An assessment of the destruction and rehabilitation of libraries during a period of armed conflict: a case study of Iraq's Libraries 2003-

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2009

Abstract

As part of cultural genocide, the destruction of books and libraries has prevailed for many centuries. The written word can be described as an extension of our imagination, which supports the notion that a book is something far greater than just a physical object. Books are connected to the memory of society, its people and their identity. It can be argued that if we fail to remember what we are, then we don't really know who we are. Recorded history has suggested that the literal murder of books has been spurred on through political and religious wars, with an ulterior motive to completely eradicate a particular society.

This dissertation conducts a case study of Iraq and the ways in which professional library and information bodies collaborated, to respond to libraries damaged during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

After the US/UK led invasion in 2003 the destruction of libraries took place through bombings and planned arsonist attacks. This inevitably forced certain groups of people to be slowly wiped out forever. The study investigates the damage to the library collections and how this contributed to the genocide of Iraq's rich cultural heritage. With these thoughts in mind, Iraq had to face the prospect of rebuilding its libraries and collections in most cases, from scratch.

Both the destruction and rehabilitation stage of the project, are examined in detail. These findings can be used as a benchmark for future periods of library annihilation. The study merges together subjects that include memory, the destruction of libraries and their relation to identity and the power of the written word.

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Contents

'This day will be always remembered, as the day when books were assassinated by the forces of darkness, hatred and fanaticism…Tens of thousands of papers were flying high, as if the sky was raining books, tears and blood'.   November 2007

Dr. Saad Eskander: Director of the Iraq National Library and Archive. (INLA).

Statistics for the Impact of Sectarian violence on the INLA's Staff, July 2007

6 Threat and Displacement of Staff

3 damages to property (one burnt-down house brunt and two hijacked long vehicles)

2 unlawful arrest and torture by the National guards

1 unlawful death of close relative

Online diary by Dr. Saad Eskander

'Bringing power to the powerless. It's a recipe to be satisfied'

Clive Stafford Smith
Campaigner against miscarriages of justice.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their valuable time, Julie Robinson- former International Officer at the Chartered Institute for Information Professionals., Andy Stephens from the British library and Nick Lack from the British Council. Your work inspired me to keep writing about this fascinating subject.

Finally, I would like to thank Chris, for being there during the write up period.

Dedicated to all the library and archive staff in Iraq.

And above all to my loving family.

1. Introduction

Background

The 3rd century BC witnessed the destruction of the great Alexandria Library as it slowly perished away in a fire. Today, like a phoenix, the library has risen from ashes into a modern centre for learning, knowledge and dialogue, known as the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

When civil society is under threat from armed conflict, civilians are usually high on the priority list to be brought out of danger and into safety. In the light of this, a nation aims for stability and to resume to a life of normality. This process of rebirth involves replacing chaos with order. It can be a slow and at times frustrating period where it can take up to a few years for any kind of positive result to appear.

Once upon a time, Baghdad was recognised as a great centre of learning in the Middle East, intellectuals could come together and immerse themselves deep into an ocean of knowledge. Present times dictate otherwise where the sounds of bullets and car bombs far outweigh the tranquillity and peaceful atmosphere found in libraries. The ongoing war in Iraq and the ensuing sectarian violence have made everyday life for Iraqis very difficult. The looting of valuable archive and museum material has robbed a country of its historical treasures. Asking now, how this happened or who is responsible is largely overshadowed by other pressing issues such as how will Iraq remerge from this?

A central theme that weaves its way through this dissertation is the relationship between libraries, particularly national archives and collections and national identity. When it was first reported that libraries and other cultural heritage was being burned and looted in Iraq in 2003, the people cried out not only because their country was slowly becoming ravaged but for the history that would be wiped out forever. Libraries are recorders of history providing humankind with an understanding of who we

are and where we come from. A library is a national asset, a way of representing a nation's identity. It has been long debated that libraries are 'pivotal institutions for the life and identity of the modern nation state'.[1]

It has been an arduous task for Librarians and intellects to campaign for the protection of libraries. Donald Rumsfeld (American defence secretary, 2001 – 2005) notoriously said 'stuff happens' when concerned with the destruction of the Iraq National Library Archive (INLA) In a war zone, human lives are a higher priority than responding immediately to the loss of cultural heritage. However it is significant to also recognise that books and library collections help 'establish history and provide cultural context to the lives of humans'.[2]

Wartime strategies involved the targeting of libraries as a way to erase identities, to massacre a cultural memory and to offend the community on a personal level. Academics have openly studied the value of libraries as personal possessions to a state and therefore a motive to commit a direct assault of vandalism, on libraries during a period of armed conflict. Libraries piece together parts missing in jigsaws; they can bridge together societies that have a complicated and varied national identity.

Benedict Anderson argues that nationalism is possible through the works of what he coins as 'print capitalism.'[3] The prospect of history being collated in the printed word on a large scale, allows individuals to feel a sense of national community and pride alongside people with whom they have little in common. The national library became 'a centralised repository for all of the print materials that establish national identity on a public scale'.[4] It allows Iraqis to see documents that once upon a time may not have been easily accessible. For example, during the Baathist regime court proceedings documents were recorded, these are the kind that can unite ordinary everyday Iraqis.

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[1] Edwards and Edwards, 2008, p. 331
[2] Edwards and Edwards, 2008, p. 329
[3] Edwards and Edwards, 2008, p. 331
[4] Edwards and Edwards, 2008, p. 332

Andersons' argument is that libraries are a unique free space to allow the 'consumption of print materials… the keepers of national history and culture'[5] From this we can better understand why libraries are deemed important to protect during a period of armed conflict as they contribute to 'nation building'.

It is relevant to assess exactly what was destroyed by arsonists as this explains the rooted connection between Iraq's various identities, nationalism and what it means to be an Iraqi. The group, who were loyal to Saddam Hussein, burned the Republican Archive that held all the Ba'athist records from 1958 to1979. The INLA also lost records that provided historians and Iraqi citizens with knowledge about relations with neighbouring countries including Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia. [6]

Following the invasion in 2003, Dr. Saad Eskander became the director of INLA, he aspired to continue the need to maintain a collateral Iraqi identity. Dr. Eskander described the INLA as the 'historical memory of the country' and carefully addresses the need to protect INLA for the future of Iraqi nationalism and national identity.

The investigative part of this dissertation is broken down into segments with a time scale between 2003 up to present time. The dissertation examines the kind of pressure that was mounted by professional library bodies on the US/UK governments to protect libraries during the Iraq conflict. An assessment of what was actually damaged is given with the question of whether particular collections were targeted for anti-nationalistic motivations

The destruction of Iraq's libraries is an ongoing investigation and debate, as the conflict itself has not come to a definitive conclusion. This current study does not attempt to be a definitive statement, but follows the destruction and rebuilding phase of only some of Iraq's institutional libraries from 2003-2005. This method of research projects a viewfinder on a particular damaged library and trails its journey to rehabilitation. The period charts the downfall of cultural heritage in Iraq and also assesses the initial

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[5] Edwards and Edwards, 2008, p. 332
[6] Edwards and Edwards, 2008, p. 329

aftermath that Iraqis in the library and information sector had to face from day to day. There is an assessment of first hand interviews and observation reports that supports the primary evidence section of the study.

Outline of research questions

The principal research questions addressed in this dissertation are:

- How has destruction of libraries been historically used by warring parties as a means for achieving their ends and how does the cultural destruction in Iraq fit into this pattern?
- What role did the international library community play in protecting Iraq's cultural heritage
- What role have international library bodies played in reconstructing Iraq's cultural institutions after their destruction manifested itself
- What kind of partnered projects have taken place between Iraqi library staff and UK/US relations?
- What lessons may be learned from events at the Iraq National Library Archive (INLA) in particular

Within the dissertation there is a detailed case study of INLA as a cultural institution. The case study surveys the life of the institute through various unpredictable cycles of destruction and rebuilding. It is fascinating to view the work and dedication of library staff to protect not only their own lives but also their emotional attachment, to recorded heritage that has been standing since time began.

The topic of libraries in Iraq is of particular general interest because it has the potential to shed light on the more general destruction. To a Westerner the destruction and loss of life in a far off country is often bewildering and impossible to relate to. Examining one aspect of that can humanise the destruction and make it more real to us.

2. Literature Review

Examining the causes and effects of the destruction of libraries and how organisations are working together to deal with the aftermath is a current and ongoing debate. There is a general growth in literature, examining how destruction of libraries has caused civilisation of nations to completely breakdown Through the use of primary evidence academics, writers and researchers can summarise their findings and investigate further, in what can be done to improve libraries after a period of armed conflict.

In regards to the ongoing war in Iraq there is a possible risk towards further loss of cultural heritage. However the literature sourced reveals, that measures are being taken to reduce the impact of future damage to libraries and cultural institutes, so to improve community confidence.

The subject itself is very wide and varied in terms of the time scale from historical arguments for libraries being targeted to ways in which organisations and committees are working together, during the aftermath of such events. This includes the International Federation of the Library Association (IFLA), the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Blue Shield. There has been some excellent reporting on the kind of measures that can be taken to save cultural heritage prior to destruction during armed conflict. Another area that has been researched is the role played by disaster management policies in libraries for possible mass scale destruction.

Sandy English (2005) a journalist reporting on the World Socialist Web Site examines the destructive case of looting in Iraq and provides an update on the cultural disaster. English's piece of writing is based on evidence taken from a report written by a Harvard authoritative. This particular piece of writing gives an insight into the damage that now requires cultural protection. The report only pursues research on the actual damage done to major academic libraries and omits an interest in other smaller institutes that could have been addressed within the body of the writing. English argues that the U.S government were fully aware of the destruction and took no precautions in protecting the

heritage looted. Further research in the report is supported by interviews and collected observations with Director-Generals of the libraries. The writer uses opinions and assumptions made through interview based evidence by local Iraqis that 'the arsonists… were Kuwaitis'.[7] Since this has not been proved, it can be argued that the writer has undertaken a propaganda tone. The main constructive point put forward in the article examines how the US and British governments propose to rebuild the loss of Iraq's cultural memory stored in libraries.

English's review argues that 'funding' is a large problem for Iraq's libraries. As international funding remains slim, the research reveals that commitment is stronger and more forthcoming from scholars and librarians. In contrast to this criticism of the British government and their lack of enthusiasm for funding, Shimmon takes on a different approach when writing in the journal *Alexandria*. Shimmon suggests that organisations such as UNESCO, the international committee and Blue Shield can work together to disseminate information about how to cope with disasters. The author's argument is supported by the declarations and committee policies. What the report doesn't reveal is how exactly these polices are being utilised during armed conflicts such as the one in Iraq.

