

# **Art and War – Anglo-American Troops in Italy (1943-45)**

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by

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# **Abstract**

## **Art and War – Anglo-American Troops in Italy (1943-45)**

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This research project presents a new perspective on the topic of art theft during the Second World War. To date, public attention has been mainly focused on the extensive art looting campaigns conducted by the Nazis in Europe. The thesis' purpose is to tell another side of the story. Through the case studies of the requisition of the exhibition *Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d'Oltremare* (Naples) and of Museo Stibbert (Florence), and an analysis of wartime historical records, this thesis examines a hidden World War II history: the modalities of Allied troops' unlawful treatment of cultural heritage in occupied territories of Italy, and the responsibility of the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission (MFAA) in preventing such acts.

This thesis argues that the issue of Allied troops' illicit treatment of cultural assets was not related exclusively to an early phase of the Italian campaign, contesting previous research on the topic. Moreover, the analysis conducted in this research project demonstrates that one of the MFAA's founding roles was to act against the billeting of troops in historical properties and to prevent them from stealing and damaging safeguarded artworks housed there. The investigation into the establishment of the MFAA aids in understanding broadly the role that Allied governments played in the creation of a cultural property protection system in wartime, which can have fields of application in modern conflicts. This system comprised the foundation of governmental entities and the issuing of regulations, both disciplining the protection of cultural heritage by combat troops.

This thesis contributes to subjects of study that to date have been studied only marginally, offering a new perspective on the topic of art theft and vandalism during the Second World War, re-evaluating the role that the Allies played in wartime in the treatment of works of art.

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This work is entirely dedicated to my grandfather Pietro (1924-2017), who would have been the proudest man on earth for this achievement. Thanks to his fascinating war stories I became interested in World War II history. Although he had never even finished primary school, he was the only one to truly understand the hard work behind a research degree.

Finally, this thesis is in memory of all the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission's officers whose efforts were central in the recovery and safekeeping of works of art and monuments from warfare's consequences. It is thanks to them that we can appreciate these cultural treasures today.

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## Abbreviations

AAF	American Air Force
AAR	American Academy in Rome
ACC	Allied Control Commission [until January 1944]
ACLS	American Council of Learned Societies
ADM	Administrative
AFHQ	Allied Force Headquarters
ALIU	Art Looting Investigation Unit
AMG	Allied Military Government [from January 1944]
AMGOT	Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories [until January 1944]
AMO	Archivio Mostra d'Oltremare, Naples
ASBo	Archivio di Stato di Bologna
ASMCAA	Archivio Storico dei Musei Civici di Arte Antica di Bologna
ASMCABo	Archivio Storico Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna
ASNa	Archivio di Stato di Napoli
BSR	British School at Rome
CAD	Civil Affairs Division
CAO	Civil Affairs Officer
ETO	European Theatre of Operations
MAAF	Mediterranean Allied Air Forces
MFAA	Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission
MTO / MTOUSA	Mediterranean Theatre of Operations
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PBS	Peninsular Base Section
RAF	Royal Air Force
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force

If the winners will respect  
the gods and the temples of the conquered land,  
their victory will not turn into defeat

(Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 39.

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## Preface

The story I want to tell first is my grandfather's. The personal anecdotes he frequently recounted to me about his experiences in wartime encouraged my fascination with war histories. Without his stories, this thesis would not be possible.

In June 1940 when Italy entered the Second World War, my grandfather Pietro Tulliach was only 16 years old. A few years later, in 1942, after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he joined the army, as it was required by the Italian law for people of his age (Fig. 1). In June 1943, he was deployed in Tuscany at Lucignano (Arezzo) (Fig. 2).

After the Armistice of Cassibile between Italy and the Allies, on 8 September 1943, the majority of Italian soldiers laid down their weapons and returned to their hometowns. My grandfather was one of them. In September 1943, the Armistice initiated his long journey home, from Tuscany to Izola, his hometown in Istria (the largest peninsula within the Adriatic Sea, at that time belonging to the Italian North-East territories – cf. Fig. 5). The journey took weeks. He travelled through many Italian cities and towns. In Bologna – the city that years later became his new home – he was helped by an unknown woman. He has always regretted forgetting her name and never paying her a visit at the end of the war, to thank her for her hospitality.

