through extensive trade routes and alliances with other states and manifest in building styles which merged Egyptian, Syrian and Aegean influences to create a distinctive local style.
> Criterion (iii): The three tels are a testimony to a civilization that has disappeared - that of the Cananean cities of the Bronze Age and the biblical cities of the Iron Age - manifests in their expressions of creativity: town planning, fortifications, palaces, and water collection technologies.
> Criterion (iv): The Biblical cities reflect the key stages of urban development in the Levant, which exerted a powerful influence on later history of the region.
> Criterion (vi): The three tels, through their mentions in the Bible, constitute a religious and spiritual testimony of Outstanding Universal Value (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992-2024a).

As stated by WHS Criterion ii, Hazor was located at an important crossroads. This is also evident in Figure 7.4 below. With its location at a point where ancient trade routes converged, which links Mesopotamia with Egypt, Hazor was able to control trade along these routes. This was evident not only from the physical location of the site, but also from contemporary correspondence texts such as the Amarna Letters (Grant 1984:17; Dever 2012:60; Ben-Tor 2016:13; Le Roux 2018:4-5).

Figure 7.4: Map of Tel Hazor located along important trade routes connecting Mesopotamia and Egypt in antiquity (Bible Odyssey 2024)

Originating from an illegal excavation at Tel el-Amarna, the *Amarna Letters* comprise an archive of over 380 documents that were written using cuneiform script, mostly in the Akkadian language, on clay tablets. They document the correspondence between Egyptian pharaohs and their vassal states in the Syro-Palestine region (including Canaan) and neighbouring states and provide insight into the state of affairs during the mid-14th century BCE (Bourke 2018:134; Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:341).[85] Three of the letters, dating roughly between 1348 and 1336 BCE, found at Amarna are directly related to the site of Hazor. They are proof of the correspondence between the then king of Hazor, Abdi-Tirshi, and the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten. Contrary to correspondence with other Canaanite rulers, Abdi-Tirshi is referred to as a king in the letters. Although the ruler of Hazor proclaims his loyalty as an Egyptian vassal, he appears to have retained a different status. The *Amarna Letters* sent to Egypt by Hazor and neighbouring states document 'Abdi-Tirshi's struggles with other leaders and his

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[85] The *Amarna Letters* were written roughly from 1360 to 1332 BCE. They were created during the 18th Egyptian Dynasty, spanning the reigns of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten, Smenkhkare and Tutankhamun (Cooney 2011:3-4; Bourke 2018:134).

acquisition of new lands' (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:88-89). With one 'half' of the correspondence recovered from Amarna, it is expected that the 'other half' of the archive of *Amarna Letters* would have been located at Hazor. Nonetheless, both Yadin and Ben-Tor have been unable to find the location of this documentary archive by means of excavations during their academic careers (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:89). However, both archaeologists were thoroughly convinced that the archive must be located at the site. As research and excavations continue with new generations of researchers and site directors, hope remains that it may still be discovered, further enhancing insight into the Late Bronze Age dynamics that shaped the region.

Therefore, with its geographical location at the convergence of important trade routes and mention of the site in extra-biblical documentary sources, Hazor must have occupied a pivotal role in the power dynamics of the Canaanite region, allowing it to emerge as a prosperous site throughout the Bronze and Iron Age periods. This longevity evidently allowed it to evolve into the largest known archaeological tell site in Israel, comprising an area of approximately 200 acres (Grant 1984:17; Dever 2012:60; Ben-Tor 2016:10-12, 65-75; Le Roux 2018:5; Hazor Excavations 2018).

However, the vast size of the site alone does not account for its archaeological significance. Indeed, before the advent of archaeological research, there was a glaring lack of information about the Canaanite and Israelite cultures in the northern regions of the Holy Land. Together with mentions in the Old Testament of the Bible, the excavations at Hazor have provided significant insight into this previously poorly understood historical period (Yadin 1975:11; Ben-Tor 2008). Evidently, this Canaanite city played an important role during the Bronze Age, as is evident by not only the significant size of the archaeological site, but also by the frequency of references made to it in biblical and non-biblical sources (Yadin 1975:11; Ben-Tor & Zuckerman 2008; Ben-Tor 2016:13, 67-74). Hence, it is possible to reconcile historical accounts with the physical evidence provided by the site itself from archaeological excavations.

For this purpose, the various occasions when Hazor was mentioned in the Bible are noted here. Hazor is mentioned for the first time in the Bible in the Old Testament in connection with the conquest of Canaan by the proto-Israelites (Le Roux 2018:6). According to the text in Joshua 11:1-5 (see below), King Jabin of Hazor was the leader

of the Canaanite League. He sent messengers to his allies to assemble the combined military forces of the North to stand against Joshua, following the victory of his Israelite troops in southern Canaan (Yadin 1975:11; Grant 1984; Ben-Tor 2016:113-117, 190):

> When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Acshaph, and to the northern kings who were in the mountains, in the Arabah south of Kinnereth, in the western foothills and in Naphoth Dor on the west; to the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites below Hermon in the region of Mizpah. They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. All these kings joined forces and made camp together at the Waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

Thereafter, the destruction of Hazor at the hand of the Israelites is noted in Joshua 11:10-13, following the defeat of the Canaanite forces in northern Galilee 'near the water of Merom' (Yadin 1975:12; Ben-Tor 2016:113-117; Kleiman 2022:28):

> At that time Joshua turned back and captured Hazor and put its king to the sword. (Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms). Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed them, not sparing anyone that breathed, and he burned up Hazor itself. Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded. Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned.

An extensive destruction layer dating to approximately 1250 BCE was excavated during the 2012 field season at Hazor (Le Roux 2018:6; Ben-Tor 2016; Kleiman 2022:28). According to Ben-Tor (2016:113), this 'mother of all destructions' devastated the city. There was extensive charring and debris. Moreover, the heat from the fire appears to have been so intense that it vitrified the bricks in the walls of the hall at the Ceremonial Palace and melted clay vessels (Ben-Tor 2016:113-117; Le Roux 2018:6).

Notably, in the above biblical text, explicit reference is given to Hazor as 'formerly' being the head of the northern kingdoms. The biblical author implied a decline in its political position and importance following the Israelite conquest (Yadin 1975:12; Ben-Tor 2016:190; Le Roux 2018:6). Similarly, a list of thirty-one kings, which were defeated by the Israelite army, is provided in Joshua 12:9-24. This list includes 'the king of Hazor', as mentioned in Joshua 12:19. Thereafter, Hazor is mentioned again as part of the biblical account of the prophetess Deborah in Judges 4:2 (in context Judges 4:1-3 is quoted below):

> After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the Lord. So the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim. Because he

had nine hundred iron chariots and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the Lord for help.