Graham Matthews from Loughborough University carried out research based on quantitative methodologies through interviews with librarians, fire officers, architects and other disaster related representatives. Matthews distinguishes the importance of planning so that we are prepared to prevent disaster robbing us of our cultural heritage.

Participating in field research, Matthews conducted interviews, up close and personal with library staff to discover what we can learn from disasters that have occurred. The writer raises questions that include: can a well-prepared disaster plan prevent mass destruction? The interviews and observation made with staff dealing with this area conclude, that a strong written policy that is followed orderly can reduce the impact and prepare staff for the outcome.

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[7] English, World Socialist Website, 2005

Another key argument to rebuilding libraries is communication and the dissemination of information. Library staff are in the information retrieval and dissemination business and Matthews identifies this is as a valuable tool to 'neutralise' local communities in coming to terms with what happens.[8]

In 1999, Linda Stoddart analysed the role of information for humanitarian work and specifically disaster relief. Stoddart tackles the argument that there has been acute research that questions what specific information is essential for disaster management. The writer relies on primary evidence from the Federation's World Disaster report to examine ways in which this has been satisfied. Stoddart gathered research to identify areas for improvement between particular groups. This places a new dimension upon existing research on this topic. This is significant in understanding the role of disseminating information and its crucial influence during the recovery process, post library destruction. [9]

In comparison Reger also argues that communication and networking are vital tools in redeveloping during an emergency response. Reger's paper conducts research between the importance of planning, information and serving the cultural community.
'Task Force' consists of up to thirty-two members and works with a wide spectrum of cultural institutes that include libraries, archives and museums. Reger measures the role carried out by Taskforce through their work with the American Institute for Conservation. The results indicate that by testing a disaster response curriculum, used in a training workshop more and more qualified people can be called upon in an emergency.[10]

America has had experience with disaster planning after the September 11th Attacks took place. Reger uses sampling evidence through interviews with Museum staff that were working during the 9//11 incident. Quantitative research gathered from the interviews

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[8] Matthews, 2003, p. 22
[9] Stoddart, 1999
[10] Reger, Taskforce, 2001

reveals that more is required to preserve and protect cultural heritage. The planning process is crucial to a successful recovery plan. In relation to the research question for this literature review, Iraq must reflect upon past disasters and learn from experience. [11]

John Aarons, the government Archivist at the Jamaica Archives and Records department has written a paper on lessons learnt on hurricanes and disaster response in Jamaica This may not provide a direct relation to Iraq, when coping with the loss of cultural heritage. However what it does draw on is the ways in which records, archive material and special collections were salvaged from the disaster. Aarons conducted field research by visiting libraries that were damaged. He noted that with no recovery plan and a lack of understanding by staff in how to deal with water-damaged material, this led to a further loss of heritage. It can be argued that staff may not be prepared for a natural disaster, in a situation where no prior warning has been possible. A weakness noted in the research conducted by Aaron, is a failure to acknowledge how very difficult it is for staff to think so quickly in an emergency. A further point made is that staff must be specifically trained to identify what is deemed most valuable to rescue.[12]

In 2003 just after the U.S and UK invaded Iraq, UNESCO took a stand to protect Iraq's cultural heritage. Council members concluded that government citizen records were vital for the protection of Iraqi people. The Hague Convention of 1954 justifies the argument that during armed conflict/natural disasters, the UK must bear responsibility to protect international heritage. This poses a political dilemma for libraries and culture to commit to the rules of humanitarian law.

Bowcott also agrees with this idea when writing in The Guardian, where he addresses the theme of looting in Iraq and the impact it has had on the cultural sites and the nation as a whole. The writer exposes the detrimental effect on world culture and justifies that after human causes it is our duty to mankind, to preserve the cultural record of history that has been standing since time began. This is an example of 'lobbying' literature that draws

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[11] Reger, IFLA, 2003
[12] Aarons, IFLA, 2003

upon the actual damage that has occurred. From the reader's point of view it is arguable for the author to provide an audience an insight to what is taking place within Iraq's cultural globe. 'The tsunami and Hurricane Katrina demonstrate that terrible things do happen. It poses some very challenging questions about what belongings you would preserve.'[13]

Karl Weibl shows the rapid response by the Blue Shield committee to swiftly urge government organisations to take action. Blue Shield defends the cultural society of Iraq by quoting parts of the Hague Convention. This is with the hope that the law will protect nations from being destroyed and lost forever. In relation to how Iraq's libraries are slowly rebuilding, the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) is there, ready on stand by to ensure that as much minimum damage will be carried out by armed forces. This style of recovery is the backbone to providing disasters relief in countries such as Iraq and Sri Lanka.

Much of the literature searched, analyses ways in which US and British led institutes are collaborating with Iraqi people/society, to slowly start the rebuilding process of Iraq's libraries and cultural heritage. A slow working relationship is being formed and much of the literature engineers a bias leaning towards the US. Michael Cloonan wrote in the Library Times International in 2004, that American Universities were the driving force to restoring many of Iraq's library shelves with books and material. This was in the hope to have as many catalogued items available for the people of Iraq.[14]

After the invasion and the initial destruction of Iraq's libraries in 2003 much of the literature queried how it had happened and who was primarily responsible. This was between the periods of 2003- 2004. Sourcing through the literature during this significant period, there has been extensive focus on the legality matters surrounding the protection of cultural heritage. The International Federation of the Library Association (IFLA) urged members from around the world to apply pressure on 'their national governments to

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[13] Bowcott, The Guardian, 2005
[14] Cloonan, Times International, 2004

ratify UNESCO's 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict'. Particularly the Second Protocol (1999) which will provide enhanced protection of cultural property and introduces the concept of a cultural war crime.[15]

IFLA has produced several resolutions and reports focusing on Iraqi libraries. The Hague Convention is heavily relied upon to lend support to the protection of Iraq's rich cultural heritage. The proposal set out to 'strengthen its communications program to foster understanding of the conditions facing librarians and libraries in Iraq…to contribute to the rebuilding of civil society, recognizing libraries as an essential part of the social infrastructure.'[16]

After 2005 there was a visible shift in the literature searching for articles via the Library and Information Science Abstract (LISA) retrieved material that was concerned with international relations building on improving Iraq's scientific and cultural society. In addition to this, federal and academic organisations came forward to offer a discounted range of access to electronic databases. The Iraqi Virtual Science Library (IVSL) was set up by a small group of technology fellows in Iraq. The IVSL aims to offer access to up to 80% of Iraqi science and technology professionals and students' [17]

There was a great deal of assistance by US companies to enlarge Iraq's libraries in terms of electronic material. In 2007 it was reported that InterDok Corp. a publisher of databases sent out donations of books and compact discs to a number of Iraqi academic institutes including The University of Baghdad.[18]

During more recent years, the media focus has shifted towards rebuilding and remaking civil society in Iraq. Dr. Saad Eskander was associated with the new cultural beacon of hope for Iraq. There was a devoted amount of literature in library and information related

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[15] UNESCO, 2008
[16] IFLA, 2003
[17] Al-Sumaydi, 2006
[18] Online, 2007

journals focusing on Dr. Eskander's mission work to rebuild and conserve the Iraq National Library and Archive. John Gravois, compiled a research article, centering on the rise of Dr. Eskander's work through which library staff were engineered to work together to rebuild the INLA.[19]

Another area of literature that has been debated is the possession of archives and documents. John Gravois' research examines the Iraq Memory Foundation. The foundation was set up after a series of documents were unearthed in the basement rooms underneath the Baath parties headquarter office. The aim was that the foundation would be a place where 'Iraqis could look up their own files, or those of their disappeared loved ones, and come to terms with the past' [20] Iraq brokered a deal with the US, to allow these documents to be digitized in Iraq. The question that arose is what is a public or private document? Should the documents have been allowed to be removed from Iraq and given to the US government?

The dilemma that is facing library and archives in Iraq, is whether government documents should remain outside the Iraqi domain and in the hands of the coalition forces. Two specialists, both striving to achieve the same goal, have expressed two opposing views with the way documents should be handled. Both men sympathise with the documents 'as the collective modern memory of the Iraqi public, which might one day play constitutive rather than destructive role.' [21] However, Makiya believes that it is safe to house the documents in a controlled house in the US as 'a respectable institution that has agreed to return them, what more can you ask for?'[22]

Dr. Eskander and Mr. Makiya- the very man who rescued the Baath party documents, both agree that the documents should not be exploited and the privacy of those whose names are mentioned should be protected. Key Iraqi figures, have debated over how the

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[19] Gravois, 2008
[20] Gravois, 2008
[21] Gravois, 2008
[22] Gravois, 2008

documents should be maintained and collected. Gravoise assesses the way these two iconic institutes have battled over the way in which the papers should be looked after.

Researching the literature reveals that a great deal has been sourced on Dr. Eskander's role and his work on the Iraq National Library Archive. Less has been written about Makiya's project of the Memory Foundation of Iraq.

Library and Information journals (post 2004) have heavily focused on Dr. Eskander's journey from the upheaval of the INLA, reinstating staff to helping rebuild the library collections, to the online journal on the British Library website. The publicity for this particular restructuring project has been circulated via specialist library journals, general newspapers and national research libraries such as the British Library.

3. Research Methodology

The motive behind this study is to attempt to answer a series of related questions dealing with the relationship between libraries, destruction and rebuilding.

The Literature Review was a good starting point to examine what material was out there on the subject. Due to the nature of the theme, much of the research was influenced as time went on due to the ever changing nature of the topic. It was therefore, imperative to remain abreast of current movements by monitoring email lists that operated a series of discussion boards. These discursive online boards provided moral support to those affected by armed conflict or natural disaster.

During the research design phase it was imperative to determine what methodologies would be appropriate. An historical perspective of the destruction of books and libraries was the foundation to the investigation and tied together the historical segment as a detailed analysis on the anthropology of cultural disaster.

Due to the very nature of the topic, qualitative research methods were employed as this could return more varied answers for the analysis part. To a degree, it can be argued that the study of destruction, rehabilitation and the future of Iraqi libraries do not strictly return yes/no responses. In relation to interviews and semi-structured interviews via telephone, face to face and email, this encourages open dialogue by the participants. It is this very style of research data that was analysed to gain a range of objective and subjective opinions and views.

Interviews

Part of the study was to interview professional library bodies and to discuss issues that are deemed controversial, as the Iraq conflict was an ongoing and sensitive issue. An open style debate was applied through the one to one interviews. Combinations of

qualitative methods were employed for the study including structured interviews, semi-structured interview, telephone interviews, and observations.

It would have been useful to have taken advantage of spending quality time with an organisation such as Blue Shield as there was no opportunity to make any visits to Iraq itself. Hence when reviewing the research methods, it would have been of use to be out in the field, to observe the way direct support/aid was provided during the rehabilitation period. And to also see what destruction took place and how library parties in the UK aided projects.