Nevertheless, the war was not over yet. In October 1943, the Nazis took control of Istria (through the Armistice of Cassibile). Back home, in a Nazi occupied territory, my grandfather, searching for a stable occupation, applied for a job as a civic guard. Having accepted the job, he soon discovered that he had been misled – the post was not that of a civic guard, but rather entailed enlisting in the Nazi SS division. He could not step back anymore from accepting that deceitful position. He then worked as an adjutant in the kitchens of the SS officers' mess. In the summer of 1944, he found out that his detachment was soon to be transferred to Germany. He managed to escape. From that moment onwards, until the end of the war, he was labelled as a *disertore* ('deserter'). *Disertori* were considered criminals and, for this reason, persecuted. Not

willing to take the side of the Nazis and fight in Germany, he risked deportation to a concentration camp or execution.

He stayed hidden for ten months in his home, helped by his mother, Giovanna. She hid him inside the house's sizeable fireplace, which included a large compartment for smoking meat. His hiding place proved to be very effective. Fascists and Nazis often went to his home, but they were never able to find him. He recalled that one day the Fascists knocked on the door of his home, searching for him. His mother managed to lie to them. Fortunately, they did not discover that she was hiding his son a few meters away – on that day, he was ill and, therefore, he was not hiding inside the fireplace, but in his bedroom. In May 1945, the area was liberated by Yugoslav troops. He was free.

After the war, in 1952, he married my grandmother, Annamaria Martincich – known as 'Mariucci' (Fig. 3). He opened a shoemaker's shop in the main square of Pirano, his new hometown, not far away from Izola. In 1954 they had a child, Sergio, my father (Fig. 4). However, their happiness was obscured by the Yugoslav dictatorship governing Istria at that time. In 1947 (when the Paris Peace Treaties were signed), and officially in 1954 (when the Memorandum of Understanding of London was signed), the region was given to the former Yugoslavia. The dictator, Tito, persecuted the Italian population in Istria. In 1955, they managed to escape to Italy. They had to live as refugees in their own country. However, that is another story.

Although in the present thesis the events that affected my family and, more generally, the Istrian population under Tito's dictatorship are not analysed, they continue to resonate with me in my position as a researcher investigating an area of World War II history and its immediate consequences.



*Figure 1 – Pietro Tulliach, the author's grandfather, in World War II army uniform (around 1942).*

*Photographer unknown. © The Author.*



*Figure 2 – Pietro Tulliach (first row, first one from the right) with his wartime comrades in Lucignano (Arezzo), June 1943.*

*Photographer unknown. © The Author.*



*Figure 3 - Pietro Tulliach and Annamaria 'Mariucci' Martincich, the author's grandparents, on the day of their wedding (26 July 1952).*

*Photographer unknown. © The Author.*



*Figure 4 – Sergio Tulliach, the author's father (c. 1955).*

*Photographer unknown. © The Author.*



I strongly believe that stories like my grandfather's have to be written on paper, so that they are not forgotten now that a first-person narrative is no longer possible. We are at present losing the last eyewitness accounts of World War II events, currently remembered exclusively through oral histories passed on by veterans to their children and grandchildren. The writing of this thesis can help to retain the memory of wartime events. This research project aims at examining a hidden World War II history: Anglo-American troops' treatment of cultural heritage in wartime.

To date, public attention has been mainly focused on the massive art looting campaigns conducted by the Nazis in occupied territories of Europe. My purpose is to tell another side of the story, by investigating the range of roles that Allied troops played in wartime in relation to the theft and damage of cultural properties in occupied territories of Italy. In this thesis, I do not want to stigmatise the illicit actions of soldiers in the theatre of war, but to provide a critical analysis of the issue that is as comprehensive and as nuanced as possible.

