

Welcome to Freshman Honors World Cultures. I'm looking forward to meeting you in August.

Your initial assignment is about ethics in the practice of archaeology, and the steps for you to follow are laid out below.

- 1) Read the *National Geography* article about archaeology to obtain background information about the discipline.
- 2) The next subject will be a file titled, "Ethics in Archaeology." Please review the nine principles published by the Society for American Archaeology.
- 3) Read each of these articles:  
"Hobby Lobby's Illegal Antiquities Shed Light on a Lost, Looted Ancient City in Iraq"  
"Blood and Gold: Children Dying as Egypt's Treasures are Looted"  
"How the Parthenon Lost Its Marbles"  
We will be discussing all of the articles during the first week of class.
- 4) Thinking about the SSA's ethical principles, select one article to use as your example of how one or more of the principles was violated.
- 5) Compose a five paragraph essay to defend your thesis. An outline for the essay format is included for your use. Please use MLA style format for your composition. If you are unfamiliar with MLA, the first hyperlink listed below will be helpful.
- 6) The assignment is due on the first day of school. Failure to complete and submit the assignment by the due date will result in removal from the Honors program.

Here are some useful websites that may help you with your essay.

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html)

<https://www.scribbr.com/category/academic-essay/#:~:text=Preparation%3A%20Decide%20on%20your%20topic,and%20formatting%20of%20your%20essay.>

<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/essay-structure>

Here is the rubric for your paper.

## RUBRIC FOR WRITING ASSESSMENTS

	Limited	Adequate	Proficient	Excellent	Earned Points	Possible Points
<b>Content</b>	<p>___ Very few details included</p> <p>___ Details do not develop main theme</p> <p>___ Unclear connections made to assignment's purpose</p>	<p>___ Many details are not clearly connected to theme</p> <p>___ Fluency is sometimes awkward or forced</p> <p>___ Assignment's purpose is explored adequately but with little depth</p>	<p>___ Content has depth with many supporting details that connect logically to the theme</p> <p>___ Clear focus on theme with obvious connections to assignment's purpose</p>	<p>___ Content is in-depth and detailed</p> <p>___ References are made that show rich understanding of the topic</p> <p>___ Superior attention to assignment's purpose</p> <p>___ Highly insightful</p> <p>___ Many supporting details</p>		<b>35</b>
<b>Standard English Command</b>	<p>___ Little attempt made at correcting grammar, punctuation, spelling or capitalization</p> <p>___ Errors in mechanics make it difficult to read/understand</p> <p>___ Vocabulary simplified or misused in context</p> <p>___ Does not use consistent tense</p>	<p>___ Writing has been edited for grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization</p> <p>___ Some errors in mechanics but they do not hinder understanding</p> <p>___ Limited vocabulary but words used correctly</p> <p>___ Few errors in tense</p>	<p>___ Writing has been edited for grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization with minimal errors in mechanics</p> <p>___ Tense is consistent</p> <p>___ Writer attempts to include some new but appropriate vocabulary</p>	<p>___ No errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling or capitalization</p> <p>___ Edited for highest possible coherence</p> <p>___ Tense is consistent</p> <p>___ Rich vocabulary usage and used in context</p>		<b>35</b>

<p><b>Organization and Cohesion</b></p>	<p>___ Paragraphs are often confusing to read or essay does not use proper paragraph development or structure</p> <p>___ No transitions between paragraphs</p> <p>___ Introduction or conclusion are ineffective or missing</p>	<p>___ Writing has a basic organization</p> <p>___ Paragraphs contain adequate structure but are simplified</p> <p>___ Few transitions between paragraphs</p> <p>___ Introduction and conclusion are present but sparse</p>	<p>___ Arguments or points are presented in a logical way</p> <p>___ Proper transitions between paragraphs</p> <p>___ Knowledge is communicated clearly</p> <p>___ Effective introduction and conclusion</p>	<p>___ Writing is clear and concise</p> <p>___ Skillful use of organization to effect logical argument and connection to theme</p> <p>___ Logical transitions between paragraphs</p> <p>___ Powerful introduction and relevant, thoughtful conclusion</p>		<p><b>30</b></p>
<p><b>Total</b></p>						<p><b>100</b></p>

# Ethics in Archaeology

## Principle No. 1: Stewardship

The archaeological record, that is, in situ archaeological material and sites, archaeological collections, records and reports, is irreplaceable. It is the responsibility of all archaeologists to work for the long-term conservation and protection of the archaeological record by practicing and promoting stewardship of the archaeological record. Stewards are both caretakers of and advocates for the archaeological record for the benefit of all people; as they investigate and interpret the record, they should use the specialized knowledge they gain to promote public understanding and support for its long-term preservation.

## Principle No. 2: Accountability

Responsible archaeological research, including all levels of professional activity, requires an acknowledgment of public accountability and a commitment to make every reasonable effort, in good faith, to consult actively with affected group(s), with the goal of establishing a working relationship that can be beneficial to all parties involved.

## Principle No. 3: Commercialization

The Society for American Archaeology has long recognized that the buying and selling of objects out of archaeological context is contributing to the destruction of the archaeological record on the American continents and around the world. The commercialization of archaeological objects - their use as commodities to be exploited for personal enjoyment or profit - results in the destruction of archaeological sites and of contextual information that is essential to understanding the archaeological record. Archaeologists should therefore carefully weigh the benefits to scholarship of a project against the costs of potentially enhancing the commercial value of archaeological objects. Whenever possible they should discourage, and should themselves avoid, activities that enhance the commercial value of archaeological objects, especially objects that are not curated in public institutions, or readily available for scientific study, public interpretation, and display.