Another reason that qualitative research methods were relevant during the research phase was the way in which interviews both structured and semi-structured allowed ethical issues to be dissected with more ease, sensitivity and realism then from a quantitative perspective. Before the actual interview started it was made clear to all participants that the information they were submitting would be reused and paraphrased for the basis of the write up. All the interviewees were fully aware, that notes were being taken and that this would be reproduced with their permission. Any data that had been taken was used directly for the dissertation or alternatively would be destroyed.

During some of the interviews participants candidly referred to more personal encounters in their work. This was where a judgement call had to be made to whether their identity should remain anonymous. However none of the participants voiced their concerns about what they were saying in relation to the note taking. This justifies the use of qualitative research methods in order to get up close and personal with the workings of many professional bodies.

The research design incorporated 'realist' and 'impressionist' perspectives with direct facts and quotations from respondents. This produced a subjective viewpoint with an attempt to understand theoretical assumptions with no influence from the interviewee.

Sampling

The groups of individuals that were selected for interviewing all work with professional library bodies and academia. Andy Stephens, Board Secretary and Head of International engagement at The British Library had an ongoing relationship with Iraq and in particular, Dr. Eskander at the INLA. This was a valuable source of primary data required for analysis. The questions put forward to Andy, were designed to engage with his first hand account of the way in which the BL reacted to the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq. Questions that were broached were how quick did the BL respond to the emergency? How difficult was it to communicate with Iraqi bodies? Could better measures have been better taken? What kinds of projects have been beneficial to Iraqi libraries and to general Iraqi society?

Karen Edwards from Book Aid International (BAI) provided a written report on the work carried out by BAI in Sri Lanka. When interviewed, Karen explained that the organisation did not assist Iraq with any rebuilding or funding due to security issues and the lack of ensuring that the material would be delivered in the right hands. This kind of qualitative data was useful as background knowledge for the data analysis. Karen's interview proved to be of significant importance because it addressed the obstacles created during the rebuilding and assisting phase to Iraqi libraries. This reinforced the argument that communication and security levels are two major causes to the slow progression for protecting and conserving Iraq's libraries.

Julie Robinson, the former International officer of CILIP revealed via her telephone interview, valuable dates, opinions and views that were shared at meetings. This was confirmed with written evidence from minutes of meetings that described a panel of library specialists who worked on International efforts and libraries. The staff brought together, were from organisations such as CILIP, the British Council and London University. Jill Martin, from CILIP allowed inside access to not only personal opinions and thoughts but also first hand written primary evidence.

Academic members of staff were a valuable source for the Literature Review. Ian M Johnson, professor of Information Management at Aberdeen University provided a number of bibliographical links during his telephone interview. He explained in detail how he put together his paper on a case study of Iraqi libraries. Another academic, Professor Graham Matthews of Loughborough University, who was emailed, forwarded links and contacts that started a trail for the research. It was most satisfying to make contact with academic teachers who shared an interest in the chosen topic and who could provide further avenues to explore. Sharing the knowledge with others helped motivate the independent study.

As no actual field work was carried out due to the volatile security issue in Iraq, primary evidence was obtained from observation reports on the damage of Iraqi libraries during 2003-2004. All of these observation reports were easily accessible from the internet including other relevant literature. For example, Dr. Saad Eskander had an online blog/diary of his daily account of life working in Iraq's National Library Archive. This online primary based 'document' served as a key source in collecting opinions, views and arguments. In the same way the interviews captured diverse views similar to the ones on Dr. Eskander's online diary that expressed his attitude and behaviour.

At times the downside to the research, was the difficulty to get hold of original transcripts/reports and minutes by certain key international bodies. This was due to non-replies to emails or telephone calls. In cases like this, official websites of the organisation or institute in question was trawled for online relevant information and links. At times, secondary evidence such as reports was relied upon for opinions and views in place of primary sources. Overall the breadth of the literature consulted was wide and varied for the research question in hand.

4. Findings: An historical understanding of the destruction of libraries and books

Libraries support the growing need and desire to promote intellectual achievement. In many ways it can be argued that books are the gateway to understanding the past and the future. For example, during 1989 in post communist Romania, the church recognized that books were the staple diet to catching up with Western education, as a way of becoming 'up to date with a world we have been cut off from for 30 odd years'. [23]

Libraries play a pivotal role in developing global systems and hold works that attempt to understand some of the world's oldest sociopolitical problems. With this thought in mind, it can be argued that an enemy targets libraries for physical destruction in order to remove its intellectual and creative independence. In Iraq, much of the Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence opens the flood gates to cultural genocide, waging a direct blow to a nation's pride and cultural ego. "Whether a race, nation or particular religion is targeted, the destruction of a library with valuable collections is personal pain that damages society and its future"[24].

'Biblioclasm' the dictionary definition for breaking books during a period of civil conflict or unrest, reveals how tearing up the content of the book can symbolise the practical method to rid a culture entirely. Through the ages, library material has been translated into a currency and as a useful weapon for bartering. When armies' conquered cities that they hoped to destroy, the burning of libraries was recognised as a sign of victory. [25]

Perpetrators have been fuelled with hatred and hostility and targeting libraries produces a hedonistic feeling. Horowitz explains that ethnic race riots can be best described as a mix of calculation and passion. They are usually related to land and the cultural differences between the groups relate to race, religion and language. When groups of people feel they

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[23] Knuth, 2003 p.41
[24] Knuth, 2003 p.45
[25] Knuth, 2006 p.11

have nothing to lose they resort to violence as a method to release any built up frustration.

Libraries are viewed as an area of order with centuries of acquired knowledge. They allow a society to treasure them as a national symbol and this makes the masses feel patriotic. Opposing governments drill it into their armies to destroy all cultural objects and possessions, so to weaken a state or group within society.
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Nazi Germany: National Identity and Book Burning 1939- 1945

During the World War II Nazi occupation of Poland, the main priority of the Germans was to create destruction through the highest form of genocide. As mass groups of Jews were migrated to concentration camps, hundreds of thousands of books were simultaneously left behind and subsequently burned. For Polish Jews, libraries had been the centre of Jewish youth in their lives.[26]

The dark motive behind *German libricide* (book burning) relates to anti-Semitism and the way in which it cultivated German society to participate in a which-hunt for the Jewish race. When the Nazis came to power, the Germans blamed any misfortune that happened on the Jews. 1930's party propaganda persuaded German people that it was imperative to strikeout against the Jews. From henceforth, Jewish culture was disbanded and removed from social order. This included, works by composers, artists and dramatists, while anything with a Jewish content was to be removed from libraries.

Ironically some of the libraries were conserved and saved from any kind of damage. This was conducted by expert German professors who were assigned responsibility to oversee the material, only to then analyse how to 'solve the problem of the Jews.' There was also competition over Jewish based libraries to take a lead with the issue of the Germans' achievement of suppressing the Jewish race. The removing of Jewish books was part of

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[26] Knuth, 2003, p.84

the Nazis final solution to terminate all that reminded society of Judaism, its people and culture as this memory was historically retained through books and libraries

Books were also saved for German scholarly consumption and by this more books were ironically rescued from any ill harm. Part of the Nazi's Final Solution was to wipe out the memory of Jewish culture and this was accomplished through public book burning and removing unwanted material from all public, national and university libraries.

The Nazis seized all control of Polish books and the library material of the Polish Parliament, this included large amounts of books and periodicals that were transferred to Germany. Furthermore, private libraries were looted and destroyed, in the vain hope of dissolving the elite intellectual minds of Polish Jews. The genocide carried out during this time, was part of Hitler's ambition to completely annihilate the educated and intellectual classes and to make extinct all the memory and culture that the Jews held.[27]

The Nazis aimed to purify society which included the murder of homeless people, people with disabilities and of homosexual status. Books were also put through a cleansing process where the Germans dominated the publishing industry. Librarians were retrained to monitor what was read and utilised and to blacklist material that was deemed inappropriate for the German regime. [28]

During the 1930's the Nazis frequently raided private homes, removing all personal letters and libraries inside Jewish homes. On the occasion of the 1933 book burning night in Berlin, the Nazis deemed this event as very symbolic and the starting of a new era- a renaissance for Germany as a whole.

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[27] Knuth, 2003, p. 89
[28] Knuth, 2003, p. 89

Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge: erasing 'Western Imperialism' through culture and literature

During 1975-1979 Cambodian society was on the brink of cultural annihilation. Among the horrific crimes of genocide, 'ethnic libricide' was also highly committed. The leader of the Khmer Rouge party named Pol Pot, set out to destroy and erase all books, literature and all memories of former Cambodian society.

Libraries and books were targeted for cultural cleansing to reform Cambodian society, free from xenophobic attitudes to neighboring nations. In the 1960s cracks surfaced in the system, there was an exploding population, a shortage of food supplies and a shift between the working class lifestyles in comparison to the middle classes. Tired of war, invasions and political social injustices the Khmer Rouge depended on the country peasant farmers to outrule the city populations. Anyone that fought against this regime was deemed an outcast.

Libraries were a cause for destruction as they were deemed a pillar of intellectualism. The finest thing a human being could be under the regime was a pure, illiterate one who had no taste of western imperialism or education. Education was provided as the following: 'The rice field is your university…and your hoe is your pen'. [29]

Young adolescents from the country were sworn in to take over and to rid the country of any capitalism. This was done so through the disposal of foreign books, deemed a conspiracy against the nation. The Cambodian experience has many mirroring overlaps to the way Afghanistan has been dealt with by the Taliban. In both countries long, unkempt hair was frowned upon while in Cambodia it was a symbol of western American imperialism.

The new regime had a four year plan to wipe out and shut down the cultural and literary side of a former Cambodia. This included all businesses, academic institutes, libraries

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[29] Knuth, 2006, p. 133

and anything that served as a reminder of the imperialist colonialist classes. This included the destruction of a cathedral, Buddhist and Islamic mosque. French literature in particular was targeted for destruction as French was spoken by the educated and this was the language that made contact with the outside world. The rejected material was thrown down wells and in ponds.

The Khmer Rouge aimed to make peasant farmers and soldiers all illiterate. To comply and ignore literacy was regarded as subservient to the regime. If you were a 'thinker' then you were classified as an intellect and this was punishable by death. The regime led to no holidays, no books, no knowledge and no music. This carried on with starvation, malaria, diseases and execution. Religious scriptures, Qurans and Bibles were all removed in an attempt to cleanse Cambodia of imperialist religions that starved the new revolution of purity.

Ethnic cleansing: wiping out a peoples memory in former Yugoslavia

The former Yugoslavia conflict is a long and detailed one therefore this study will assess what occurred in Bosnia during the mid 1990's. The Serbians were very much interested in wiping out any trace of Islam as this worked against their regime of expanding Serbia as Eurocentric in nature. The Serbs managed to shell the Sarajevo Oriental Institute, destroying the largest collection of Islamic and Jewish manuscripts. By wiping out centuries of Ottoman history, the Serbs wanted to reinforce their disapproval of all that Islam had contributed to the advancement of culture.