In this context, it should be noted that a king of Hazor by the name of Jabin is mentioned both in Joshua and in Judges, whereby the Book of Judges in canon and chronology follows the account of Joshua. This discrepancy has caused much debate among biblical scholars (Yadin 1975:12-13; Le Roux 2018:6).

As a result of being oppressed, the Israelites under the leadership of the prophetess Deborah and her commander Barak rallied an army. They defeated Sisera and his troops at the Kishon River:

> When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera gathered together his nine hundred iron chariots and all the men with him, from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River. Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is the day the Lord has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?" So Barak went down Mount Tabor, followed by ten thousand men. At Barak's advance, the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot. Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim. All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left (Judges 4:12-16).

The biblical account further states that in addition to defeating the king's general, Deborah and Barak continued their offensive attack and eventually defeated King Jabin, but they did not burn the city:

> On that day God subdued Jabin, the Canaanite king, before the Israelites. And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin, the Canaanite king, until they destroyed him (Judges 4:23-24).

Notably, the above biblical text does not mention the burning of Hazor in the aftermath of the battle, but states only that 'not a man was left'. Thus, the extensive destruction layer found during the 2012 excavation season would rather correspond to the account of Joshua 11 and not necessarily to the defeat of Hazor recounted in Judges 4-5 (Le Roux 2018:6). When the biblical text is correlated with archaeological research, it becomes evident that the biblical account can be connected to physical evidence *in-situ*:

> According to the chronological data in the Old Testament this event would have occurred during the second half of the thirteenth century B.C. Excavations at Hazor have indeed revealed evidence of massive destruction at this time – so severe that the city was not rebuilt until the time of Solomon, during the tenth century B.C. An intriguing aspect of the destruction is that the heads and hands of statues of both deities and dignitaries were intentionally broken off. Excavators suggest that this could have been the work of the Israelites, carrying out Moses' injunction to "cut down the idols of their gods" (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:350).

The next instance, when Hazor is mentioned in the Bible, is in the first Book of Kings:

> Here is the account of the forced labour King Solomon conscripted to build the Lord's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer (1 Kings 9:15).

Figure 7.5: Examples of Ashlar masonry at Tel Hazor (Photos: MC/The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin)

As is evident above, the biblical text 'implies that following the fall of Canaanite Hazor, there was no proper city on the site until Solomon rebuilt it, along with two other strategic cities' (Yadin 1975:13). Indeed, in the ancient Near East, it was commonplace that inscriptions would have recorded significant construction projects and similar building activities related to the reigns of kings. As such, it became evident from the biblical text that during the reign of Solomon, prolific rebuilding efforts occurred in

numerous ancient cities as the king invested in developing infrastructure for the Israelite kingdom. Indeed, several buildings, which were constructed with fine Ashlar masonry, were excavated at Hazor, as is evident in Figure 7.5 above.

Figure 7.6: Tel Hazor aerial view of six-chambered gate flanked by two outer towers at the entrance, as well as the casemate city wall (Photo: MC/The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin)

In addition, the rebuilding and fortification efforts that were mentioned in 1 Kings 9:15 concur with archaeological evidence dating to the tenth century BCE at numerous sites, including Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. Casemate walls (double walls with chambers) were employed as defensive structures for the first time, often in collaboration with multi-chambered city gates (Dever 2012:136): The 'work in these cities made use of ashlar masonry and displayed similar facades, dimensions and designs. The cities also featured six-chambered gates, with three chambers on each side of the gateway' (NIV Archaeological Study Bible 2005:497). Indeed, the six-chambered gate with its two outer towers and the casemate city wall, comprises some

of the most prominent and distinctive archaeological features at Hazor (see Figure 7.6 above).
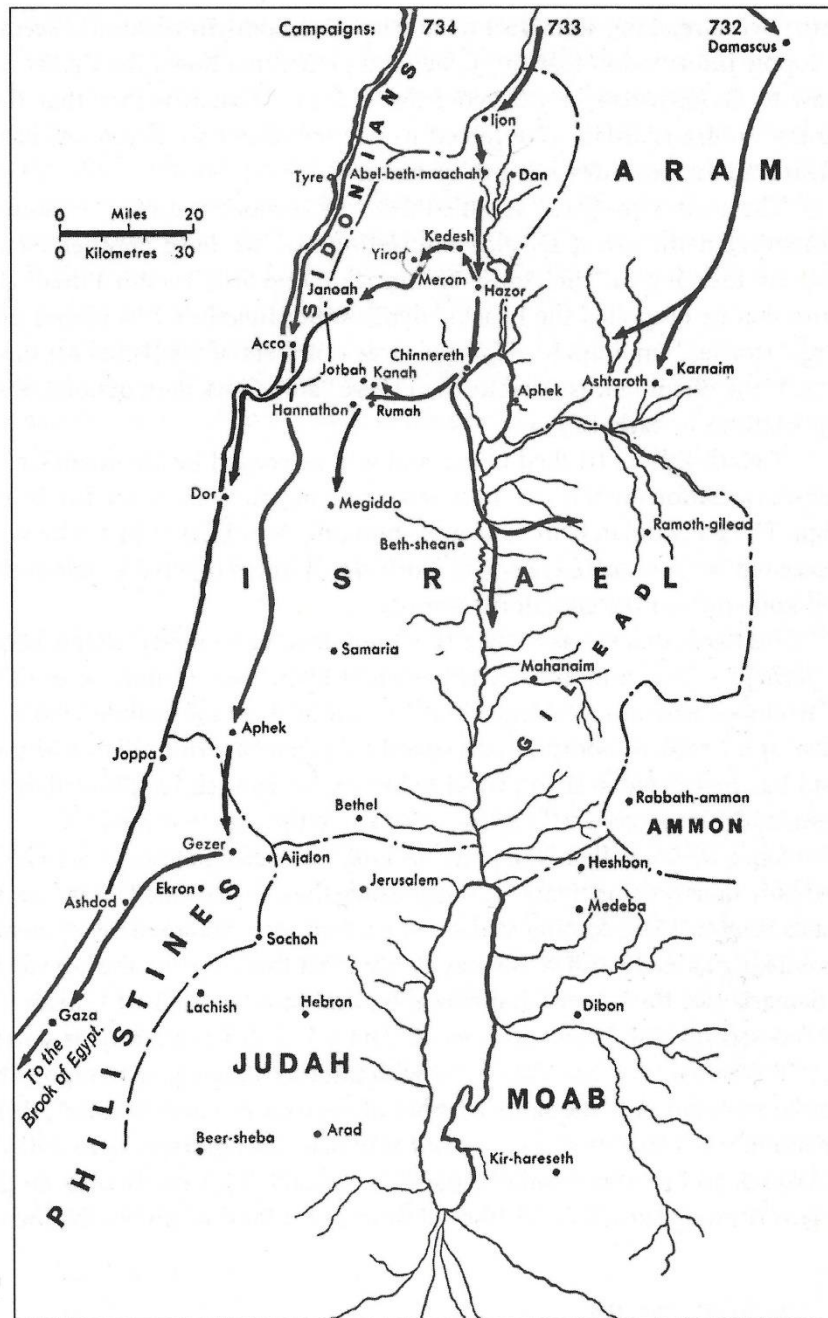