## Principle No. 4: Public Education and Outreach

Archaeologists should reach out to, and participate in cooperative efforts with others interested in the archaeological record with the aim of improving the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the record. In particular, archaeologists should undertake to: 1) enlist public support for the stewardship of the archaeological record; 2) explain and promote the use of archaeological methods and techniques in understanding human behavior and culture; and 3) communicate archaeological interpretations of the past. Many publics exist for archaeology including students and teachers; Native Americans and other ethnic, religious, and cultural groups who find in the archaeological record important aspects of their cultural heritage; lawmakers and government officials; reporters, journalists, and others involved in the media; and the general public. Archaeologists who are unable to undertake public education and outreach directly should encourage and support the efforts of others in these activities.

## Principle No. 5: Intellectual Property

Intellectual property, as contained in the knowledge and documents created through the study of archaeological resources, is part of the archaeological record. As such it should be treated in accord with the principles of stewardship rather than as a matter of personal possession. If there is a compelling reason, and no legal restrictions or strong countervailing interests, a researcher may have primary access to original materials and documents for a limited and reasonable time, after which these materials and documents must be made available to others.

## Principle No. 6: Public Reporting and Publication

Within a reasonable time, the knowledge archaeologists gain from investigation of the archaeological record must be presented in accessible form (through publication or other means) to as wide a range of interested publics as possible. The documents and materials on which publication and other forms of public reporting are based should be deposited in a suitable place for permanent safekeeping. An interest in preserving and protecting in situ archaeological sites must be taken in to account when publishing and distributing information about their nature and location.

## **Principle No. 7: Records and Preservation**

Archaeologists should work actively for the preservation of, and long term access to, archaeological collections, records, and reports. To this end, they should encourage colleagues, students, and others to make responsible use of collections, records, and reports in their research as one means of preserving the in situ archaeological record, and of increasing the care and attention given to that portion of the archaeological record which has been removed and incorporated into archaeological collections, records, and reports.

## **Principle No. 8: Training and Resources**

Given the destructive nature of most archaeological investigations, archaeologists must ensure that they have adequate training, experience, facilities, and other support necessary to conduct any program of research they initiate in a manner consistent with the foregoing principles and contemporary standards of professional practice.

## **Principle No. 9: Safe Educational and Workplace Environments**

Archaeologists in all work, educational, and other professional settings, including fieldwork and conferences, are responsible for training the next generation of archaeologists. Part of these responsibilities involves fostering a supportive and safe environment for students and trainees. This includes knowing the laws and policies of their home nation and institutional workplace that pertain to harassment and assault based upon sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, national origin, religion, or marital status. SAA members will abide by these laws and ensure that the work and educational settings in which they have responsible roles as supervisors are conducted so as to avoid violations of these laws and act to maintain safe and respectful work and learning environments.



## RESOURCE LIBRARY | ENCYCLOPEDIC ENTRY

Archaeology is the study of the human past using material remains. These remains can be any objects that people created, modified, or used.

Portable remains are usually called artifacts. Artifacts include tools, clothing, and decorations. Non-portable remains, such as pyramids or post-holes, are called features.

Archaeologists use artifacts and features to learn how people lived in specific times and places. They want to know what these people's daily lives were like, how they were governed, how they interacted with each other, and what they believed and valued.

Sometimes, artifacts and features provide the only clues about an ancient community or civilization. Prehistoric civilizations did not leave behind written records, so we cannot read about them.

Understanding why ancient cultures built the giant stone circles at Stonehenge, England, for instance, remains a challenge 5,000 years after the first monoliths were erected. Archaeologists studying Stonehenge do not have ancient manuscripts to tell them how cultures used the feature. They rely on the enormous stones themselves—how they are arranged and the way the site developed over time.

Most cultures with writing systems leave written records that archaeologists consult and study. Some of the most valuable written records are everyday items, such as shopping lists and tax forms. Latin, the language of ancient Rome, helps archaeologists understand artifacts and features discovered in parts of the Roman Empire. The use of Latin shows how far the empire's influence extended, and the records themselves can tell archaeologists what foods were available in an area, how much they cost, and what buildings belonged to families or businesses.

Many ancient civilizations had complex writing systems that archaeologists and linguists are still working to decipher. The written system of the Mayan language, for instance, remained a mystery to scholars until the 20th century. The Maya were one of the most powerful pre-Columbian civilizations in North America, and their Central American temples and manuscripts are inscribed with a collection of squared glyphs, or symbols. A series of circles and lines represents numbers.

By deciphering the Mayan script, archaeologists were able to trace the ancestry of Mayan kings and chart the development of their calendar and agricultural seasons. Understanding the basics of the Mayan writing system helps archaeologists discover how Mayan culture functioned—how they were governed, how they traded with some neighbors and went to war with others, what they ate, and what gods they worshipped.

As archaeologists become more fluent in Mayan writing, they are making new discoveries about the culture every day. Today, some archaeologists work with linguists and poets to preserve the once-lost Mayan language.