All kinds of documents and literature were seized and destroyed, from academic libraries, passports, birth certificates to diploma certificates. By bombing Bosnia and rejecting their multicultural status, the Serbs were attacking the Bosnians' national identity. Libricide in Bosnia was in effect creating intellectual and ideological casualties.[30]

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[30] Knuth, 2003, p. 127

The annihilation of Bosnia's identity, memory and history produced a second Carthage- a form of ethnic cleansing. The Serbs had then planned to recreate Bosnia under their jurisdiction within a Serbian style. One of the most devastating moments was when the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina was bombed with rockets. Bombarding this institute was literally ripping at the core of the people's national identity. Librarians came together to conserve what little was left of the collections housed in the library, Once again Bosnia proved that intellectual and cultural links are vital to a nation's civilisation. The library housed rare books and up to 1.5 million volumes of work. The national Library was also a UNESCO depository with scientific papers and newspapers and periodicals. Libraries were principally targeted to rid the nation of a race, religion and history.[31]

Extremism re-emerged through time as a prime reason for book and library destruction. During the Nazi era, books were burned to strike out at the intellectual freedom that reigned during the Weimar Republic. During the 1990's, Bosnia came under attack from looting and pilfering. Cultural destruction was highlighted in the public eye more so then terrorism.

In ancient times books were commonly associated with territorial wars. A number of texts were destroyed through combat and wiped out under rubble when cities were conquered. During the Roman period libraries were utilised as a symbol of power among wars. Their trophy like icon was acknowledged through two significant motives, to feel empowered by your enemy's possession and to destroy what is deemed as political and heretical.

The strong relationship between groups of identities and a nation's beliefs has been illustrated throughout history where opposing leaders and generals have fought battles to intentionally wipe out the culture of their enemy.[32]

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[31] Knuth, 2003, p. 161
[32] Knuth, 2003, p. 3

The Taliban and religious extremism causing destruction for Afghanistan's libraries, books and knowledge

Afghanistan is geographically pocketed between Iran and Pakistan and is at a unique cultural crossroad from Chinese rituals to Greek philosophy. The Silk trade route stretched from Italy to Japan and covered Afghanistan. From this, one can gather the tremendous cultural, religious and military influence that left a footprint on Afghanistan. During the 15th century Librarian-Artists collected calligraphic works of the Persian poet Herat.

Towards the last part of the twentieth century a number of cultures came together that included Buddhism, Turkish art and architecture. A lot of these collections, documents and archaeological reports were housed in special museums and libraries. Repeated invasions brought ethnic and religious conflict.

For more than twenty years Afghanistan has had a brutal history of conflict and invasions. Images that come to mind are Soviet tanks, women in full veil and the blown up Buddhist statues turned into rubble. After this fatal period followed by the fall of the Taliban, much of Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage was destroyed. Bombed out libraries and bullet ridden books were accompanied by testimonies retold by library and archive staff.

The destruction of libraries and artefacts had taken a toll after years of civil unrest and guerrilla warfare. Like Cambodia's Khmer Rouge and the Nazi's regime to purify society, Afghanistan also experienced a sense of conflict in what direction the country should take. A power struggle emerged that supported the elimination of books and libraries. The Soviet invasion was an attempt to produce a communist regime and to suppress the rebellion factions between the various Afghan clans. Libraries were part of

the destructive make-up by Afghan warlords while they were also used for looting books and antiquities. This 'currency' brought ammunition and supplies to the country.[33]

As Afghanistan came under staunch rule, libraries often came under the crossfire. The Taliban was a powerful influence that created laws based on the Quran. This carried righteous values and put libraries and their contents under suspicion and therefore at extreme risk.

Through the ages, leaders have attempted to apply modernity to an Afghan society that was predominately independent. The Marxism regime of 1973 was being rejected by much of the country and the soviet led intervention in 1979, attempted to maintain the Marxist ideologies. The fight for socialism left the government removing capitalist related books and burning some religious material. The Soviets removed 'disobedient' library and archive staff and replaced them with ones who were willing to engage in socialism. Under the Soviets' books were threatened while the literary elite in Afghanistan were left asking themselves 'which books we should hide'.[34]

As the Mujahedeen attempted to enforce Quranic laws upon the country, people fled in all directions. As feudal wars surfaced much of the libraries, museums and ancient archaeological sites bore the brunt of the violence. Cultural institutes were bombed, ransacked and used for trading.

Afghanistan's modern biblioclasm demonstrates that violence towards books and libraries in general, is due to fear of being undermined or weakened by political systems. Internal wars can submit the same level of violence and destruction against symbols of culture as a way of lashing out against those very regimes that repressed them. Hatred is spurned not from ethnic rivalry but political doubt. When ordinary people lose faith in political regimes such as the collapse of socialism in the 1980s, it leaves society lashing out, as failure to deliver everyday needs that are not met. Records, files and literature that

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[33] Knuth, 2006, p. 142
[34] Knuth, 2006, p. 143

was once a symbol of hope, is now deemed as offensive and violating of human rights. Records trigger emotional attachment and identify flaws and gaps in government led systems.[35]

It is our duty as a civil society to protect the record of mankind. Our culture is an instrument of not only the past but also connects us to the future. Collectively they help identify people and their cultures. Without this, the globe is vulnerable and therefore must take precaution to preserve history.

The next chapter unravels the story of how the international library and information community campaigned, to protect Iraq's libraries in the 2003 conflict and the obstacles they faced.

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[35] Knuth 2006, p.144

5. Analysis and Discussion of Findings

5.1 How did the global Library community prepare for the likely damage to Iraq's libraries following the invasion in 2003?

The media played a pivotal role on a global level in the pre-war debate. Reasons given by the government to invade Iraq were changing from day to day where some of them were deemed plausible while others bordering fictional. Nations across the world resisted the desire to invade Iraq and questioned the motive behind the US led invasion.

The months leading up to the war had a large influence on library and cultural heritage groups to ensure, that if the US government invaded Iraq that they complied with the Hague Convention (definition given further down). In January 2003 professional associations and bodies lobbied pressure on official contacts in Washington and London to protect and preserve, Iraq's rich cultural heritage. Significant archaeological figures had signalled warnings that if preliminary action was not taken then there would be danger from post-looting.

Email evidence presented by the International Council of Museums (ICM) President illustrates the concerns among the archaeology, library and cultural professional community. Meetings between the United Nations and all the archaeological key figures expressed the urgency to safeguard Iraq's archaeological sites and libraries.

On 17th April 2003 Andrew Oddy, the President of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) wrote a personal letter to both Tony Blair and President Bush, concerned that Iraq's cultural heritage had now come under fire and looting. He questioned both the British and US government whether [they] had taken preliminary precautions to protect the libraries, museums and monuments. In his letter, Andrew Oddy argues that during the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 the coalition forces permitted the illegal looting of artifacts kept in the Kabul Museum.

Oddy commented that during the Second World War 'the army that liberated Europe was accompanied by a corps of specialists whose role was to try to safeguard monuments'. [36]

The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was procreated in 1954 in The Hague. It focuses on monuments of architecture, art history, manuscripts and books. The Convention is designed to deal with damage to cultural property during periods of hostility usually when it is already too late.

Library and Information bodies questioned how much did the US and British governments follow the Hague Convention in Iraq? The Hague Convention requests that

- A number of important buildings and properties are marked up for special protection.

- To set up extra special units within the military forces that would take on responsibility for cultural heritage.

- The Convention also dictates that those who violate the Convention should be penalized.

Before and just up to post invasion of Iraq the International Scholars of Mesopotamia and the Near East (ISMNE) delivered a petition to the United Nations and UNESCO. Over a thousand academic related scholars protested for the military to take precaution to protect, what they deemed as "the only access that our and future generations have to ancient Mesopotamia…once destroyed, that link to humanity's past is lost, to us and to our descendants forever," [37]

The scholarly community urged and forewarned the military to take rigorous care not to target Museums, academic libraries, and buildings that stored resources related to the study of Iraq. ISMNE went on to instruct the US-Allied military what to do if in the event

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[36] Oddy, Iraqcrisis, 30th April 2003
[37] Slanski, The threat to world heritage in Iraq, 2003

of a museum or particular site being damaged. Immediate efforts should be made to control any fires and to protect the damaged site from looting.

Further to this, the UN were asked to ensure that security measures be taken by staffing archeological sites to prevent the looting of artifacts. The first Gulf war had unfortunately suffered vast amounts of looting and objects were illegally traded and hence lost forever.

Libraries, museums and other professional bodies had used the time extensively well, writing petitions, circulating emails and openly protesting. They were quick to point out that the first Gulf War had created loss and irreparable damage and therefore requested that the Iraqi Antiquities Authority, be offered support to work on restoration and preservation of libraries and cultural heritage and to train Iraqi library and museum related staff.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) & United Nations Education and Scientific Committee (UNESCO)

In February 2003, The Blue Shield committee released a public statement harbouring serious concerns for the potential damage to cultural property including libraries in Iraq. Ross Shimon, President of the ICBS, wrote to the key players involved in the conflict – Tony Blair, George W Bush and Sadaam Hussein. Shimon applied pressure via a written letter that was also forwarded to UNESCO and to the necessary ambassadors in The Hague. Akin to other professional bodies, ICBS requested that the governments take preliminary action and preserve the cultural history of Iraq. [38]

With the sensitive issue of the war and the loss of human lives, the media caught attention of the looting and burning of library buildings. ICBS went on to issue another public statement explaining that its members were shocked to see records and archives burning, with nothing left but ash. Footage shown on television portrayed bags of library

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[38] Shimon, 2004, p.138

material being safeguarded in a mosque. However, the area in which the bags were dumped was insect infested and the temperature conditions not suitable for the material.

UNESCO held an emergency meeting in Paris, in April where committee members of ICBS were present. A report had been compiled for submission to the UK/US government about action to be taken to fight hard to ensure that libraries and archives were protected and preserved.[39]

The Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

Jill Martin, Director of Knowledge & Information explained in a conducted interview dated (12th October 2007), that when the news broke concerning the risk to Iraq's libraries and cultural heritage, CILIP discussed methods to remain in touch with colleagues within the library community. Communicating with the British Library was deemed vital in order keep abreast of the ongoing affairs in Iraq. Bernard Naylor, who chaired the CILIP ethics panel, harshly criticized the British government in a press release for failing to follow the Hague Convention. [40]

Jill Martin pointed out that Bob McKee, chief executive of CILIP had highlighted the urgency to preserve government records in Iraq's libraries that hold information about Iraqi citizens. 'No nation can function effectively in the twenty-first century without a strong information society and knowledge economy.'[41]

After the initial invasion of Iraq, CILIP decided to hold out for a short period, this was to allow the media attention to die down a little. From this, CILIP was able to distinguish between the inflamed media attention and what had factually occurred. They agreed that it was imperative that aid should be provided to those libraries that had come under fire.