Figure 7.7: Tiglath-Pileser III's campaigns conquering northern Israel from 734-732 BCE (Dever 2012:331)

Despite these heavy fortifications, Hazor eventually met its end at the hands of the Assyrians. While the defeat of the Canaanites under Deborah's Israelite army meant the end of Canaanite Hazor, the Assyrians under the emperor Tiglath-Pileser III

conquered Hazor and other northern Israelite cities in 732 BCE (see Figure 7.7 above). This defeat sealed the end of Israelite Hazor, as it was destroyed and not rebuilt again (Yadin 1975:13; Hazor Excavations 2018). The biblical text in 2 Kings 15:29 is also the last time that Hazor is mentioned in the Bible:

> In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maakah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29).

7.3 APPLICATION OF THE FOUR-PILLAR APPROACH TO TEL HAZOR – A PILOT STUDY

After analysing the site in the context of biblical archaeological research and establishing its biblical significance, it becomes apparent that Hazor as an archaeological terrain has vastly contributed to the present-day understanding of Bronze Age societies in the southern Levant. For this reason, it is essential that the site be preserved for future research and that it remains accessible to the public. A site as large and important as Hazor undoubtedly faces its own unique challenges. Owing to its historical and socio-cultural value, it should be safeguarded so that further research will be possible. Therefore, it was chosen as a pilot study for the theoretical application of the interdisciplinary four-pillar approach to safeguard cultural heritage against looting and destruction as mentioned in Chapter Six. This includes contributions in terms of documentation, monitoring the site, physical and legal protection or security and public archaeology.

7.3.1. Documentation and research

When considering the history of research at Hazor, it becomes apparent that the site of Tel el-Qedah (also known as Tel el-Kedah or Tel Waqqas) was identified as the probable location for biblical Hazor by JL Porter in 1875, which was confirmed again in 1881. However, it was only in 1926 that John Garstang officially rediscovered the site and identified it as Hazor. By 1928, he conducted the first excavations at the site (Yadin 1975:19; Yadin 1993:954). Thereafter, four seasons of excavations were held by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem under Yigael Yadin from 1955-1958. Ten years later, he returned to the site for a fifth excavation season from 1968-1969 to conduct further research (Yadin 1975:19-22; Yadin 1993:594-603; Ben-Tor 1993:604-605). Since 1990, the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has

been continuing research at Hazor.[86] The 'Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin' were led by Professor Amnon Ben-Tor from 1990-2006. Since 2007, they have been led jointly by Professor Amnon Ben-Tor and Sharon Zuckerman, followed by Professor Amnon Ben-Tor and Shlomit Bechar since 2016. More recently, since 2022, by Professor Amnon Ben-Tor and Dr. Igor Kreimerman, with the support of further experts, such as Dr. Deborah Sandhaus, Manuel Cimadevilla, Orna Cohen and Gabriel Lederman (Ben-Tor 2008:1769; Hazor-Excavations 2018). A plan offering an overview of the excavation areas of upper Hazor is shown in Figure 7.8 below.

Archaeological research at Tel Hazor has been largely interdisciplinary in nature. According to Kreimerman (2023), who is the current director of archaeological research at Hazor,[87] a combination of 'both standard archaeological methods (stratigraphy, study of pottery, metal objects, seals, statues etc.) and micro-archaeological methods' is employed on site. Micro-archaeological methods include archaeozoology, archaeobotany, sediment samples to study phytoliths and spheroliths, scanning technology such as Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) and X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) analysis to identify the elemental composition of materials of objects, petrography (to identify where pottery was produced) and the composition of mud-bricks 'to understand construction methods and techniques' (Kreimerman 2023). During an excavation season, the finds are collected and thoroughly recorded. Once the excavation season has ended, most of the portable artefacts, except for heavy stone objects,[88] are removed from the site to be taken to the Hebrew University. There, a selection of artefacts is identified for further study. In addition, micro-archaeological samples are taken to the laboratories of the university for detailed analysis (Kreimerman 2023). In addition to the interdisciplinary research and analysis of the finds and the site, archaeologists also have an obligation to share the research results and to publish their academic findings and the report of each excavation season. These then become part of the corpus of knowledge generated by the team of archaeologists researching the site.

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[86] It should be mentioned that financial support for the continued research at Tel Hazor is gained from the 'Philip and Muriel Berman Centre for Biblical Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and by the Israel Exploration Society', as well as the 'Selz Foundation (New York), the Edith and Reuben Hecht Fund (Israel), the Steven B. Dana Archaeology Fund (Las Vegas)' amongst others (Hazor-Excavations 2018).

[87] The former director of archaeological research at Hazor, Prof Amnon Ben-Tor, passed away in 2023.