## History of Archaeology

The word “archaeology” comes from the Greek word “arkhaios,” which means “ancient.” Although some archaeologists study living cultures, most archaeologists concern themselves with the distant past.

People have dug up monuments and collected artifacts for thousands of years. Often, these people were not scholars, but looters and grave robbers looking to make money or build up their personal collections.

For instance, grave robbers have been plundering the magnificent tombs of Egypt since the time the Pyramids were built. Grave robbing was such a common crime in ancient Egypt that many tombs have hidden chambers where the family of the deceased would place treasures.

In Egypt in the mid-1800s, an Egyptian man searching for a lost goat stumbled across the tomb of Pharaoh Ramses I. (Many archaeologists doubt this story and say grave robbers, working as an organized group, routinely scouted and plundered many tombs in the area.) Ramses I ruled for a short time in the 1290s BCE. Besides the body of the pharaoh, the tomb held artifacts such as pottery, paintings, and sculpture. The man sold the mummies and artifacts from the tomb to anyone who would pay.

The mummy of Ramses I wound up in a museum in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, where it remained until the museum closed in 1999. The Canadian museum sold the Egyptian collection to the Michael C. Carlos Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, which confirmed the mummy’s royal status through the use of CT scanners, X-rays, radiocarbon dating, computer imaging, and other techniques. Ramses I was returned to Egypt in 2003.

One of the most well-known archaeological finds is the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun, also known as King Tut. Unlike many other Egyptian tombs, grave robbers had never discovered King Tut. His resting place lay undisturbed for thousands of years, until it was discovered in 1922. In addition to mummies of Tutankhamun and his family, the tomb contained some 5,000 artifacts.

Many early archaeologists worked in the service of invading armies. When Gen. Napoleon Bonaparte of France successfully invaded Egypt in 1798, he brought artists, archaeologists, and historians to document the conquest. Napoleon’s troops took home hundreds of tons of Egyptian artifacts: columns, coffins, stone tablets, monumental statues. Today, these Egyptian antiquities take up entire floors of the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.

Some archaeologists of this time were wealthy adventurers, explorers, and merchants. These amateur archaeologists often had a sincere interest in the culture and artifacts they studied. However,

their work is often regarded as an example of colonialism and exploitation. The so-called Elgin Marbles are an example of this controversy.

In 1801, Greece had been taken over by the Ottoman Empire. The British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Lord Elgin, received permission to remove half of the sculptures from the famous Acropolis of Athens, Greece. These marble sculptures were a part of buildings such as the Parthenon. Lord Elgin claimed he wanted to protect the valuable sculptures from damage caused by conflict between the Greeks and the Ottomans.

The government of Greece has been lobbying for the return of the Elgin Marbles ever since. Most Greeks view the sculptures as part of their cultural heritage. Greece has cut off diplomatic relations to the United Kingdom several times, demanding the return of the sculptures, which remain in the British Museum in London.

Eventually, archaeology evolved into a more systematic discipline. Scientists started using standard weights and measures and other formalized methods for recording and removing artifacts. They required detailed drawings and drafts of the entire dig site, as well as individual pieces. Archaeologists began to work with classicists, historians, and linguists to develop a unified picture of the past.

In the 20th century, archaeologists began to re-assess their impact on the cultures and environments where they dig. Today, in most countries, archaeological remains become the property of the country where they were found, regardless of who finds them. Egypt, for example, is scattered with archaeological sites sponsored by American universities. These teams must obtain permission from the Egyptian government to dig at the sites, and all artifacts become the property of Egypt.

Archaeology is based on the scientific method. Archaeologists ask questions and develop hypotheses. They use evidence to choose a dig site, then use scientific sampling techniques to select where on the site to dig. They observe, record, categorize, and interpret what they find. Then they share their results with other scientists and the public.

## Basic Essay Format

### I Introduction

#### A. Opening statement(s) – gain your readers’ attention

1. Ask an interesting question that will make the reader want to find out more (or read the rest of your paper)
2. Reference a piece of Literature, song, etc. (or quote)
3. Use an interesting quote
4. State an interesting or alarming fact or figure
5. Tell a joke (I would not suggest this for a formal paper)

#### B. Transition – connect Opening to your thesis (below)

#### C. Thesis Statement (Your Main Idea)

### II Body

#### A. Main Point 1 – the first point you want to make or address about your thesis

1. State the point (one sentence)
  - a. Include a transition word or phrase – for Main Point 1, make a reference to the Main Idea as a transition
  - b. Example: The first issue is... or First...
2. explain the point
  - a. Your ideas
  - b. Research - Support from experts (Remember that every time you use a quote or paraphrase, you should provide your own explanation of it.)
3. conclude the point (1 – 2 sentences; preferably 1)
  - a. draw a conclusion based on your explanation and research

#### B. Main Point 2 – the second point you want to make / address about your thesis

1. State the point (one sentence)
  - a. Include a transition word or phrase – for Main Point 2 - ?, make a reference to the Main Idea or previously stated point
  - b. Example: While the first issue addresses \_\_\_\_\_, the second addresses...
  - c. Example: The second issue is... or Second...
2. (Repeat steps 2 – 3 from Main Point 1)