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[39] Shimon, 2004, p.138
[40] CILIP press release, 2003
[41] CILIP press release, 2003

Jill Martin appointed Julie Robinson the International Officer at CILIP, to monitor the libraries and their well being in Iraq. This would be from the stage of initial invasion that included statistical analysis of what had been damaged and what required immediate assistance. In 2004 an international panel was drawn up, where a strategic plan was proposed to provide direct and immediate support to Iraq's library and information centres.

Julie worked rigorously to maintain statistics as evidence based research to present to CILIP. This was then used to identify where assistance was most needed. The policy incorporated CILIP to provide training and professional development to Librarians in Iraq. It was also to ensure that relations and ties with UK library institutes and professional bodies would remain intact.

CILIP immediately proposed that that would try and assist Iraq with material and resources. A book donation scheme would be set up and contact made with Iraqi colleagues, to ask them what exactly they need. Jill Martin considers CILIP's response to Iraq's destruction as being quite imminent. It was in her view dangerous to respond too quickly as unreliable reports were being produced and it was best to monitor and wait, to see the dust settle first.

In October 2004, Julie Robinson presented the Policy Development Committee of the CILIP International Panel, with a paper on an up to date explanation on the destruction of Iraq's libraries. At the time with the current situation in Iraq, the panel decided to monitor the situation and to keep CILIP members abreast of this. There was also an investigation conducted to assess how UK based library and information organisations could forge ties with Iraq's Library Association.

Some time after this period, Julie Robinson left CILIP and her role was never replaced due to shortage of funds. The Iraq library project plan was never picked up and all the statistics and monitoring literature was never put to solid use.[42]

The British Library (BL)

The British Library Board Secretary, Andy Stephens found it quite difficult at first, to keep communication relations open with colleagues in Iraq, due to the high sensitivity surrounding the Iraq conflict.

Secretary board at the BL, held a meeting before the run up to the war led invasion It was decided that the BL would support IFLA and UNESCO with lobbying to the UK/US government and that it was imperative that the Hague Convention guidelines be followed.

The BL were fully aware that preliminary precaution in Iraq was crucial as the conflict in former Yugoslavia witnessed a number of libraries burned and destroyed during the 1990's conflict

The British Library took careful steps to work with other British based library bodies such as the International Committee of the Blue Shield. The BL understood that to make any progress it was essential that communication with other professional library bodies on a global level was a means to show support and encouragement.

The British Library (BL) offered its support to Iraqi colleagues in the library profession. The BL worked with other associations, initially lending hand to a book aid project between the UK and Iraq. Andy Stephens was keen to go out to Iraq to see for himself what actual loss, looting and destruction had taken place. However, this was not possible, for security reasons. It was not until some time later, that the BL was to take a real stand and become a voice box for Iraq's library and information sector.

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[42] Minutes, 2004, panel committee.

The International Federation of the Library Association IFLA

IFLA collaborated with other professional bodies to lobby for the protection of libraries and cultural heritage. The council submitted an official message to the coalition forces to follow the ratification in the Hague Convention

After the invasion, IFLA requested that the armed forces initially adopt a three point plan:

- Follow the Hague Convention protocol in order to protect and conserve Iraq's cultural heritage

- To combat any illicit trade and looting

- To commit to the restoration of libraries

On behalf of IFLA, UNESCO carried out a mission to Iraq to diagnose the damage to Iraqi libraries, while fostering stronger communication ties to 'develop a global awareness of the impact of those losses'. Their priority was to promote the importance and significance of libraries in civil society. [43]

IFLA initiated a plan to work closely with Blue Shield as a coordinating body and to double its efforts to liaise with other professional bodies. The lobbying was a way of urging national members to recognize the much needed assistance to Iraq. Furthermore, the IFLA council members aimed to 'make it publicly evident its work in assisting the rebuilding of Iraq's libraries'. [44]

As much as library and information bodies tried to badger, protest and safeguard, the invasion caused much loss and sorrow to the countries cultural heritage. The conflict created substantial damage to Iraqi libraries, leaving a nation crying for its lost heritage.

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[43] 69th IFLA General Conference and Council, 2003
[44] 69th IFLA General Conference and Council, 2003

The time had now come for specialists to go out to Iraq and assess what destruction had taken place to Iraq's cultural society.

5.2

Observation reports: the initial damage and destruction to Iraq's libraries and cultural heritage

After the invasion in 2003, a number of professional library and museum related groups went out to Iraq to investigate the extent of the damage to libraries and cultural property. It will not be possible to cover all areas of destruction in this dissertation .However the reports chosen, hope to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the extent of damage that occurred during the period just after the invasion of Iraq. The investigation will examine facts, opinions and recommendations to conserve and repair Iraqi libraries.

Nabil Al-Tikriti was an independent PhD student (now an Assistant Professor in the department of History and American Studies at the University of Mary Washington) who at the time decided to go out to Iraq and meet library and museum staff to assess the damage to Iraq's Libraries. His personal views and opinions of the destruction and critical reaction of the US defense department should be accepted as opinion as opposed to fact.

It is important to note that Al-Tikriti's report was written before any other professional body fact finding mission was completed. The report was used as a preliminary test to understand what exactly was damaged and served as an eyewitness account of how much looting was carried out.

Iraq Manuscript Collections, Archives & Libraries Situation Report.

By Professor Nabil Al- Takriti.

Field research conducted 25-31 May 2003.
Interviews with key museum figures were conducted and photographic evidence was produced.

The areas that required immediate attention included the replacement of stolen equipment, lost non-original documents due to looting and the restoration of the physical restructure of the buildings

Al-Tikriti discusses the benefits of having first hand experience in Iraq as this may combat any media conspiracies that exist. The report highlights the argument that was put forward in the previous chapter, that a warning to protect and conserve the library collections was signaled months prior to the US/UK led invasion in Iraq. Al-Tikriti reflects on the hard work carried out by the Iraqi Library staff and during desperate times, the staff worked under critical conditions to salvage and rescue their cultural heritage.

Professor McGuire Gibson explains that the US forces 'neglected their legal duty under the international law of belligerent occupation to restore and maintain law and order'.[45]

Dar Al-Makhtutat Al-Iraqiyya (Iraqi House of Manuscripts) 27-28 May

Al-Tikriti interviewed staff including the Director of the collections. Without any physical evidence, Al-Tikriti was 'reassured' that the collection was completely safe. As a reader of the report, this does not prove that the collections are safe as no visual evidence is presented to the author in Iraq. The report suggests that the director of the Iraqi house of manuscripts may have wished to keep the whereabouts and details of the collection under wraps, as he 'refused to allow an NBC News film… to enter the shelter while I was interviewing them'. [46]

In Chapter 2 there was discussion of how library and information professionals in the west reacted and prepared for the possible destruction of libraries in Iraq. Al-Tikriti's report provides fresh evidence that efforts to save collections in Iraq began four months prior to the invasion. Manuscripts were taken to the shelter area and microfilms and

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[45] Al-Tikriti, 2003, p.1
[46] Al-Tikriti, 2003, p.1

CDROMS were removed to all undisclosed areas. The staff had taken precautions and may have been able to react better for the 2003 led invasion as they had prior experience with the Gulf War in 1990-1991

How staff protected and preserved the library collections

The report is very much based on interviews and personal accounts as the author uses eyewitness testimonies to quieten down the media critics. Al-Tikriti, did not view any of the manuscripts, nor viewed where they were reported to have been located. Library staff were able to shelter up to 800 manuscripts from a number of various libraries that included University of Mosul Library, University of Basra and the Iraqi Academy of Sciences. Dr. Naqshbandi, director of the collections, explained that his staff took precautionary measures however they took a risk in dong so, as they had no official permission from the Minister of Culture. [47]

One staff member remarked 'Iraqis might have stolen the MSS for personal profit, but they would never have burnt them'.[48] Al-Tikriti implies that the Iraqi people cherish their background and history enough to never desecrate upon it.   This relates back to the historical analysis in Chapter 1 that, to 'destroy' is to ultimately remove the Iraqi national identity all together.

Iraqi Academy of Sciences (IAS)

Interviews conducted with the Director of Administration, Mr. Muhammad Khudeir.

Looting was reported by Al-Tikriti, however he never actually witnessed it. Members of staff at the IAS explained that a US tank swarmed in and crushed the front gate of the institute and then left. According to witness statements, this allowed looters to enter the building and strip the place of all computers, air conditioners, electrical fixtures and vehicles. Many books were not taken and this indicated that the looting at this institute was not as organised as other unfortunate ones.

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[47] Al-Tikriti, 2003, p. 3
[48] Al-Tikriti, 2003, p. 4

667 Manuscripts were transferred to Dar al-Makhtutat. Al-Tikriti visited the Manuscript room to see the original copies that had been stored. A full update conclusion is given about each manuscript collection in a range of medical libraries, university libraries and ancient period collections.

Assessment of Iraqi Cultural Heritage, Libraries and Archives.
By Arnouolt, Jean- Marie

Research conducted: June 27- July 6, 2003

This report was compiled by Jean- Marie Arnoult, the Inspector General at the Bibliotheque National de France

The mission was carried out by a team of archaeologists, an architect, a conservationist and a Librarian. The main points discussed in the report, centre on, the examination of the damage of Iraq's National Library and Archives, the reconstruction of architecture and the rebuilding of the collections. There also future recommendations to restructure and rehabilitate Iraq's cultural heritage

Arnoult's report implies that much of Iraq's failings and shortcomings are due to the inadequate training of staff. The importance of training, teaching and implementing policies to regenerate Iraq's libraries and their collections for the future, is highlighted throughout the report.

As part of the scheme to rebuild Baghdad, Centre for Manuscripts 'restoration and digitisation programmes are not only depending on acquisition of equipment but also on coherent objectives and qualifications of technicians'.[49]

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[49] Arnoult, 2003, p. 2

Safeguarding the collections

An immediate plan of action by the UNESCO based team was to try and visit and assist as many various libraries (public, university and religious) in Iraq that included areas such as Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. Baghdad Iraqi Centre for manuscripts was found to be in good condition and had not been looted.

Prior to the invasion the collection was transferred to a safe house. Arnoult was not allowed to visit this site…'but I think that it is true and I have no reason to refute assertions by Iraqi authorities… answering the question on the actual conditions of conservation, it was said that everything was correct'. [50]

This follows on to the point that much of the experts who were sent out on missions to inspect the state of Iraq's libraries and archives, were relying on interviews and statements made by library staff.