[88] These are taken to the local Kibbutz to be placed in a storehouse or 'museum' (Kreimerman 2023).
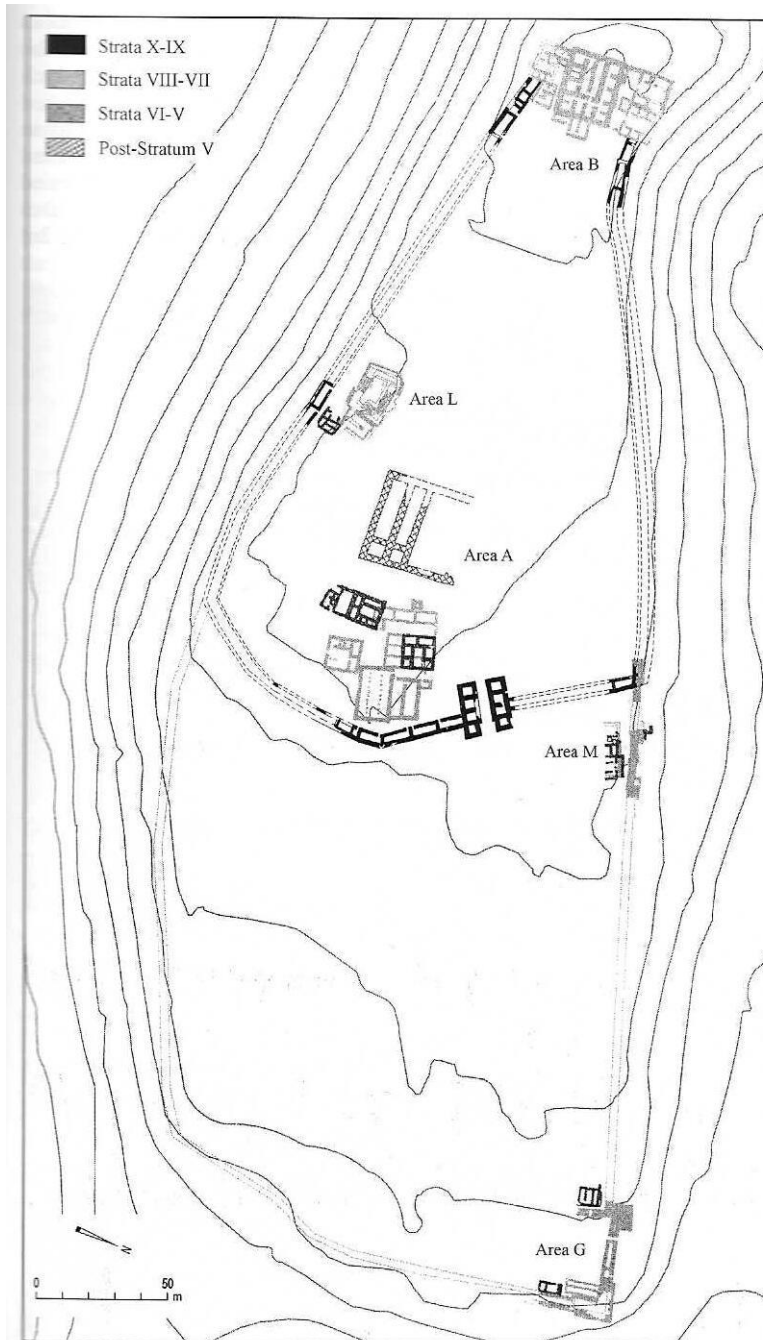
Figure 7.8: Plan of upper Hazor with excavation areas (Ben-Tor 2008:1773)

However, in addition to the technology and methods noted above, additional technological devices could be employed for research at the site in the future. This could include for example the rendering of 2D or 3D images, to illustrate not only the stratigraphy and stages of development of the site itself, but also a more in-depth study and analysis of certain features or artefacts that were excavated there. It is also essential in terms of the principles of digital humanities that the data about the site are documented, accessible, and reproducible and that the procedures are transparent and sustainable among others.

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7.3.2. Security and monitoring

According to correspondence with the site co-director, Dr. Igor Kreimerman (2023), the archaeological site of Tel Hazor has largely been spared from looting in recent times. The intentional destruction of the archaeological remains, which includes events such as looting or vandalism, is extremely rare at this site. One notable exception occurred several months ago:

> A land-owner who owns both a field and a part of the MBA rampart has decided to build a massive fence and damaged the rampart and also several structures in the lower city. The Israel Antiquities Authority now takes legal action against him, and he will probably have to cover some costs of salvage excavations in the area (Kreimerman 2023).

Hence, the occurrences of looting or intentional destruction are not commonplace and transgressions are being prosecuted to the extent of the law. In addition, in accordance with physical and legal security, the archaeological site is access-controlled by security personnel during the day. Furthermore, it is surrounded by a fence with an access gate that is locked at night.

However, since it has not been identified as necessary, the site is not currently being monitored through remote sensing such as satellite images or drones (Kreimerman 2023). This approach could contribute to enhancing the safeguarding of the site in the future. Moreover, through aerial or drone photography, the condition of the site could be monitored better over a period of time, as areas of deterioration might be identified or possible occurrences of looting could be detected that may not have been apparent through other methods of monitoring the site, especially since it is such a large tell site.

7.3.3. Public archaeology

As identified above, ongoing research at the site is interdisciplinary in nature and volunteers from a multitude of nations participate in the six-week excavation season (or they join one of two stints of three weeks), which ranges from late June to early August annually (Hazor Excavations 2018). The longer duration of participation in an excavation allows for more continuity during the excavation season because of less rotation and changing participants. Veteran participants and qualified staff members, who previously participated in the excavation, are able to direct and orientate newcomers, as well as amateur archaeologists (Stern 2000:337).

Typically, research at archaeological sites is funded through research or government grants, as well as donations. However, one benefit of volunteer participation in archaeological excavations is that the participation fees (which usually cover the expenses of the participants, such as accommodations, meals and transportation to the site, and insurance) could also contribute to this cause. More importantly, the volunteers are able to 'perform a huge amount of archaeological work' (Gori 2013:219; Vieweger 2012:450-451). In this regard, it is one of the most plausible ways to perform necessary fieldwork. At the same time, members from academia and the public forge closer connections to the site where they are working, thereby generating awareness of the archaeological significance of the region and the need to safeguard it for future generations (Gori 2013:219). In addition, participants in a volunteer dig are able to develop scientific skills in practice (Vieweger 2012:450-451).