#### C. Main Point 3 – the third point... or Third...

1. Repeat steps 1 - 3 under Main Point 2

#### D. Main Point 4 – the fourth point...or Fourth... (You can have as many main points as necessary)

1. Repeat steps 1 - 3 under Main Point 2

### III Conclusion

#### A. Restate Thesis (Main Idea) – remember to use different wording

#### B. Restate Main Points

1. You can use separate sentences for each
2. You can combine them into fewer sentences
3. DO NOT introduce any new material or ideas in the conclusion

#### C. Closing

1. Draw a general conclusion about the information you found about your Thesis, OR
2. Relate to your Opening – use the same idea, OR
3. Both 1 and 2

### Remember:

1. Do not use first- or second-person pronouns (I, me, we, us, our, mine, ours, my, you, yours, etc.)
2. Do not use contractions
3. Try not to use phrases like: There is (was), There are (were), Here is (are, was, were), It is (was)
4. Use multiple types of sentences (Do not begin every sentence with a noun/subject-verb combination.)

# Blood & Gold: Children Dying As Egypt's Treasures Are Looted

By Owen Jarus, Live Science Contributor | August 8, 2016 08:09am ET

Since the 2011 Egyptian revolution, political instability and a tourism decline have led to widespread looting of archaeological sites — with deadly consequences.

Children forced to work in dangerous conditions to pillage historical sites have died. Antiquities guards were gunned down within an ancient tomb they were trying to protect. **Mummies** have been left out in the sun to rot after their tombs were robbed. And looting pits have pockmarked ancient sites in such vast numbers that words cannot adequately describe.

A Live Science investigation found that not only were these horrific events happening but that an enormous amount of potentially **looted Egyptian artifacts** had made their way into the United States. These artifacts include a vast number of gold coins. Documents obtained from the US Census Bureau by Live Science reveal that since 2011, more than \$143 million worth of artifacts have been exported from Egypt to the United States. The artifacts were brought into the United States for personal or commercial use, rather than temporary display in a museum, the documents say. The documents also show that the vast majority of the artifacts were shipped to New York City, where many auction houses, antiquities dealers and art galleries are based. However, detecting a shipment of looted artifacts and proving that they were looted is very difficult, researchers and government officials told Live Science.

The influx of Egyptian artifacts into the United States shows no signs of abating. In the first five months of 2016, about \$26 million worth of artifacts were exported from Egypt to the United States, the Census Bureau documents say.

Since 2011, more than 45 lbs. (20 kilograms) of antique gold coins have been exported to the United States from Egypt — that's about twice the weight of **Tutankhamun's famous golden death mask**. Between 1998 and 2010 only 4 pounds (less than 2 kilograms) of gold coins were exported from Egypt to the United States the documents say.

## Deaths in Egypt

Photos provided by **Egypt's Heritage Task Force**, which has been tracking **looting in Egypt** — show children working at Abusir el-Malek, a village south of Cairo that holds an ancient cemetery with thousands of burials. In the photos, the children can be seen carrying artifacts and rummaging around in pits and shafts. The photographs show how

narrow and deep the holes get, creating dangerous working conditions that have led to the deaths of children researchers have found. The photos show that the landscape the children work in is scarred by these pits and is strewn with the bones of ancient mummies.



A close-up of a mummy's head at the Bahariya Oasis.

*Credit: Photo courtesy of Egypt Heritage Taskforce*

"Children have been used primarily to reach small burial shafts and tunnels. Unfortunately, many children have lost their lives in the process," wrote Monica Hanna, an Egyptologist working with Egypt's Heritage Task Force, in a paper she published in the book "Countering Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods" (ICOM, 2015).

In fact, more than 25 children, employed by professional antiquities gangs, died last year in shafts in Abusir el-Malek, Hanna told Live Science.

Little of the money from the sale of artifacts goes to the children's families, Hanna said. Instead, most of it ends up in the pockets of antiquities dealers and middlemen, who smuggle it out of Egypt and into other countries, such as the United States. "Many of them [the middlemen] are part of the international mafia that smuggles drugs and arms in the region," Hanna said, according to her research and that of her colleagues.

Hanna said buyers of Egyptian antiquities should know that "the object you buy does not only have a child's blood on it, but also [that] looting activities have completely destroyed the site similarly to what ISIS does to other archaeological sites in the region." [Reclaimed History: 9 Repatriated Egyptian Antiquities]

Children working in the shafts are not the only ones being killed in the looting. Two guards — Mustafa Ali, 36, and Asrawy, 56 — were gunned down by a group of robbers on Feb. 20, 2016, while inside a 4,000-year-old tomb at the site of Dayr al-Barsha, according to a team of archaeologists working at the site. Both guards left behind families, including a wife pregnant with twins. (A [GoFundMe page](#) was set up by the archaeological team working at Dayr al-Barsha to help out the families of the two killed guards.)

They died in a hail of bullets. "Over 20 bullet holes impacted in the relief decoration on the walls of the exterior room and two large blackened blood stains on the floor indicate the spots [in the tomb] where Asrawy and Mustafa were murdered," the archaeological team wrote in a statement on the web page.

## Tricky to catch

It can be very challenging to find looted artifacts that are being exported to the United States, sources tell Live Science.



The landscape at Abusir el-Malek, south of Cairo, is littered with ancient human bones from looted burials.

*Credit: Photo courtesy of Egypt Heritage Taskforce*

"It is extremely difficult to prove that any single artifact that arrives in the U.S. has been looted," said **Erin Thompson**, a professor of art crime at the City University of New York. "Middlemen are experts in making looted and smuggled **antiquities** look like they are part of the legitimate market by cleaning and restoring them and creating forged paperwork that makes it seem like Egypt gave permission for its export."

