

January 25, 2016.

**Archaeologist and historian Alex Joffe** and **former CIA analyst Yaya J. Fanusie**, co-authors of 'The Monumental Fight – Countering the Islamic State's Antiquities Trafficking' document (Foundation for Defense of Democracies) published in November 2015, have both written articles questioning figures relating to ISIS's profits from looted antiquities. In articles published on the same day in January, they suggest the figures have been greatly exaggerated – an apparent U-Turn on what they wrote previously in relation to these figures.

**“Far from initial claims that ISIS was making tens of millions or more from stolen antiquities” writes Joffe, “the true figures are likely far lower.”** While Fanusie writes, **“probably no one outside of ISIS knows exactly how much money the group is making by trafficking ancient artifacts.”**

Read Joffe's piece for the National Interest here: <http://goo.gl/0sQtMD>  
and Fanusie's at CNBC here: <http://goo.gl/dsxY6l>

February 5, 2016.

**Lawyer, writer and Middle East commentator Franklin Lamb** has questioned the validity of “hundred of millions of dollars” figure widely reported in the news and suggests that digging for antiquities as akin to gambling in a Las Vegas casino, in an article for Counter Punch. Lamb writes **“while untold quantities of archaeologically vital artefacts” have been looted, sold and displaced through ISIS, their projected looting income, “has not been backed up by probative, material data.”** As for the argument that holes in the ground are evidence of antiquities looting, Lamb adds, "In fact, locally the activity is a bit of a gamble. As in a Las Vegas casino, many can wager but with only a long shot holds the prospect of a high payoff. The vast majority of artifacts currently being unearthed at sites in Syria are of great archaeological importance but have little value on the worldwide art market.”

Read more here: <http://ow.ly/YfzSR>

February 27, London symposium at Courtauld Institute.

**Sam Hardy of UCL and the American University in Rome**, who tracks the illicit sale of antiquities online, says we do not know how much Isis is profiting from this trade because there is no hard evidence. **“I compiled all the different numerical claims that have been made about trafficking objects out of Syria. I am 99% sure that all of them are wrong.”**

The way to combat this trade on the ground is to provide sustainable development and to change the life opportunities for people who are involved, Sam Hardy said. In Mali, West Africa, the problem of looting has been decreased by 75% using this twin approach, he added.

<https://goo.gl/Avf2at>

March 8, Le Monde

**Ludovic Ehrhart, a colonel in the French police who heads the Central Office for the Fight Against Cultural Goods Trafficking (OCBC)**. For months now, the OCBC has been tracking Syrian and Iraqi antiquities on the Paris market, and is poised and ready to launch an investigation “at the slightest suspicious discovery”. There have

been no miraculous finds yet. **“There are a few small objects and old coins on sites like eBay or Le Bon Coin,”** Ehrhart says. **“But we haven't found anything major.”**  
<http://goo.gl/Cgn5tC>

March 8, All Party Parliamentary Group, House of Commons  
**Dr Neil Brodie and APPG co-chairman Lord Renfrew both confirm that they have not seen any evidence of looted Syrian artefacts in London as yet.**

March 11, 2016. Financial Times Collecting supplement. **Anti-trade campaigner Christos Tsirogiannis says: “I have no proof or even information that looting of antiquities is funding IS terrorist activities.”**  
**Michael Will of Europol adds: “We don't have the evidence that Isis is selling antiquities to fund its activities.”**  
<http://goo.gl/LoUfFh>

March 11, 2016. The Creators Project article. Catherine Chapman quotes **former Homeland Security Antiquities dept chief James McAndrew** as saying that shutting down the legitimate trade will not discourage looters. He also notes that **previous claims of Gulf war antiquities showing up on the US market have yet to yield results.** McAndrew also argues the case for addressing the issue on the ground in the conflict zone itself, a view supported by archaeologists, academics and the trade.  
**Deborah Lehr, who chairs the Antiquities Coalition, is quoted as saying: “The biggest challenge in this field is that there's no real information or statistics on the size of this illegal trade.”**  
Meanwhile Neil Brodie says that sitting down with the trade to find a workable solution is far from ideal but better than nothing.  
<http://goo.gl/JZxpEz>