It seems to be commonplace at archaeological excavations in Israel to excavate for five days only (Mondays to Fridays) during a workweek. One of the reasons for this is not only observing religious rest days, but also allowing volunteers from abroad to travel within Israel (Stern 2000:337-338). In this context, tourists not only become attached to the archaeological site where they are working, but also enjoy sightseeing and relaxation during their time in Israel. When considering the long workdays during the excavation, it is essential to allow for some rest to recover from the exhausting nature of the work.[89]

As a declared national archaeological park and a World Heritage Site encompassing the largest tell site in Israel, Tel Hazor boasts an abundance of visible archaeology. The Israel Nature and Parks Authority (2019), which manages the site, supports

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[89] Below is the daily schedule for a typical excavation day (Mondays to Fridays) at Hazor for the 2023 excavation season (the thirty second excavation season) as noted on the official website, which is comparable to the typical daily schedules of other organised volunteer trips and excavations (Vieweger 2012:455-456):
4:15 Wake-up
4:45 Bus leaves for site
5:00 Work begins
7:00 Coffee and tea break
9:30 Second substantial breakfast
10:00 Work resumes
13:00 End of field work and pottery washing
14:00 Lunch – main meal (back at the kibbutz)
15:00 Siesta, relaxation
17:00 Pottery reading (for those interested)
19:00 Lectures – as announced
19:30 Supper
21:00 Suggested bed-time (Hazor Excavations 2018)

ongoing archaeological research, conserves excavated archaeological buildings and features, and maintains the site for visitors. As part of the infrastructure of Tel Hazor National Park, there are established walkways on-location, as well as information boards with roof covers. Self-exploration by means of visitor signage and maps enables tourists to be directed to the points of interest (POI), which are also suggested to visitors on the website (Israel Nature and Parks Authority 2019b). Ablution facilities and recreation or picnic areas are also available. In addition, zoning can be identified at the archaeological site (see Figure 7.9 below) to avoid excessive visitor traffic through delicate areas of the site and to support infrastructure from negatively affecting sensitive archaeological heritage (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992-2024b).

As an archaeological site, the official boundaries of Hazor are 'declared by the Israel Antiquities Authority and therefore protected according to the antiquities law' (Kreimerman 2023). As a national park, the site is 'protected and maintained by the National Parks Authority' (Kreimerman 2023). As a tourist site, Hazor is zoned. The heritage area open to visitors is fenced (see Figure 7.11). There is also a parking lot with a 'small shop at the entrance, restrooms, and walkways' taking tourists to the main features of the site, which in turn are equipped with information boards to inform visitors of the significance of the site and the points of interest (POI) (Kreimerman 2023). The areas, where active excavations are being carried out, are more sensitive and are currently fenced off with signage to prevent people from entering, as is evident in Figure 7.12 (Kreimerman 2023).
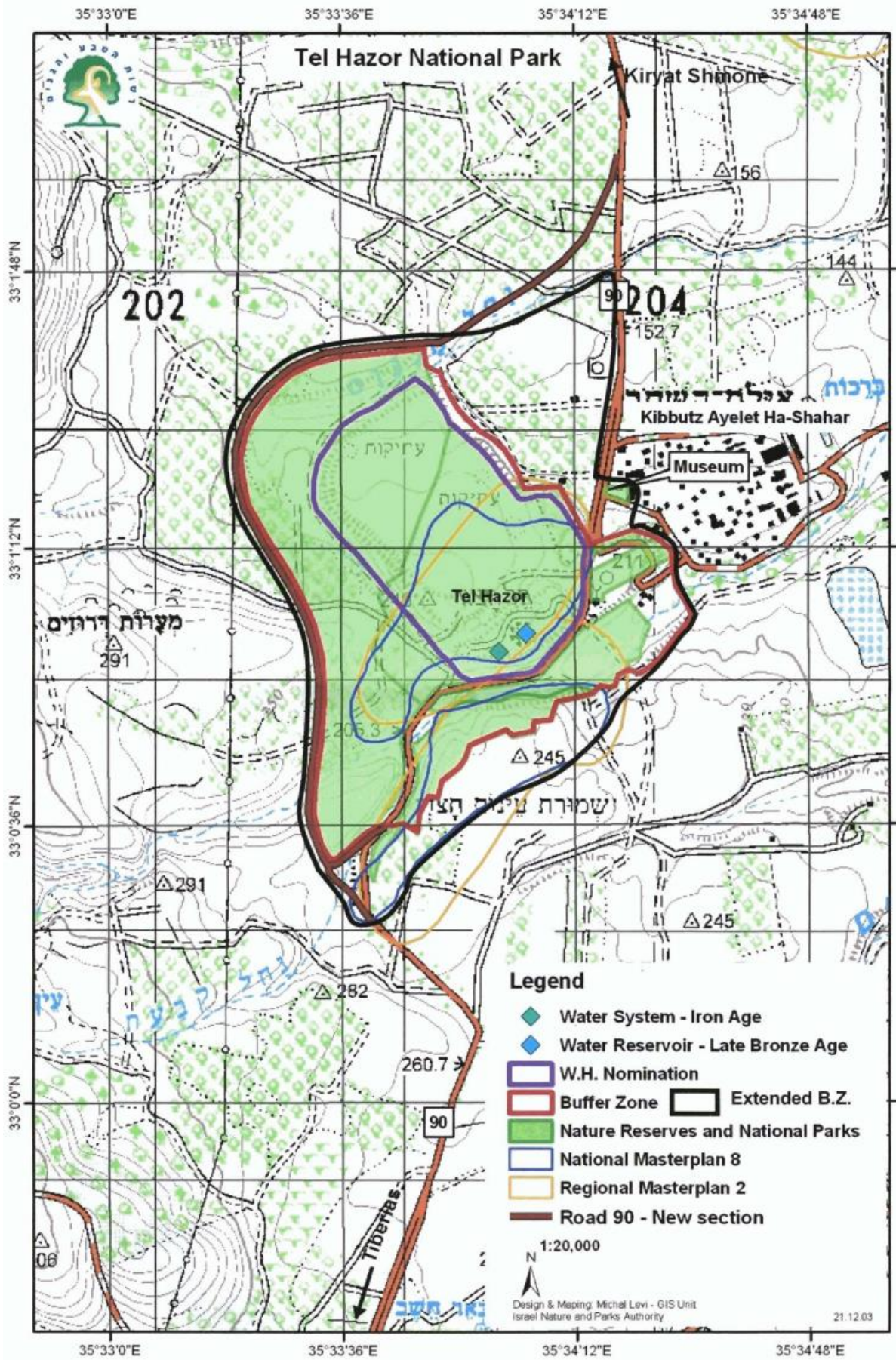
Figure 7.9: Map of Tel Hazor National Park with zoning (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992-2024b)

Figure 7.10: Protective roof covering the Canaanite palace remains dating to the Bronze Age (Photo: MC/The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin)

As is evident in Figure 7.10 above, the archaeological remains of the Canaanite palace dating to the Bronze Age are covered by a roof to protect them from the elements. Furthermore, the Hazor Antiquities Museum is a local site museum, that is directly related to the archaeological site and located in the neighbouring kibbutz, Ayelet Hashacha (see Figure 7.9). However, according to Kreimerman (2023), the museum is currently closed to visitors 'due to problems with the structure'. At this stage, efforts are being made to locate funding for the necessary renovations (Kreimerman 2023).