"Suddenly, an artifact that was ripped out of the ground last month is indistinguishable from one that's been in a private collection for decades, and which is entirely legal to export and sell," Thompson added.

Furthermore, U.S. Customs doesn't check all shipments; a spokesperson for U.S. Customs and Border Protection told Live Science that the agency conducts audits of antique shipments but declined to say how often this is done.

The spokesperson also said that it is the responsibility of the person importing the shipment to declare the shipment's value. This means that the \$143 million is simply the value of the imported Egyptian artifacts being declared by importers; the actual resale value could be higher.

Additionally, the documents obtained by Live Science show only shipments that made it to the U.S., the Census Bureau spokesperson said. Because the documents don't include shipments that Customs agents stopped and impounded, the amount of Egyptian antiquities reaching the United States could be even higher.

## Golden treasure

Many of these artifacts are simply declared by importers as being "antiques" that are over 100 years old, although some are labeled more specifically.

The antique gold coins are the largest category of identified artifacts recorded in the documents. The data show that before 2009, few gold coins were brought into the United States from Egypt. The number grew in 2009 and surged in the years following the 2011 Egyptian revolution.

Coins have been minted **in Egypt** for more than 2,000 years. Some of the earliest Egyptian coins were minted by the Ptolemies, a dynasty of rulers descended from Ptolemy Soter, one of **Alexander the Great's** generals. Alexander conquered Egypt in 332 B.C., and the Ptolemies ruled the country until 30 B.C., when **Cleopatra VII**, the last Ptolemaic ruler, died by suicide after the **Battle of Actium**. After Cleopatra's death, Egypt was incorporated into the Roman Empire.

One explanation for the abrupt increase in imported gold coins comes from satellite research conducted by a team led by Sarah Parcak, an anthropology professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

After examining satellite images of Egypt from the past two decades, her team found that the looters prefer portable objects from sites dating to periods after minted coins were invented. "Overall, 55% of the affected sites were of Late Period (Dynasties 26-30) to Roman-period date," Parcak's team wrote in a **paper published** in February in the journal *Antiquity*.

Some of the gold coins coming into the United States could also be forgeries, Hanna told Live Science. "A lot of local jewelers fake gold coins and sell them as antiquities," she said.

*Original article on Live Science.*

# Hobby Lobby's Illegal Antiquities Shed Light On A Lost, Looted Ancient City In Iraq

JANE ARRAF



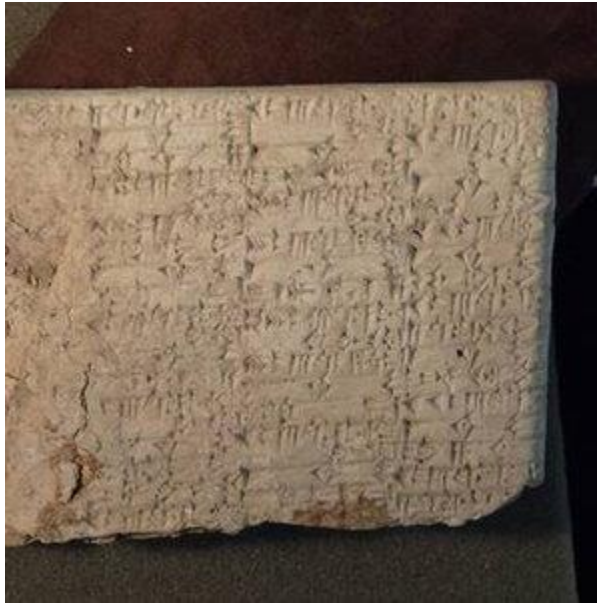
Ancient artifacts seized from Hobby Lobby are shown at a May 2 event returning the artifacts to Iraq in Washington, D.C. The seized artifacts include cuneiform tablets from the little-known ancient city of Irisagrig.

*Win McNamee/Getty Images*

Archaeologist Eckart Frahm didn't have much time to determine where the 4,000-year-old clay tablets had come from. Homeland Security officials had given him just 2 1/2 days in a

dimly lit New York warehouse to pore over the cuneiform inscriptions etched into the fragile, ancient pieces and report back.

"They were not in great shape. They had infestations of salt in them, so it's not that I could say I had been able to read everything," says the Yale University professor. "My main goal was to provide a general assessment from when and where did these tablets actually originate."



## **THE TWO-WAY**

### **Hobby Lobby's Smuggled Artifacts Will Be Returned To Iraq**

Frahm determined the tablets at the center of a federal case against the Oklahoma-based Hobby Lobby arts and crafts chain were from a place few had ever heard of — an ancient Sumerian city called Irisagrig.

"You could argue that this is a lost city because this place has never been properly excavated and you don't even know exactly where it is," Frahm tells NPR.

But looters know. The roughly 250 tablets Frahm examined in 2016 were among 5,500 objects, including ancient cylinder seals and clay seal impressions known as bullae, smuggled into the U.S. starting in 2010. Shipped from the United Arab Emirates and Israel without

declaring their true Iraqi origin, some of them were marked "ceramic tiles" or "clay tiles (sample)."

They'd been purchased by Hobby Lobby for \$1.6 million.