At times, Arnoult was frustrated during his visit and inspection. This was due to the way in which the collection was divided with parts missing. The vandalism and looting had ultimately, forever distorted the valuable collections. He commented that the visit to the centre had 'left me unsatisfied in spite of the certitude that the most important patrimony collection was safe'. [51]

The experts carrying out the mission acknowledged the way in which, Iraqi senior staff members were not fazed by the disruption or how staff had taken the initiative to prepare files and apply for new equipment. The recommendations made by the UNESCO led team, mostly centre on training, restoring, cleaning and library collection policies being implemented. The team deemed it imperative that 'restoration and digitisation programmes are not only depending on acquisition of equipment but also on coherent objectives of technicians.'[52]

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[50] Arnoult, 2003, p. 6
[51] Arnoult, 2003, p. 6
[52] Arnoult, 2003, p. 6

One of the biggest obstacles to future development of the library collections was the training issue of technicians. A prior visit to the library, carried out by Arnoult in 1999 identified 'carelessness in management of the library due to the lack of well-trained people'.[53] This issue was never fully rectified and evidently implies that the library, in 2003 is still in this shape.

A recommendation for Baghdad National Archive was to have a conservation policy in place. Reference is made to the various collections and priority to be decided for rescuing and preserving particular collections.

Extensive looting and a fire had destroyed this central public library. It was reported that a very specific fuel was used to start the fire that enabled books and shelves to be completely annihilated. Awqaf Library, in Basra also experienced a similar fate to the public central library. Based on information collected abroad and visual evidence, the library had lost up to 90% of the printed books.[54]

Damaged by looting where equipment and furniture was stolen and approximately 2% of the collections were looted. Mustansiriya University, was recommended to restore its building and create an acquisition of collections. The four areas to be tackled: were architectural reconstruction, recreation of the collections, to retrain staff and reorganise the administration and legal system

The report indicates an urgency to rebuild the physical part of the building so that the libraries collections can be stored and preserved. 'Opportunity to reconsider the architectural programmes…to make them more functional regarding contemporary necessities'.[55]

Other areas deal with the reconstruction of collections, storage and space issue and the requalification of staff: It was agreed that the training deprivation and labour reduction

[53] Arnoult, 2003, p. 8
[54] Arnoult, 2003, p. 10
[55] Arnoult, 2003, p. 13

will affect the overall stability and long term future goals of the libraries. The report is keen to identify problems and issues that have always been there and now firmly need addressing.

The administration and legal relations are viewed by the expert team as an essential component to reviving the cultural and academic institutes. This would regenerate Iraq with 'investments and the everlastingness of their objectives towards the population of a democratic country'.[56]

In conclusion a lot of the material has successfully been rescued, boxed and stored. However the stored material has not been looked after well. This is due to the lack of space and training, with obsolete manuals being relied upon.

Opening the doors: Intellectual Life and Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad

Research conducted: July 3003

A report of the Iraqi Observatory
Keith Watenpaugh et al.

A group of historians travelled to Iraq to catalogue the extent of damage to both higher education and cultural institutes. The mission report endeavoured to meet three key objectives: To extend and reform communication with Iraqi academic communities. To carefully assess the condition of the material found in libraries, archives, museums and university research centres. It also aimed to create strong relations between professional bodies and centralised organisations in Iraq.

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[56] Arnoult, 2003, pg. 14

From the beginning, the report is clear to point out that judgements and assessments 'may not be shared by all members of the group, but rather represent a consensus opinion'.[57] The research methods indicate that the historians wanted open and frank dialogue between themselves and the Iraqis'. The sampling of interviews was conducted across a spectrum from intellectuals, artists, NGO workers to Iraqis living in Jordan as refugees.

Interviews were conducted with academic staff and students on the campuses. Baghdad University's main library was devastated where looting took place, leaving the library starved of computer equipment and electrical appliances. An insight of what the staff and students feel is given to the reader. Campus Central Library had in total 10% losses but much of the data and collections were out of date.

Libraries have a pre-eminent role to play in the future reconstruction of Iraq. One of the key recommendations in the report is to restock and update the collections and technology. In addition to this, it is advised that free access to the Internet be made available on university campuses. It is significant to point out that the Gulf War in the 1990's and the sanctions imposed on Iraq left the country dry of resources.

After meeting departmental staff, the team of experts concluded that relations between academics and international intellectualism must be created. The Middle East Studies Association and other related groups are asked to hold conferences and symposiums, so that they can encourage 'contemporary research in all fields…considered off limits by the Baathist apparatus…Women Studies, Media and Society and Human Rights Jurisprudence.' [58]

The central focus of the report is the documentation of the National Library and Archives. The team confirm that the reported stolen items of books and manuscripts found their way in the hands of Baghdadi book dealers. They were then sold on at the

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[57] Watenpaugh, 2003, p. 3
[58] Watenpaugh, 2003, p. 13

Friday book market. The Hawza Library has employed its own security guard to protect the remaining surviving collections.

There is a gap between what is reported as missing and what the team actually witnessed…. 'Discoveries cast doubt on the amount destroyed and actual numbers may be an order of magnitude less than estimated'.[59]

An update in this current report, from Al-Tikriti's findings, has the historian experts interview Husaya Al- Shami, a Shiite cleric who was now responsible for the overall collections in al-Awqaf library. 50% of the collections had been looted or burned. The future vision for the library was to modernise, rebuild and 'employ modern forms of cataloguing and information technology'.[60] 980 manuscripts were added to the collection however these were not completely catalogued. Therefore this applies pressure to provide a clearer picture, to what exactly went missing during the looting.

The Al-Qadiryya Mosque Library houses some private collections and opened in 1954. The Librarian was interviewed and confirmed that there were up to 65, 000 publications and 2000 manuscripts. Many of these were safely removed prior to the conflict.

The advantage to this mission report being written three months after other reports permits the team to amend and update any prior research carried . Much of the evidence is based on the credentials and testimonies of staff.
The library's director denied that they had accepted boxed collections from the al-Awqaf Library.[61] In the light of these findings the team highly recommend that international efforts should be sort after to aid the Iraqi staff to catalogue and digitise their material. To also ask other Arab nations to support their Iraqi colleagues with retraining staff and planning development programmes.

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[59] Watenpaugh, 2003, p. 13
[60] Watenpaugh, 2003, p. 15
[61] Watenpaugh, 2003, p.16

In order to see the library collections return to some normality, the looting of books must be tracked and monitored by Interpol and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The team requests that a policy for books should be created, similar to the way archaeological sites are being cared for. In addition to this books should also be tracked for safekeeping.

According to the expert team, the CPA have not assisted or taken any effort to protect the collections from looting. It also asks that there be lobbying on behalf of the National Library and Archives for it not to become a victim of conflict between groups/Iraqi sects. It would also be deemed an asset to put government documents on microfilm, to prevent further loss of material.[62]

The Iraqi Jewish Archive Preservation Report

Research conducted: October 2, 2003
In May 2003 historic documents, contemporary books and rare items dealing with Iraqi Jewish culture were under threat. The CPA requested that a mission report be conducted. They asked conservators from the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to assess the condition of the material and to make significant recommendations.

In the speedy movement of storing away the collections, the material of loose documents and bound text were found distorted and crumpled. Books were detached from their original covers and material had been submerged in water and mild growth had formed The conservators were optimistic that with care and technical conservation, most of the material from the archive was repairable. The preservation action plan is designed to conserve individual items and to allow the material to be accessed for research.

It is the responsibility of the CPA to ensure the 'protection and final disposition of the documents pending election of a sovereign Iraqi government'.[63] The report justifies the

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[62] Watenpaugh, 2003, p.17
[63] Iraqi Jewish Archive Preservation Report, 2003, p.2

removal of the material of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to the US because of the lack of trained staff in Iraq and the duration that it would take, to develop the current Iraqi staffs' skills. The report does not explain when it plans to return the collection to Iraq, if at all during the period of armed conflict.

A cost analysis is given explaining that the breakdown can only be considered once there is access to all the records. NARA will be forfeiting the fee and not the US Military. It is questionable at this point, to ask why the CPA is not paying for this.

The main targets in the Preservation Action Plan are, to freeze the material for stability of mould growth, to dry the parchment scrolls and to accept that books and other materials will need further treatment after the initial drying process. Mould remediation is recommended to be carried out by qualified trained professionals. Curatorial assessment is required with an examination of the physical and chemical conditions. Microfilming will allow long term preservation to take place and provide better access to material by students and scholars

The Library of Congress and the Cultural Property Office of the US Department of State mission to Baghdad.
By Deeb, Mary-Jane et al.

Research conducted October 27- November 3, 2003
A team of three specialists were sent out from the Library of Congress (LC) led by Dr. Mary Jane-Deeb. The group met with librarians and talked to heads of academic departments, to engage with staff to find out what happened to the National Library. The team met an Iraqi library specialist named Wishyar Mohamed, the CPA advisor on rebuilding the national library.

During the visit, the LC team were taken to a house called 'Dar Saddam lil-Makhtutat' where up to 50,000 manuscripts are stored. The LC team were able to take photographs of the manuscripts as evidence. [64]

On November 1st the LC team visited the Old Library and were able to confirm what they had seen and to take photographic evidence. There was also a migration project taking place, with boxes of library material being removed from one institute due to a fire and being returned to the Old Library. A large part of the National Library (The Old Library) was damaged and destroyed in a fire. A large area of the library had furniture and library equipment looted. [65]

There was evidence to contest that the fire damage was a pre-planned target. The team suggested that some kind of specific device was used and one that could not be found in the hands of 'random looters'. The fire had caused much of the archives department to burn to ashes. Newspapers on microfilm were destroyed in the fire. While the Private collections of literary figures, were stored in a separate room away from the fired out area. Up to 4000 books in the private collections managed to survive the destruction

The team were able to spot the 'lack of collection maintenance by the librarians and the lack of funds for the upkeep of the collections'.[66] One parallel point made in most of the reports is the weakness in care collection. This was considered an issue prior to the Iraq war of 2003. The lack of funds had created an ill fate for Iraq's libraries to maintain standards and up to date training. The reporting on how the libraries had faired after the invasion was a good method of benchmarking for libraries practices.

The department of manuscripts was formed in 1962 and contained 2,526 manuscripts, this increased as the government collected further volumes throughout the 70's and 80's. Up to 50,000 manuscripts were housed in a bomb shelter for protection. The report

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[64] Deeb, 2003, p. 3
[65] Deeb, 2003, p. 4
[66] Deeb, 2003, p. 5

confirms that the manuscript centre had trained professional staff to look after the manuscripts and it 'appeared to be administered and running efficiently' [67]

Some libraries had suffered from a lack of funding and the aftermath of the sanctions of the first Gulf war. However the manuscript centre had been fortunate to benefit from technical and professional support. State support has enabled the centre to preserve, collect and to maintain the manuscripts on microfilm. Credit is given to the staff at the manuscript centre for protecting the manuscripts from harm both before and after the led invasion. The whole community participated in providing 24 hour protection to the collection. During the war, the staff were able to still repair material, assemble rooms and make areas available for conservation work. [68]

Once material was stored and boxed away, items were damaged by flooding and dyes that had bled on to the boxes. Some material had come separated from its original covering while other parts of material had been lost.