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## **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

The preface to this thesis has described the personal connection I have with this research project, and it has briefly introduced its topic: the Allied troops' treatment of cultural heritage in wartime. In this chapter, I outline the aim and objectives of this dissertation and review its research context, positioning it in the broad discourse around Anglo-American cultural property protection in wartime. A critical analysis of key secondary sources has been divided into two categories: Allied art theft and damage in World War II; and the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission. A discussion of the research methodology follows, identifying it as a historical research project primarily comprised of an analytical study of archival records and incorporating a case study approach. The chapter ends with a description of the thesis structure.

### **Aim and objectives**

This research project focuses on the range of roles that Allied troops played during the Second World War in damaging and stealing cultural property in occupied territories of Italy. Through two case studies, I am investigating an underexplored area: the modalities of Allied troops' crimes against cultural assets, and the potential contexts that drove the Anglo-Americans into committing those crimes. Moreover, my intention is to study the role that the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission (hereafter, MFAA) played in trying to prevent such illicit acts.<sup>2</sup>

This dissertation constitutes a novel study on the topic of art theft and vandalism in World War II, considered for the first time in great detail from the point of view of Anglo-American troops in occupation of Italy. Previous studies on this topic have analysed exclusively the illicit acts committed by troops in Southern Italy, which – albeit being widespread – do not provide an exhaustive framework for the issue. The research project's purpose is to investigate the topic of Allied troops' wrongful actions

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<sup>2</sup> A thorough investigation of the foundation and aims of the MFAA is included in chapter 2.

towards art in Italy in a comprehensive way, by analysing instances from different Italian geographical areas.

As the archaeologist and historian Nigel Pollard notes, damage and destruction to cultural properties during the Second World War were caused by a number of different factors: deliberate damage by combatants specifically targeting cultural property; incidental, accidental and collateral damage during combat (including bombing and artillery); damage caused by military or civilian looting; damage occurring during the careless occupation and military use of cultural sites.<sup>3</sup> As far as the last factor is concerned, official and unofficial records depict a picture of widespread damage to and appropriation of cultural assets by Allied troops during their occupation of European territories in World War II. In wartime, the Allies frequently seized historic palaces and museum buildings to convert them into army bases, military hospitals, and army depots.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, through the analysis of two case studies, my intention is to demonstrate that, during these requisitions, troops destroyed, damaged and stole cultural objects preserved there.

The main case studies of this research project include the following events: the military occupation of the exhibition grounds of *Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d'Oltremare* in Naples (hereafter, Mostra d'Oltremare), transformed into a military hospital; and the requisition of Museo Stibbert in Florence, converted into an army base. I have selected these two case studies because they are representative of the illicit actions towards cultural heritage undertaken by Allied troops in Italy in World War II. At Mostra d'Oltremare and at Museo Stibbert those acts were widespread, and they both included extensive stealing and damaging activities. Moreover, very high was troops' level of appropriation of the buildings they requisitioned, resulting in their change of use and, consequently, in the damage of architectural structures. Finally, the case study related to the military occupation of Museo Stibbert helps in providing an exhaustive framework for the topic, by analysing for the first time its occurrence in

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<sup>3</sup> Pollard 2019a, p. 672; Pollard 2020a, p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> Allied troops' use of historic palaces as army bases, military hospitals, depots, etc. will be thoroughly investigated in chapter 2.

Central Italy, thus expanding the existing published literature on the theme, which up until now has been focused exclusively on Southern Italy.

Thus, the *aim* of this research project is to critically analyse Allied troops' treatment of art in occupied territories of Italy during the Second World War.<sup>5</sup> This constitutes the main research topic of the present thesis, which also includes a *sub-theme*, exploring the responsibility of the MFAA in preventing troops' illicit actions against cultural assets in a time of war.

The aim of the research project has been pursued through the investigation of specific *objectives*, which have led also to the critical study of the project's sub-theme. The first objective is the analysis of the circumstances that made troops' illicit treatment of art possible – e.g., during the seizure of historic palaces and museum buildings. The second one includes the study of the measures undertaken by Anglo-American governments for disciplining troops' treatment of cultural heritage – comprising the creation of the MFAA. The third objective encompasses the investigation around two specific case studies: the military occupation of Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds and of Museo Stibbert, including the involvement of the MFAA in limiting it.