In a settlement last year with the Justice Department, Hobby Lobby agreed to forfeit the objects and paid a \$3 million fine. In May, about 3,800 objects were handed back to the Iraqi government at a ceremony at its Washington, D.C., embassy, and will be returned to Iraq later this year.

Last November, Hobby Lobby president Steve Green, the son of the craft store chain's founder David Green, opened a Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C., which contains another \$201 million worth of ancient artifacts tied to Hobby Lobby. The museum said in a statement last July that "None of the artifacts identified in the settlement are part of the Museum's collection, nor have they ever been."

The world's first civilizations sprung up between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is now Iraq. Objects from archaeological sites in the south have been prone to wide-scale smuggling since the 1990s, particularly due to southern Iraq's porous border with Kuwait, according to archaeologists who specialize in Iraq.

Looting intensified in the security vacuum after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Apart from the loss of the artifacts themselves, crucial information placing them in the context of where they came from is also lost when undocumented objects are removed from their original sites.

Frahm says a database established by Spanish archaeologist Manuel Molina and others guided him in determining the origin of the Hobby Lobby antiquities. It was based on inscriptions of other looted tablets that surfaced after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Those tablets marked the first time archaeologists were known to have seen the name Irisagrig. According to one of the cuneiform tablets, it took four days to tow boats upstream from Umma, a better-known ancient Sumerian city, giving Molina a rough probable location of the lost city in the south of the country.

Umma itself is one of the most heavily looted of all known ancient sites in Iraq. Thieves dug hundreds of holes into the tells — the mounds under which the ancient city is buried — after security collapsed following the 2003 U.S. invasion.



Archaeologist Lamia al-Gailani at the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. The museum was looted in 2003 after the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Some of its antiquities were recovered but looting has continued in the south of Iraq, where thousands of ancient sites yet to be excavated by archaeologists are unprotected.

The remains of thousands of other ancient towns and cities likely exist under other mounds, archaeologists believe.

"Don't forget, even if we take only ancient Iraq, it's 3,000 years — so they didn't live in just one or two cities," says Lamia al-Gailani, a British-Iraqi archaeologist with the Iraq Museum in Baghdad and the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. She has worked on Iraqi antiquities since the 1960s. "Southern Iraq is absolutely full of these mounds," she says.

Archaeologists believe about 5,000 tells exist in Iraq, Frahm says. Only a few have been properly excavated. Irisagrig is not one of them.

"The city of Irisagrig is only known from other tablets," he says. "Many were sold on eBay, some made it into various private collections. And it is from these other tablets that we know the tablets from the Hobby Lobby collections — some of them, at least, if not all of them — are from that very city."

Frahm says he was able to verify the tablets' origin by references and seals, including that of an official known to have been governor of Irisagrig some 4,000 years ago.

The tablets constitute a local government archive that includes records of commercial transactions, official visits — even notations on what the palace dogs were fed.

"It seems life in Irisagrig was actually pretty good," says Frahm. "The dogs didn't get meat. They got cereal ... but other low-level inhabitants of the palace, including some female weavers, got rations composed of meat — and that is something unusual at the time."



A clay tablet from the seized Hobby Lobby collection bears a cuneiform inscription referring to the disbursement of leather bags to hold water, known as water skins. The inscription is dated with the name of a month used exclusively in Irasagrig, a lost ancient city in present-day Iraq.

*/Courtesy of Eckart Frahm*

The Irasagrig tablets were administrative rather than religious, Frahm says, but would have been inscribed around the same time that those following a literal interpretation of the Old Testament believe the patriarch Abraham lived. Some believe the city of Ur referred to in the Bible as Abraham's birthplace is the ancient Mesopotamian city of the same name, in what is now Iraq.

Frahm says apart from the Irasagrig archive, the Hobby Lobby artifacts that are being returned to Iraq also include tablets dating from about 2500 BCE (an alternative to "B.C.")

commonly used by scholars to denote "before the common era") with incantations to the gods, Babylonian letters from between 1900 and 1700 BCE and hymns from several hundred years BCE.

Frahm describes the incantations as some of the most important pieces in the collection. The tablets, about 300 years older than the Irisagrig tablets, invoke three Mesopotamian gods. He says another text from the first millennium BCE is written in both Babylonian and Emesal, a dialect of Sumerian he says was originally a language used only by women.

Most of the other items were clay bullae, used as seals for documents, and cylinder seals — small, intricately carved stone cylinders whose impressions in clay served as signatures.

"I don't think there were any that were particularly unusual, but some of them were nice seals," says Elizabeth Stone, a Stony Brook University archaeologist who was asked by U.S. authorities to examine the seals to ensure they belonged back in Iraq.

"Some of them were good, hard stones with very clear impressions, and some of them weren't," she says. "They were a very mixed bag. They might well have been purchased not in Iraq, but from Israel and the Gulf, from where they were sent."

Stone says she believes the hefty fine Hobby Lobby has paid could deter some imports of looted antiquities into the United States.

But looting is sure to remain a problem, experts say, as most of Iraq's archaeological sites are unprotected and other large markets remain outside the U.S. Archaeologists believe many private collectors of looted Mesopotamian antiquities are wealthy Gulf Arabs.

"After the 1991 [First Gulf] war, the Iraqi government lost a lot of control in the countryside, particularly in the south," says Gailani. "The north has antiquities, but it's a different type of antiquities and looting it is more difficult. The south is easier and attractive, because it's small objects, tablets ... Everyone wants tablets."