Recommendations for the National Library

The Library of Congress advised that the collections be housed in a new designed architectural building where new stacks for the library be provided. It would be significant to appoint a Director of the Library, preferably with a PhD in Library Science. Another recommendation is to provide three independent buildings to the library that consist of the National Library, National Archives and a House of Manuscript.
The report stresses the importance of library and archive work being independent from one another and staff being given full training and development.

The LC team were impressed with the hard work carried out by librarians to preserve their heritage and culture. 'Training for these librarians in different fields will become necessary in the future and the Library of Congress to assist in that area'[69]

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[67] Deeb, 2003, p. 5
[68] Deeb, 2003, p. 7
[69] Deeb, 2003, p.10

These observation reports were used as a guide during post 2003 restructure and rehabilitation phase for Iraq's libraries and archives.

5.3

The rehabilitation process: rebuilding Iraq's Libraries

'…national libraries and archives can and should play a key role in the formation of national identity, true citizenship, and civil society…'[70]

In the summer of 2003, the British Council (BC) had appointed a specialist named Nick Lack, as the Regional Information Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, to deal with books and information development in Iraq. Lack explained in an email interview on 15th November 2007, that he had a difficult job of making sure that the financial budget was to be used consistently and had 'to design, set up, equip, fill shelve and train staff etc'.[71]

In part of rebuilding the learning resource centres, Lack liaised with suppliers and construction workers in Iraq to add more shelves and study areas. While back in the UK, proper designs were being prepared for 'shelving, study seats, counter and reception'.[72] Hours were spent selecting material that had to be paid in time before the financial deadline loomed. PCs were brought over from Jordan in time for the financial budget to close.

One of the biggest problems the BC faced was locating staff to run the centres. The BC moved quickly to train staff and within a short period of a week, Iraqi lecturers were sent to Amman for 'library housekeeping and internet' knowledge. Nick Lack commented 'it was pretty rushed and I felt both sorry for them as well as great admiration'.[73]

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[70] Eskander, The Tale of Iraq's Cemetery of Books speech, 2004
[71] Lack, 2007, email
[72] Lack, 2007, email
[73] Lack, 2007, email

It was very difficult for British Council staff to rebuild library resource centres under a short period of time. This had a detrimental effect on the overall quality of the product. However to compensate, the Iraqi and Jordan office were very much involved and supportive. Nick Lack stresses that 'it was only when we actually transferred responsibility for supporting the centres to the Jordan information centre, that a professional input was made.'[74]

Another dilemma that Iraqi and BC staff faced was the lack of access to their email accounts. Lack retold how difficult it was trying to track down 'if the builders had started work, whether electricians were sourcing wire…it was only when staff came out for training to Amman that I got firm confirmation that the building work had been done'.[75]

Under Saddam's reign Iraq was isolated from other nations. Due to this, BC colleagues could not rely on academics to advise them on selecting material. The university staff had had no contact with society outside Iraq since the 1980s. Much of what academics asked for- in terms of resources and material was 'no longer available and indicated another task in re-training of university staff to make use of new equipment'.[76]

The IT infrastructure was weak and left BC staff struggling with communication. Jordan assisted in the training of Iraqi library staff and allowed them to return to Amman, one year on for a follow up course. However, Nick Lack was quick to point out that 'I don't think aftercare was that good'.[77]

Public sympathy for the situation in Iraq has been given support through book donations. A number of UK publishers joined forces to donate English-language material to Iraqi libraries. Publishers donated their backlists as the BC agreed to collect the material and

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[74] Lack, 2007, email
[75] Lack, 2007, email
[76] Lack, 2007, email
[77] Lack, 2007, email

'consolidate materials which were published since 1990'.[78] 7 Universities managed to benefit from these new arrivals in January 2004.

Book Donations

Much of the material that was donated had to be sieved through as it was not in line with academic libraries and their needs. The biggest task was ensuring that the appropriate type of material was delivered to the right kind of library.

Benevolent donators were at times unaware of the shortfalls identified with book donation projects. Jeff Spurr, the Islamic and Middle East specialist at Harvard College Library, argues that donating material to Iraq should be carefully assessed. Items that should be avoided are self-help books, outdated reference work and titles that are in poor condition. In contrast to this, donations that should be considered include, scholarly works, up to date reference works, long runs of significant research periodicals and 'not simply books to fill the libraries…but text books to pass to students, particularly in the hard and applied sciences'. [79]

The distribution and shipping of books was the biggest obstacle the BC faced. Statistics reveal that up to 55 tonnes of books and journals were donated by 30 organisations. Ten universities in total were offered the material including the University of Basra, Baghdad Business School, and University of Mosul. [80]

In a report compiled by the BC in 2004, it was suggested that it was difficult to follow up how the book donations were being taken care for. This was due to poor communication with the University. The lack of information opened up rumours that 'nine tons of books… are languishing in a warehouse… and no one yet has figured out a way to distribute them.' [81]

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[78] Johnson, 2005, p. 37
[79] Johnson, 2005, p. 38
[80] Johnson, 2005, p. 40
[81] Johnson, 2005, p. 41

Part of collection management rebuilding for Iraqi libraries involves creating cataloguing databases that allow access to holdings of Arabic language material. This was acknowledged by Arthur Smith a representative from Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) who explained that it would be beneficial for libraries with Arabic collections to submit their records to OCLC WorldCat.

This would be of significance to Iraqi libraries, in three ways. The first being that by having access to collections, such as those found at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the American University of Cairo, Iraqi Libraries will have a rich source of material , they will also be able to see what other libraries are holding and will provide 'a benchmark for their own collections'.[82]

Many of the redeveloping library projects for Iraqi libraries had started out with copious amounts of enthusiasm and encouragement only to fade when funding became an issue. In 2003 after the invasion of Iraq, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) had compiled an agenda on the damage and destruction of Iraqi libraries and outlined that 'IFLA members all over the world should encourage the creation of a national Blue Shield committee in their respective countries'.[83] However when currently approaching the IFLA pages, there is no web page that allows you to monitor progress on Iraqi library pages and some of the web pages are now out of date.

Nick Lack pointed out that the BC has a web page that details donors and recipients and is '3 years out of date now'.[84] This indicates that technical errors are stifling towards understanding what should be classified as archival and what current rebuilding projects should remain in the news.

The institutes and groups that have been supplying a steady flow of news, updates on rebuilding and charting the history of the damage and rehabilitation to Iraq libraries is MELA (Middle East Librarians Association) and the Oriental Institute of the University

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[82] Spurr, 2004, p 24
[83] IFLA, 2003, 64th general IFLA Conference
[84] Lack, 2007, email.

of Chicago which has an 'Iraqcrisis' mailing list. Both these two bodies give extensive updates on the web, about the communication flow between warring parties and are regularly updated with new news on the current situation. The University of Chicago's web pages serve as a useful discursive platform to advertise the whereabouts of looted material. Thousands of books were opened up on the Baghdad market and to possible places abroad. Some books have managed to be returned to their rightful owner but many are still missing. [85]

During Sadaam's Ba'athist reign, the Iraq National Library and Archive (INLA) suffered under a strict regime that neglected 'progressive culture and critical thinking'. Cultural and educational institutions were under threat, where all the former directors of the institute were members of the Ba'athist regime that followed orders within a totalitarian state.[86]

The Iraq National Library and Archive (INLA)

The Iraq National Library and Archive (INLA) was built during the 1920's while under the British colonial administration, to assist in creating a sense of national identity among the varied Iraqi population. It was then moved in 1976 and rebuilt during the Baathist regime under the influence of Saddam Hussein. The institute crippled somewhat in the 1980's, as Saddam pumped money into the eight year Iran-Iraq war.

This era was known as a very dehumanising period for the Iraqi people with three destructive wars under Sadaam. During this volatile period INLA and Iraqi researchers were denied full access to literatures, in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Further to this, material that was deemed Marxist or Kurdish in subject matter was removed from the library shelves. The collections were lacking in care as there was no conservation laboratory, no policy for collection development nor a budget in place.

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[85] Spurr, 2004, p. 45
[86] British Library, Podcast, December 8th

Prior to the 2003 war in Iraq, much of INLA's material was stored away for safekeeping, however the collections were left unsecure and exposed for looting and smuggling to take place. The INLA had received extensive press coverage showing images of library collections burning. Another media presence was the online journal by Dr.Eskander on the British Library website that presented a diary of chronological events from day to day. The institute witnessed peaks and troughs to rebuild its lost documents. The online journal included, not only descriptions of the looting of valuable, historical collections but also the fatal loss of human lives.

Andy Stephens from the BL explained in a conducted interview (September 2007) that the idea behind Dr. Eskander's online diary on the BL website was two fold. It was to express 'professional solidarity' with fellow colleagues and to secondly use the online blog as a vocal platform to obtain 'further public and professional support'. [87]

When Dr. Saad Eskander joined as the new director of INLA in November 2003, he found the book collections were thirty years out of date and staff had been given no prior professional training on how to care for and collect the material. The Collection Development Policy was obsolete where up to 25% books were found to be damaged.[88]

Eskander recognised that Libraries are an archive symbol of dialogues, rationalisation and creativity. In the middle of 2003, the US department of State had issued a proposal of rehabilitation related work to be carried out by the Library of Congress. The aim was for the Library of Congress to assist with rebuilding the Iraqi collections, helping to update the library system and provide training to library staff.

Dr. Saad Eskander decided that he didn't want to wait for the governments to reopen the buildings. So he asked his colleagues to write down their needs. It was decided that the main reading room would be opened in July 2004. The Italians and Czech library

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[87] Podcast, BL, December 8th
[88] Podcast, BL, December 8th.

communities were very helpful in encouraging the redevelopment of INLA and insisted that Dr. Eskander visit them. Staff were trained in Europe and returned to Iraq in order to train other staff.

In 2005, Dr. Eskander appealed for support from the British Library to help rebuild the library collections at the INLA. The British Library assisted by sending microfilm copies of India Office records that were part of the colonial Iraq administration between 1914-1921. Lynne Brindley, chief executive of the British Library remarked that 'we are pleased to be able to assist the Iraqi National Library and Archive as part of international efforts to reconstruct its collections. [89]

Under Saddam's regime, the library suffered from a lack of English text books in the Social Sciences. This was deemed vitally important, in the summer of 2007, the BL shipped over 300 textbooks donated by UK publishers and worth thousands of dollars.