Figure 7.11: Walkways, signage and fencing to guide tourists at Hazor (Photo: MC/The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin)

Figure 7.12: Fenced off area for ongoing archaeological research, where tourists are not permitted to enter (Photo: MC/The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin)

Access to the national park is controlled by means of entry fees or a multi-site access pass known as the 'Israel Pass' (Israel Nature and Parks Authority 2019b). Visitors to Hazor can explore the site on their own with the aid of on-site signage in English and Hebrew, as well as by using a bilingual brochure about the site.[90] Guided tours are offered by locals, i.e., volunteers from the region. They are conducted mainly in Hebrew, mostly over weekends, and are free of charge to the public. In contrast to volunteers, official employees at Hazor receive their salary from the National Parks Authority. The excavation is run mainly by university staff and international volunteers. On occasion, locals also participate and the excavation team plans to increasingly 'incorporate some local youth movements in the excavations' (Kreimerman 2023). In this way, not only would tourists and volunteers from abroad gain a stake at the site, but also gradually more local people.

The participation of international volunteers as participants in the annual excavation season, as well as staff from the Hebrew University, has the positive side effect that they require accommodation, transportation and sustenance, as well as other amenities for the duration of their stay. According to Kreimerman (2023), local businesses are thus able to benefit from the project as well: 'we pay a local hostel, we hire dining services, we shop for products in the region, and travel to local attractions'. Similarly, overnight tourists and day visitors also benefit the local economy.

With approximately 50,000 visitors a year (during the pre-COVID-19 period), Hazor is not as popular a tourist location as other attractions in Israel such as Masada, which receives over a million visitors annually (Kreimerman 2023). However, tourism has a positive ripple-effect on the region that helps to support the local economy through generating income and, in turn, direct and indirect employment. Primary employment can be explained as jobs that are directly related to the tourism industry and the heritage attractions that drive tourism (people employed as restaurants and accommodation establishments, as well as cashiers/receptionists, site managers, tourist guides, museum interpreters, park wardens, curators, security guards, etc.). Tourists often engage in direct spending near a tourist attraction, such as paying for accommodation, food and entrance fees for cultural or natural heritage sites. This, in

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[90] This brochure is available both in English and Hebrew (Israel Nature and Parks Authority 2019b).

turn, generates indirect spending: the hotels need to employ laundry services and cleaning staff, restaurants purchase food from a local vendor, and employees spend their money locally to satisfy their own needs and wants. This generates indirect employment related to this secondary type of spending, which is a ripple effect of tourism and a multiplier for the local economy (Timothy 2011:163-164). In turn, tourism may result in regional income growth and tax revenue, which could be reinvested into the region to support the local economy and in turn provide funding for the conservation and preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites that are the resource base for tourism (Timothy 2011:163-165). Hence, tourism, through the utilisation of the archaeological site as a cultural resource base, can be seen as an economic multiplier.

7.4 CONCLUSION

Evidently, the heritage situation in each country and at each archaeological site is unique. As such, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and nationalist placemaking efforts offer unique challenges. This has shaped the way that archaeological research is funded and conducted and consequently affects the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in Israel and in Israeli occupied territories. Considering the turbulent history of the Levant since antiquity, this is yet another period of unrest in a long line of clashes that have shaped the region.[91] Regardless, the safeguarding of archaeological heritage should remain a priority since it is often closely linked to the identity of the people living there and it is intrinsically part of their culture.

With respect to the case study of Tel Hazor in Israel, its location plays a favourable role: it is not located in the West Bank, where the majority of the conflict and unrest is centred. Moreover, owing to its self-evident historical and archaeological significance, the site was prominently developed into a tourist destination and a national archaeological park under the auspices of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. Therefore, it was determined to be an ideal archaeological site to function as a best practice example to apply the interdisciplinary four-pillared solution. Indeed, the site

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[91] The long history of conflict is also evident at Tel Hazor. Indeed, events of destruction and rebuilding form part of the very fabric of any tell site.

already seems to fulfil three of the four aspects, namely documentation and digitisation, public archaeology and securitisation and legal protection.

However, one pillar has not yet been considered. To date, aerial photographs (by drones) of the site have been obtained for scientific purposes. Remote sensing has not yet been used to monitor the site of Tel Hazor, since illegal excavations and vandalism did not seem to affect the archaeological heritage site at this stage. Hence, enhancing the monitoring of the archaeological site at this stage does not appear to be an immediate necessity. However, if the socio-political situation in that region of Israel should deteriorate in the future and become acute, it might become useful. This is evident by means of satellite imagery used to monitor heritage sites in Gaza at present.

Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration is necessary not only for research purposes, but also for safeguarding the site from the perspective of the site managers employed by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, which is tasked with the maintenance and protection of the Tel Hazor.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

At this stage is does not appear that a panacea to the problem of the plundering of the past and the present in the Biblical World may ever be found, especially since it is an ongoing problem that has persisted since antiquity and continued well into the present. The safeguarding of cultural heritage cannot be guaranteed due to a multitude of factors including socio-political and economic circumstances and possible future environmental issues that may exacerbate these circumstances. Therefore, the resulting illicit trade in antiquities continues to have a detrimental impact on an already fragmented archaeological record.

8.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

As evident in Chapters Two, Three and Four, the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage is a universal phenomenon that has occurred since antiquity. In ancient Egypt, burial architecture changed over time in an attempt to hinder tomb robbing and different securitisation mechanisms and legal tools were already in place to hinder and punish the perpetrators. However, the lure of making a fast profit by selling the raw materials stolen from graves for economic improvement seems to have been a major factor for the continuation of the practice. In other places of the Near East, such as the southern Levant, the predominant factor that promoted looting appears to have been the aftermath of conquest, whereby the victors returned home with war loot. In both instances, the major enabling factors for the plundering and vandalism of cultural heritage appear to have been economic decline and socio-political and religious conflict.