"It's easy to get," she says. "You dig a hole and most probably you will find something."



# How the Parthenon Lost Its Marbles

In 1801 a British nobleman stripped the Parthenon of many of its sculptures and took them to England. Controversy over their acquisition by the British Museum continues to this day. Was it preservation, or pillage?

BY JUAN PABLO SÁNCHEZ

During the 1700s, a European Grand Tour was a rite of passage for the sons of wealthy families. Lasting for up to three years, and taking in Switzerland, Paris, and Rome, the high point of this secular pilgrimage for most travelers was Greece. On arriving in Athens, the first sight these young tourists would look for was the Acropolis and its crowning glory: the pillared Parthenon, dedicated to the warrior goddess Athena.

Yet even as the Grand Tour became increasingly popular, laying the foundations for modern tourism, this great monument, studded with the work of the great Athenian sculptor Phidias, was at risk of disappearing entirely. Since the 15th century, Greece had been ruled by the Ottoman Empire, whose troops had converted the Acropolis into a garrison, and whose sultan, Mehmed II, had turned the Parthenon itself into a mosque, complete with a minaret.



Detail from the western frieze of the Parthenon. British Museum, London

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSSE/SCALA, FLORENCE

In 1687, during a war fought between Venice and the Ottomans, the great monument was used by the Ottomans to store gunpowder. Exposed on the Acropolis, the Parthenon was a highly vulnerable target, and in September that year, a deadly blow fell: A Venetian mortar struck it, causing a colossal explosion that destroyed its roof, leaving only the pediments standing. Later, the Venetian admiral Francesco Morosini tried to remove sculptures in order to take them back to Venice. The pulley he was using broke, and the figures, including a large Poseidon, was smashed to pieces.

Morosini withdrew from Athens with the dubious honor of having caused more damage to the Parthenon in just one year than it had suffered in the two millennia since Socrates and Pericles had watched its slow rise over Athens at the end of the fifth century B.C.

## Parthenon in Peril

By the middle of the 18th century yet more of the ruined Parthenon's decoration had been plundered. The site's precariousness only encouraged travelers to carry off items, as many believed it would be razed to the ground before long anyway. "It is to be regretted that so much admirable sculpture as is still extant about this fabric should be all likely to perish ... from ignorant contempt and brutal violence" warned Richard Chandler, an English antiquarian, in 1770. A few years later, the Irish painter Edward Dodwell reported that huge quantities of marble from the Parthenon had been broken up in order to build cabins for a garrison. On hearing about the situation, many western travelers and collectors sought to acquire treasures pillaged from the Parthenon on the local black market in an attempt to "save" them from destruction.

Some collectors claimed this was perfectly legal, as they removed items with the connivance of the Ottoman authorities. Many collections of Parthenon statuary housed in the world's museums today were acquired in this way. The most famous and significant was brought to London beginning in 1803 by the former British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, the nobleman Thomas Bruce—more commonly known as Lord Elgin.

## Taking the Marbles



Thomas Bruce, seventh Earl of Elgin. Portrait by Anton Graff, 1788

PHOTOGRAPH BY AKG/ALBUM

Thomas Bruce, seventh Earl of Elgin and 11th Earl of Kincardine, was an aristocrat with a promising political career. During the first years of the war with revolutionary France, he held various diplomatic posts in Vienna, Brussels, and Berlin. He returned to his native Scotland in 1796, where he built a splendid country mansion at Broomhall. The architect behind the project was Thomas Harrison, who shared his client's passion for Greek sculpture and architecture. In 1799 Lord Elgin's diplomatic services were again required—this time as ambassador to the Ottoman

sultan Selim III, who was keen to foster allies from Europe who would help him boost his defenses against Napoleon's campaign in Egypt, then under indirect Ottoman rule. Having married hastily in September 1799, Elgin set sail from Portsmouth with his new wife, the heiress Mary Nisbet, bound for Constantinople (now Istanbul). Before Elgin left, Harrison urged him to use his privileged position to get hold of drawings and copies of Greece's great monuments. Lord Elgin agreed and enlisted a team of artists directed by the painter Giovanni Battista Lusieri.

On their arrival, Lord and Lady Elgin were lavishly received by the sultan. While his wife organized sumptuous parties, Lord Elgin sent Lusieri and his team to Athens to sketch ancient works of art, as requested by Harrison. Lusieri was given free rein to carry out his work—except when it came to the Acropolis. In order to gain access to the monument, the Ottomans demanded large daily payments, and they refused to let the painter set up a single piece of scaffolding. Lusieri then asked Lord Elgin to request a *firman*, a special permission from the sultan himself.

On July 6, 1801, Lord Elgin received authorization, not only to survey and take casts of the sculptures but also to remove whatever pieces were of interest to him—or at least that's how Elgin interpreted this now controversial passage from the sultan: "When they wish to take away some pieces of stone with old inscriptions and figures, no opposition be made." Having won the favor of the governor of Athens, Lusieri and his men dismantled a large part of the frieze from the Parthenon as well as numerous capitals and metopes. Finally in 1803, the huge collection of marbles was packed up into about two hundred boxes, which were then loaded onto wagons and transported to the port of Piraeus to await their passage to England.