While it would be important to examine the European situation in greater detail, this research project is restricted exclusively to the Italian territory, to present a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon limited to a single area. Therefore, instances of Allied illicit actions against cultural property in Europe are confined solely to the first section of chapter 4.

This research project explores subjects that have been only superficially investigated until now, most especially the capacity of the MFAA in improving cultural property protection by the hand of occupying troops. It examines topics that have never been a subject of study, including the range of roles that Allied troops played in relation to cultural property in occupied Italy, and the military requisition of Museo Stibbert in Florence and of Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds in Naples. Therefore, the project's contribution to the academic discourse on the contexts behind the Allies'

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<sup>5</sup> With the term 'art' I refer, throughout the entire thesis, to artworks (paintings, drawings, sculptures), and artefacts as a whole.

appropriation of and damage to cultural objects in occupied territories takes the form of updating and significantly expanding the existing published literature on these themes.

To conclude, for its focus on the historical events that affected museums and monumental sites in World War II, the present thesis can be included in the broad spectrum of museum history studies, analysing a period when museum collections strikingly changed due to the major disposal activities to which they had been submitted because of the stealing actions perpetrated by both the Germans and the Anglo-Americans. Moreover, as it will be investigated in detail in chapter 7, the findings presented in this dissertation can work as historical lessons, introducing procedures in preventing troops' unlawful activities towards cultural properties that can be applied to contemporary cultural property protection practices. More specifically, this thesis provides examples valid for opening a constructive discussion on how the lessons learned in World War II in the cultural property protection field can be useful in the implementation of policies for the safekeeping of cultural heritage during conflict today. More specifically, the regulations implemented by Allied governments for limiting and preventing troops' occupation of historical buildings, and the establishment of a unit deployed in the war field with the task of enforcing those rules (the MFAA) constitute the historical examples that should be taken into consideration by policymakers in the cultural heritage protection field today.

### *Terminology*

In this research project, I have been selective in the vocabulary I have employed. To enhance the reader's understanding of the terminology adopted in this thesis and its meaning, in this section I define some of the terms I have adopted and consider their nuances and suitability for this project. These terms relate to the main subjects of investigation, their contexts and the actors involved.

In the primary and secondary sources central to this research project, the terms 'to plunder', 'to steal', 'to loot' and 'to appropriate' frequently appear to define the illicit acts that Allied troops committed with regard to cultural property in the occupied

territories of Europe.<sup>6</sup> More specifically, the verb 'to plunder' identifies an act of stealing goods by force, especially during war or rioting, emphasising the violence of the behaviour. However, stealing by force almost never took place under the Allied troops. For this reason, I avoid using this term in my thesis. Secondly, 'to loot' denotes an act of military violence and, more specifically, it addresses an act of stealing goods from empty buildings during a war or riot. This was true only partially with Allied troops' actions, because often the buildings they exploited were already occupied by individuals sheltering there or even by Superintendents' offices.<sup>7</sup> I have considered using this term in the thesis, but only while writing about buildings left empty during the Allied occupation. As a result, the terminology I use extensively in my study is 'to steal' and 'to appropriate', as historical evidence suggests that they more precisely describe the actions perpetrated by Allied troops. 'To steal' denotes an act of taking something without permission or legal right and without intending to return it; 'to appropriate' represents an act of taking something for one's own use without permission. Implicit in both terms are the motives behind Allied illicit actions: they stole objects with the intention of bringing them home as souvenirs, or later selling them. Here, I use the two verbs as synonyms.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, I have considered the proper terminology in referral to the disruptive actions conducted by soldiers towards cultural properties, including instances of stealing and vandalism. More precisely, I have reflected on the appropriate use of the word 'crime', defined as 'an act or activity that is illegal and can be punished by law'.<sup>9</sup> In order to analyse if the wrongful art treatment activities perpetrated by Allied troops in occupied territories were considered as against the law, I have analysed the

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<sup>6</sup> The primary sources to which I refer here are the historical documents produced by the MFAA in wartime; along with secondary sources such as Alford 2011, Coccoli 2017, Givens 2014, Nicholas 1994, and Pollard 2020a.