As such, not much seems to have changed into the present, as these factors remain prevalent reasons for the plundering of the past in the present. However, as increasing protests indicate, a major contributing factor in the future seems to be environmental or climate change, which may aggravate the socio-political climate between nations, as well as within nations between non-states parties. Therefore, it may not be possible

to identify a universal remedy or all-cure that would solve all problems related to the plundering of archaeological heritage in the biblical world. However, it is possible to curb the severity of the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage to some degree. As became evident in Chapter Five, the current legal tools are indeed helpful, but they do not suffice on their own, especially in light of unpredictable emergency situations such as armed conflict (and in the case of natural disasters), when many other humanitarian measures seem to fail. Moreover, both international and national legislation appear to be reactive to specific situations instead of being proactive in hindering heritage crime that drives the illicit trade in antiquities. Therefore, a heritage management approach, which rests on the interdisciplinarity of the 'four pillars' identified by Chapter Six of this study, has the best chance of success at present. These four pillars include the following:

- The monitoring of archaeological sites and cultural venues, as well as antiquities, through remote sensing and watchlists
- Thorough documentation and digitisation of archaeological heritage
- The physical and legal securitisation of cultural heritage
- Public archaeology through community engagement, education and tourism to strengthen stakeholder ties to cultural heritage and the local economy

In this context, interdisciplinary teamwork as part of a long-term, funded collaborative project or unit is the best way forward to investigate the provenance of looted artefacts, to trace stolen objects back to their source country (or, if possible, even to the site of origin) and to hinder the plundering of archaeological heritage from occurring in the first place. Thus, archaeologists, art historians, museum professionals, heritage managers and other academics could work together with lawyers and police or military units in a consultative and research capacity. Their professional expertise may offer fresh perspectives that enrich such a collaboration of persons from different disciplines working together towards the same goal. In addition, the value of community participation and consultation and efforts to generate awareness through public archaeology should not be underestimated. Such a partnership based at grassroots level with an understanding of the needs of local communities is also essential for the safeguarding of archaeological heritage, since local persons derive value and identity from it.

The interdisciplinarity of the four-pillared approach was successfully applied to Tel Hazor in Israel as a theoretical and desk-based pilot study. However, further practical on-site research will still be necessary in the future. This theory can also be applied to other archaeological sites in the Near East and beyond, especially in other tourism-rich destinations such as Egypt, which boasts a multitude of archaeological heritage, but at the same time continues to be plagued by illicit excavations. By applying this approach to other sites in Israel and Egypt, it would be possible to determine other needs that may have been overlooked in a desk-based research project, since it was not possible for the author of this thesis to travel to Israel owing to the circumstances that were prevalent for the duration of this research project. Therefore, in-person research at the chosen case study site was not conducted.

8.3 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

With respect to the application of the four-pillared interdisciplinary approach at Tel Hazor, physical research at the site should definitely be considered an option to deepen research in the future. In this context, conducting a 'systematic surface survey' or field-walking at Tel Hazor would be practical (Burke & Smith 2004:65).[92] Hereby, the site would be divided into walking lines, corridors or transects. Field-walkers would slowly and systematically pace across each applicable section of land to scan the surfaces in search of evidence of looting, vandalism or other forms of destruction (Burke & Smith 2004:65). Given the limited availability of trained personnel, time and finances to conduct such a survey of the entire site on foot, it may be necessary to 'limit [the] survey to certain parts of the landscape: a strategy which is known as sampling' (Burke & Smith 2004:66; my inclusion). However, when analysing only a portion of a site, the sample needs to be representative of the whole site by choosing a 'suitable sampling strategy' and examining only a selection of quadrants or zones (Burke & Smith 2004:66-69).

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[92] Unfortunately, it was not possible for the author of this thesis to conduct in-person research or a field-walking survey at Tel Hazor due to financial and human resources limits and time constraints (limited leave available from work) faced as part of the research. Moreover, due to the Covid-19 pandemic international borders were closed, which made travel impossible for long periods of time. In addition, ongoing unrest persists in many areas of the Near East and this also affects the ability to conduct in-person surveys. Towards the end of the study, the conflict flared up again in Israel. For this reason, it is uncertain when travel to the region would be 'safe' again. Therefore, it was necessary to rely on correspondence with the director of archaeological research at Tel Hazor and other local experts.

If physical evidence of looting or vandalism is found, it would be necessary to identify if there are patterns in the looting of the site or surrounding areas, where disturbances such as looting pits or evidence of destruction occur in greater concentration, as well as ascertaining the percentage of the site that has been affected. In combination with this, satellite or Google Earth images and aerial photographs (using drones) of the corresponding areas should be analysed to compare the condition of the site on the ground with evidence obtained through remote sensing and to identify the progression of potential issues over time. Moreover, local inhabitants of the kibbutz at Tel Hazor should be consulted to determine how they as a community are invested in the protection of their cultural heritage as a community.

In addition, the potential impact of the Israeli-Hamas War on the heritage site should be considered. Even though, the site is basically located on the other end of Israel, far removed from the current conflict zone, it might still have an impact. Thus, it would be important to consider the continued monitoring and securitisation of the site, and if any public engagement programmes are continuing during a state of emergency, whereby reserve forces are being called up to fight, which might affect the inhabitants of the kibbutz. Additionally, considering the armed conflict in Israel, does the research at the site continue? Will there be a 2024 excavation season at the site or would excavations only resume at a later stage? With respect to the other pillars, apart from monitoring, public archaeology and security, the continuation of research at Tel Hazor remains important. However, the application of the principles of digital humanities should be employed to a greater degree to ensure that the information is properly digitised, accessible and reproducible so that it is not lost, should the conflict reach greater proportions. Thus, the documentation processes need be transparent. In this regard, the more intensive use of technological devices for research, such as different means of scanning and utilising 2D and 3D imaging technologies, is recommended. In this manner, certain features and artefacts that were excavated at Hazor could be researched in greater depth. Through imaging technologies, digital models and reproductions can be rendered, which can become significant in the event that an original object deteriorates or is lost.

In addition, the war undoubtedly has a detrimental effect on the tourism industry, as the international community would be reluctant to travel to a country affected by armed

conflict or civil unrest. However, tourism has traditionally provided for volunteer excavators and funding in support of ongoing research projects. This might result in a funding or human resources shortfall and could impact the preservation of the site. Depending on the continued duration of the war, this may evolve into a long-term negative impact for the entire region, not only at geopolitical and socio-cultural levels, but also at an economic level.