## DID ELGIN HAVE PERMISSION TO TAKE THE MARBLES?



Removal of marbles from the Parthenon in 1801. Watercolor by Edward Dodwell. Packard Humanities Institute, California

PHOTOGRAPH BY PACKARD HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

Any answer to this question, one which has bedeviled British-Greek relations for years, is based on interpretation of the document at the heart of the affair: the firman, the decree issued by Sultan Selim III to Elgin, which was used as a justification to take the marbles. Despite the ambiguity of the language in the firman, the landmark 1967 study by British historian William St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, concludes that the sultan did not allow the removal and export of statues and reliefs from the Parthenon. A clause authorizing the British to take stones “with old inscriptions and figures” probably referred to items found in the excavations conducted on the site, not artworks adorning the temples. Later, Elgin and his associates would recognize before the parliamentary committee that

this act was probably illegal, but they justified it as a way to save the pieces from the damage and looting to which they had been subjected under Ottoman rule.

## The Marbles Go to London

Transporting the marbles to the United Kingdom was beset with problems from the outset. One of the ships was wrecked near the island of K ythira, where the cargo of treasures lay on the seafloor for two years before being retrieved. Hostilities with France, and the possibility of the hoard falling into French hands, led Elgin to request that a British warship docked in the port of Piraeus near Athens take the heaviest sculptures from the Parthenon pediments. Elgin had managed to keep the marbles from the French, but the same could not be said about his own person: Crossing France on his homeward journey to London, he was imprisoned and remained in custody in Pau near the Spanish border for three years until 1806. Once back in London, he began new negotiations to get the Ottoman government to authorize the second shipment of statuary, which left Piraeus in 1809.



Caryatid from the Erechtheion, Arcropolis of Athens, taken to England by Lord Elgin in 1806. The remaining five caryati...

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

Having brought the statues and reliefs to England, Lord Elgin proposed putting them on public display—a noble idea that was undermined by his intention to “restore” the statues. Elgin hoped to re-create the missing sections of each piece. To carry this out, he put forward the name of the most important neoclassical sculptor of the time, Antonio Canova. Canova, a Venetian, refused to touch the treasures, protesting: “It would be a sacrilege for any man to touch them with a chisel.” From 1807, Elgin exhibited the marbles that had arrived in Britain in a house that he leased in Park Lane, near Piccadilly in London. The display was a sensation, attracting a huge number of artists and academics.

The costs of shipping the marbles were paid out of Lord Elgin's own pocket. He calculated he had spent a total of £74,000 in expenses and bribes—more than a million dollars in today's money. Despite his title, Elgin was not a very rich man, especially after 1808 when he faced a ruinous divorce settlement. Feeling the pinch, he put pressure on the British government to buy the collection. In 1812 he deposited the marbles in the home of the Duke of Devonshire and mobilized his contacts to talk up the value of the pieces and warn against the danger of them falling into foreign hands. In 1816 Parliament created a commission to assess Elgin's offer, a decision that caused a huge stir in the press. The country was divided among those who considered they should be bought for the nation, those who considered them a waste of money, and those like the poet Byron who excoriated Elgin for taking them in the first place.

## Holding On to Their Marbles

In 1816 the commission finally fixed the price of the marbles at £35,000 (approximately \$500,000 in today's money)—less than half Elgin's asking price. Parliament approved the sale by a very tight margin: 82 votes in favor and 80 against. Lord Elgin, a staunch patriot, had turned down lucrative offers from other governments for the treasures, and argued all along that the marbles would add luster to Britain's imperial image. Taking the long view, he was justified in anticipating the sense of national pride Britain would feel for the marbles, and in time it became commonly accepted that the nation had purchased them for a song. One of the greatest artworks in human history was now housed in the middle of London, a vital propaganda tool in projecting the image of the British Empire as civilized and benign.



The Elgin Globet, made from engraved crystal, shows a scene from the Parthenon frieze. John Northwood, 1873. M...

PHOTOGRAPH BY DEA/ALBUM

After spending several years in a temporary facility, the marbles were moved to the Elgin Room in the British Museum in 1832. As the exhibition had an educational purpose, providing models for artists, the original pieces were displayed together with molds of the missing fragments. The originals, in fact, made up only around 60 percent of the whole display. In the 1930s work began on a new room that would display only the originals, whose surface texture and color had been altered due to a rigorous (but poorly supervised) cleaning in preparation for display. The Duveen Gallery, named after the businessman who financed it, was completed in 1938 but installation of the marbles was halted by World War II. During the Nazi raids on

London, the marbles were put into storage, and the Duveen Gallery itself suffered serious bomb damage. The space was restored and finally opened to the public in 1962.

Since regaining independence in 1832, successive Greek governments have petitioned for the return of the Parthenon marbles. During her service as the Greek minister of culture between 1981 and 1989, the actress Melina Mercouri reenergized the repatriation campaign. The new Acropolis Museum of Athens, which opened in 2009, includes a specially designed space to house the marbles for the day—fervently awaited by many Greeks—they are reunited with other treasures from the Parthenon and the Acropolis. Not surprisingly, the British Museum has so far refused all requests to give up one of its most popular exhibits. The Parthenon marbles have become the most visible, and notorious, collection of Acropolis artifacts still housed in museums across Europe, often with the justification that such objects are emblematic of European civilization as a whole, not just of Greek heritage.