The media has worked positively with Dr. Saad Eskander by drawing on a number of significant themes that include nationalism, identity and the protection of cultural and political documents. The courage and dedication by Dr. Eskander, to remain in Iraq under such life threatening conditions, serves as a reminder of how much care and consideration he has not only for the people of Iraq but the rich history of the country.

Eskander explains 'What makes a Kurd or a Sunni or a Shi'I have something in common is a national library and archive... it is where the national identity of a country begins'. [90]

In November 2006, Dr. Eskander made a visit to the Library of Congress to meet staff to discuss the continuation of the relationship between INLA and the Library of Congress (LOC). The LOC had made an official visit to Iraq in 2003 to evaluate the damage to Iraqi libraries and to recognise where [they] needed to assist.

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[89] Managing information, 2005 pg 22
[90] BL website, 2007.

Eskander was most interested in building up internet relations between INLA and the rest of the world's knowledge. Through the use of global internet gateways, Eskander was keen to develop a digital related means of communication. It was his mission to develop knowledge and to seek assistance from colleagues in the library and information sector so that INLA could enlarge both their print and electronic collections. In particular, Eskander was interested in developing collections on the Arab world and to work with technical departments that dealt with environmental issues dealing with light and air control applied to delicate and rare collections.

It was Eskander's strategic aim to help restore material that was damaged after the arsonists had caused destruction to the library collections. Much of the books in Iraq were printed on highly acidic paper that was turning yellow quite rapidly. During 2003- 2004 the Library of Congress introduced a mass project of dandification of books and this inspired Dr. Eskander to work on future restoration projects at the INLA.

In August of 2006, the Iraqi National Guards broke into the INLA and placed the lives of the staff and the collections in extreme danger. The British Library worked with Dr. Eskander to create media wide coverage of this event, in order to make their concerns known across the globe. The online diary presents the reader with a first hand account of the everyday fear and security threats INLA staff had to ensure. Statistics included the kidnapping of 4 staff, and the displacements and death threats to 121 staff. [91]

The rebuilding of the INLA is Eskander's mission to bring together Kurds, Sunni and Shi'I together collectively under one Iraqi identity. Despite all the secretariat violence, under the director's leadership and guidance the INLA remained defiantly open. All the archive reading rooms received scholars each day allowing them access to a wealth of knowledge.

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[91] Eskander, 2007, online Diary, BL   `

The most significant changes and developments that have taken place between 2003 and 2007 are quite staggering. The rehabilitation process has allowed staff to increase from 95 to 420 and the number of qualified staff has increased from 19 to 46.[92]

The level of democracy has taken a rapid change for the best at INLA. Under Saadam's regime, staff were placed under a form of censorship preventing them from communicating with outside professional colleagues. Now, librarians and archivist can freely elect representatives to attend council meetings. In addition to this success, the microfilming of archive documents has been compiled, under extreme conditions such as power cuts and high temperatures. In 2007, 60,000 documents were filmed. Dr. Eskander, also signed a declaration that tied INLA to the Library of Congress to join in the World Digital Library scheme.

Dr. Eskander's online blog on the BL website was a unique way of revealing what it was like to live from day to day with security issues while trying to head a national library. The diary came to an end in July of 2007, as he felt that his online journal was placing his staff under unnecessary security exposure.

In the summer of 2008, Dr. Eskander lobbied for the return of millions of documents seized by the US government. Eskander believed that if the documents remained in the U.S, then 'the Americans can control Iraq for decades to come'.[93] Further to this, failure to return them was illegal under the Hague Convention. The Society of American Archivists and the Association of Canadian Archivists issued a statement in support of this project concerned that 'the United States government has the responsibility to intercede… in ensuring the return of Iraqi records removed by private parties during the conflicts'.[94] The exact whereabouts of these documents is still unknown to Iraqis.

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[92] Library and Information Update, 2008, pg. 9
[93] Library and Information Update, 2008, pg.9
[94] Association of Canadian Archivists, 2008

The rebuilding phase of Iraqi libraries is an ongoing affair and has come very far through the hard work and commitment of the Iraqi people. However professional bodies have been sidetracked due to funding and communication issues.

6.

Conclusion

Review of findings

It is important to respond to the original questions in this investigation and to assess what conclusions were discovered. There are a number of issues that have been examined to justify why libraries are targeted for destruction. Cultural genocide is a method employed to erase history such as books and documents that serve as a written reminder of what was once part of a nation's identity. This sheds light on how significant library collections and holdings are in terms of nation building. The printed memory is a strategically powerful weapon that can be used in various ways during periods of wars and international conflicts.

With Afghanistan, libraries and their recorded knowledge were looked upon as encouraging Western ideologies and socialism. This in turn, led to the Taliban attempting to cleanse Afghan society. In the case of Iraq, under Saddam's regime, the written word was censored and monitored while the collections were starved of humanities and social science subjects. This led to a sheltered existence for much of the library and archive staff across the country. A lack of communication for almost 20 years with the outside world left the library sector of Iraq in a fragile state.

Prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, The UK and US government were lobbied by professional library bodies to follow the Hague Convention states that cultural heritage is to be protected during both international and non- international armed conflict. Between the periods of 2003-2004 several library, archive and conservation specialists compiled a series of observation reports that highlighted the degree of damage and permanent destruction caused to Iraqi libraries. The reports support the argument that a large amount of the damage was created by arsonists, who set out to remove a large part of Iraq's

heritage. This included documents that dealt with the Baathist regime and papers dealing with Kurdish heritage and history. In contemporary society damage to a nation's identity is still very much under threat. The findings in this investigation drew upon what was damaged and how quickly professional library bodies responded.

The observation reports submitted evidence on not only what damage occurred but addressed how much support was given by the US/UK government and armed forces. One of the prime arguments steers towards the way in which the government reflected upon professional library bodies lobbying to protect and conserve Iraq's cultural heritage and libraries. The question raised is could the governments in power during the led occupation have done anything more to prevent the looting and arson activities? Paul Auchterloine, Middle East Librarian at Exeter University raised this issue during a conducted interview. He explained that US AID had spent hundreds of thousands of pounds to ensure that cultural heritage would be protected and long term programmes were set up to be implemented for when the time came.

The next stage after post destruction was to slowly pick up the pieces. The specialist library and archive staff noted that prior to the war, a number of key library features were not in place. This included, no collection development policies, no financial budget, library material was out of date by decades and there was a limitation on Information Technology and electronic facilities. More over, the library staff was very out of touch with cutting edge research within their field. This played a significant role in how the libraries were presented to Iraqi society in general.

The rebuilding phase for Iraqi libraries has not been a smooth transition. It is still very much an ongoing affair, as Iraq sits in the midst of long term reconstruction.

Iraqis felt an immediate urgency to respond when their national library came under threat from looting and arsonists. Now that the damage has been done, the priority is to rescue and repair the surviving collections and to update the workforce.

Rebuilding stage

The rebuilding phase has been effected by a number of determining factors. By the end of 2004, Iraq was still very much under a security threat where there were safety issues in the public domain. As there was a continuing lack of security, this made external support more difficult to engage with.

The non-governmental organisation Book Aid International (BAI) did not supply books to Iraq, as prior experiences in Afghanistan had left their fingers burnt. A number of boxes were sent to Afghanistan, yet the books never reached those vulnerable parties. As a result of this Karen Edwards from BAI, explained that they could not provide Iraq with material due to the security issue and language barrier.

Iraqi libraries have suffered under the strain from lack of funding. When the money has been divided, a third of this is known to disappear through forms of corruption while security issues have been a prime obstacle in delaying library projects. Other problems encountered through the investigation that could still have future consequences on the country, is erratic communication levels between international parties and local bodies in Iraq. This encourages Iraqi people to be dubious about positive external support.

However in the light of this, Iraqi libraries have witnessed some positive changes and developments including the retraining of library and archive staff. A slow but remarkable improvement in library collections has been produced, through both print and electronic means. At the INLA, Dr. Eskander has campaigned tirelessly to make connection with libraries and specialist staff on an international level. This has brought Iraq to the world's attention and helped promote the value and importance of the historical collections. The media attention that Dr. Eskander has used to his advantage has put a controversial spotlight on the documents that the US government initially seized when they invaded in 2003. These very documents and their significance for Iraqi society link to the primary theme that has continuously featured throughout the dissertation- identity and the role of library documents as recorders of history.

The aim of this investigation was to examine closely, the relationship between library professional bodies and their support given to rebuilding Iraq's damaged libraries after the 2003 conflict. Through sourcing literature on this topic to interviewing key library and information professionals; it was possible to conclusively draw how much work has been successfully carried out and what gaps still remain for the coming future.

One of the most fascinating aspects in this study was the connection between libraries and national identity. This powerful relationship was strongly conveyed through print and online literature, from Historians writing about the burning of libraries in former Yugoslavia, to Dr. Eskander's poignant online diary on the BL website.

Dr. Eskander will continue his journey of reclaiming and rebuilding a new singular Iraqi identity. Akin to the resurrection of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the libraries of Iraq will once again rise from the ashes.

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Appendix

Transcript of telephone interview

With Julie Robinson (former International Officer for the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals)
Date: 31/10/2007
FQ: Farzana Qureshi
JR: Julie Robinson

FQ "Can you tell me about the motives/purpose behind the workings of the International panel in regards to Iraq?"

JR "I was assigned to monitor and gather together data and information on the current situation on Iraq's libraries. I reported back to the panel that was set up by CILIP".

FQ "How quick did CILIP respond to the emergency/disaster in Iraq?"

JR "It was in good time unlike IFLA or the British Library. There was a danger in acting too fast because of unreliable reports/sources looming about the situation and it was best to wait for the dust to settle and to then take action."

FQ "How long were you working on the Iraq Library project?"

JR "I worked on the internal project for up to two years. I attended conferences, one at Westminster University in February 2004 or so about reconstructing Iraq's academic institutes. I met academics to discuss ways to reconstruct libraries and academic institutes with a science remit. I found that there were no librarians present at the conference. They were not consulted and it felt like there was a lack of appreciation of what Librarians actually do.

There was a bias towards the Sciences and then the Humanities and the Arts were at the bottom. It was an attempt to get new scientific equipment set up for Iraq. Everyone had their own agenda to address. UK Publishers Association set up conferences and workshops yet there was no list in place nothing was forthcoming.

At the workshop economic development was priority and 'knowledge within society' has a whole was being neglected."

FQ "Was there any obstacles in your way at the workshop that prevented you from progressing?"

JR "I felt I could not get further then a certain point and this was due to lack of communication and no clear cut agreement towards what should be done."

FQ "What kind of rebuilding projects did CILIP get involved with?"

JR "CILIP was keen to assist with a book donation project. However 'dumping' was becoming a problem. The book donation project was deemed not very useful or successful."