In the absence of a political resolution to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Palestinian archaeologist Al-Houdalieh (2018:247) stated:

> … it may be that local, citizen-driven actions such as educational and consciousness-raising activities, community pressure, and citizen monitoring of sites – all founded on a sense of ownership, and of the inherent value of preserving the material remains of the past – may be our best defence against looters.

As shocking as the looting and destruction of archaeological heritage is, it also offers valuable teaching moments when the public becomes aware of the severity of the damage that was caused. This might motivate them to take action to protect their cultural heritage for future generations. This indicates the value of public archaeology and community engagement as vital pillars in the interdisciplinary approach to safeguarding archaeological heritage. Combined with monitoring sites through remote sensing, documenting and digitising research data and the implementation of physical security and legal tools, public archaeology may offer a more balanced and effective approach to protect and preserve the archaeological heritage of the biblical world and beyond.

During the study, some other gaps in existing knowledge also became apparent. For example, in Chapter Two the possibility of looting being state-sanctioned was voiced. Since this is still a relevant issue at present, this aspect requires further investigation. Moreover, it became evident that the tomb architecture in ancient Egypt had altered over time to adapt to the changing need to secure graves. However, this was not as self-evident in the burial archaeology of the Levant as considered in Chapter Three. Therefore, this aspect would necessitate further in-depth research.

In Chapter Four it became evident that the purposeful destruction of cultural heritage in antiquity occurred in different forms, such as the erasure of text and damage to reliefs and sculptures, and it occurred due to different motivations such as conquest, looting, ritual or symbolic or political purposes or even as a result of socio-cultural and religious change. One aspect here that bears further investigation is the possibility of iconoclasm or *damnatio memoriae* occurring as a form of official proscription and employing planned construction to carry it out – this may have occurred at necropoles throughout ancient Egypt, whereby older graves or mortuary temples and other structures were purposefully deconstructed or destroyed to make way for later or more imposing tombs and structures that they were in the way of. This could be investigated by purposefully analysing whether spolia from preexisting features would have been reused and by mapping and creating detailed chronologies of burials within different necropoles. Another aspect would be the destruction of ancient Egyptian sites in connection with Coptic iconoclasm: Were there papal decrees that ordered this destruction or the discontinuation of pagan beliefs, which would have added fuel to the fire in addition to the orders issued by Emperor Justinian I for the closure of ancient Egyptian temples?

Since the historicity of the religious reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah remains disputed, more research in this regard would be essential for clarification and for enhanced cross-referencing with the biblical tradition. Another fascinating aspect of iconoclasm, which appears to have been more prevalent in ancient Mesopotamia, is the 'godnapping' of the icons of deities and the destruction of sites, which were commonly employed by ancient regimes as mechanisms to control a conquered nation. Nonetheless, what is yet unclear is to what extent the subjugated population might also have used similar means such as the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage to resist and rebel against the control of their conquerors. This aspect of utilising iconoclasm for revolting against suppressors could also become an interesting field of research in the future.

In connection with the current and future challenges to safeguarding cultural heritage considered in Chapter Five, the increasing impact of environmental change on archaeological sites, as well as climate action or protests by activists focusing on cultural venues, should be investigated more thoroughly. As evident in the research,

the frequency and severity of natural disasters are bound to increase over time, and as such, the consequences would also increasingly affect archaeological heritage located in future disaster zones. Recently, the ICOM joined the Call-to-Action campaign launched by the Climate Heritage Network (CHN), which encouraged stakeholders of creative industries and cultural heritage practitioners to transform through sustainable development and to set an example through climate leadership in cultural institutions (ICOM 2023c).

In addition, new trends and their impact on the illicit trade in antiquities should also be considered as future research avenues. Chapter Six considered the importance of the interdisciplinary four-pillared approach in an attempt to control the plundering of archaeological heritage. This includes keeping full digital records and making information available and accessible to stakeholders. This would ultimately include the use of open-source data to aid in a better understanding of the black market in art and antiquities, as well as the proliferation of online sales of illegal antiquities. However, the easy accessibility of digital data can be a double-edged sword. While it is essential to aid researchers' understanding of issues, it remains useful for heritage practitioners to manage their collections and sites and to convey reliable information to policing agencies in the event that this becomes necessary. On the other hand, with open-source data being readily available to other members of the public as well, it may also be misused for nefarious purposes. This aspect of open-source data and its connection to proliferating online illegal markets should be studied in more detail in the future.

In addition, the resurgence of the Near Eastern conflict, as mentioned in Chapter Seven, has already had detrimental consequences, especially with respect to the loss of human life. However, these developments may result in further-reaching consequences, affecting the entire Near Eastern world and beyond. At this stage, it is still too early to determine the possible extent of collateral damage to cultural heritage in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. As mentioned in Chapter Seven, initial reports and remote sensing have already indicated detrimental destruction. Unfortunately, it does not currently appear as if the hostilities are being resolved, but rather that the escalation thereof might continue. The conflict in Israel, located at the crossroads in the midst of the Near East, is thus a tinderbox that is bound to have far reaching

consequences if no diplomatic compromise can be reached. This will undoubtedly affect archaeological sites and other cultural heritage in the region. Therefore, despite the interdisciplinary tools at the disposal of heritage managers, non-profit agencies, international organisations and governments, it appears that in exceptional circumstances such as armed conflict, diplomacy and the hope that international conventions would be honoured remain a last resort.

Once the hostilities are over, cultural heritage – as a notion central to the socio-cultural and economic well-being of people and that has shaped their identity – has the potential to become a central focus in the peacebuilding process. Despite the multitude of cultural identities and parallel historical narratives that are present in the region, cultural heritage can help foster respect and mutual understanding. The potential application of cultural heritage as a tool for peacebuilding through public archaeology would also necessitate further research.

8.4 CONCLUSION

Ideally, safeguarding the archaeological heritage of the biblical world would facilitate the survival of a 'more intact' archaeological record of the region (apart from the natural degradation of organic material remains). This would imply that the context of archaeological finds would not be destroyed or disturbed by negative human intervention, which would enable Biblical Archaeologists to conduct research to gain valuable insight into the lives and circumstances of past societies. In this manner, the multitude of prevailing research questions that await answers may eventually be resolved. In addition, without the loss of artefacts to the illicit antiquities trade, more data would be available for analysis and comparison. With 'more intact' sites available for thorough scientific excavations, this could lead to the discovery of additional extra-biblical sources, which in turn could contribute to the academic understanding of biblical events, places and societies.

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