<sup>7</sup> This happened, for example, in Palermo during the occupation of Palazzo Reale, converted by the Allies into the Military Police's headquarters. They forced the Superintendent for Monuments and his staff to vacate and move their offices to other rooms. This event will be discussed in chapter 4. Similar instances are investigated in chapter 5 with reference to the city of Naples.

<sup>8</sup> The definitions reported in this paragraph concerning the terms 'to plunder', 'to steal', 'to loot', and 'to appropriate' are taken from *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2002).



documents produced by Allied governments in wartime. From studying them, I have reached the conclusion that those actions were acknowledged as a crime. For example, the regulation 'Order on Wilful Damage and Looting' – issued in August 1943 and directed to troops deployed in the war theatre – emphasised the 'seriousness of the *crimes* of looting, stealing and causing wilful damage to ... property' [emphasis added].<sup>10</sup> There, properties in general are mentioned – both public and private. A direct referral to properties of the cultural kind is included in a later document, the booklet *Preservation of Works of Art in Italy* – published in May 1944 and directed to combat troops. There, the destruction caused by soldiers' negligent and wanton actions towards the cultural heritage of occupied territories was defined as 'a *crime* against civilization' [emphasis added].<sup>11</sup> Even the preceding 1907 *Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, at article 56, characterised the wrongful art treatment activities perpetrated by occupying troops as illegal and, consequently, as a crime:

The property of municipalities, that of institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, even when State property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of, destruction or wilful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art and science, *is forbidden, and should be made the subject of legal proceedings* [emphasis added].

Thus, considering the employment of the word 'crime' in the official documents analysed above, I have utilised this nomenclature in the present thesis. Similarly, I have used the adjectives 'illicit' ('forbidden by law, rules, or accepted standards') and 'unlawful' ('not conforming to or permitted by law or rules') to characterise troops' art treatment activities.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, my investigation into terminology also concerns the precise use of military terms such as 'to quarter' and 'to billet'. In the MFAA reports these verbs were

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<sup>10</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> AMG-11a 1944, p. 4. A copy of the booklet is reported in Appendix 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

used interchangeably, although 'to billet' specifically refers to providing soldiers with a temporary accommodation in a civilian house, while 'to quarter' is a more general verb denoting soldiers being lodged generally in a location. In this project, I have followed monuments officers' reports by employing these two terms as synonyms.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, scholarly publications refer to safeguarding sites holding artworks and artefacts in wartime as both 'storage' and 'refuges'.<sup>14</sup> On the one hand, 'refuge' is defined as 'a place or state of safety from danger or trouble'. On the other hand, 'storage' is simply a 'space available for storing'.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, 'refuges' refer, more properly than 'storage', to the places where works of art had been transferred in World War II for safekeeping, serving then as real places of safety for something in actual danger at that moment. Pollard, too, uses the term 'refuge' in his work, following the terminology of the 1954 *Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*.<sup>16</sup> There, 'refuges' are specifically defined as places 'intended to shelter, in the event of armed conflict, the movable cultural property'.<sup>17</sup> Thus, I employ the term 'refuges' throughout the entire research project alongside similar terms such as 'repositories' and 'deposits'. As emphasised by Pollard, these last two terms were typically used in wartime documents referring to the buildings chosen as safekeeping places for artworks.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, in the thesis the words 'Allies' and 'Allied troops' refer exclusively to American and Commonwealth forces, thus not including the former Soviet Union. Moreover, I use 'British troops' interchangeably with 'Commonwealth troops'. Similarly, 'Axis forces/power' concerns solely Germany and Italy, excluding Japan.

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<sup>13</sup> For the definitions of the terms 'to quarter' and 'to billet' cf. *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> The word 'refuges' is frequently used in Pollard 2019a, and Pollard 2020a. 'Storage' is employed in Dagnini Brey 2009, Hammond 1980, Nicholas 1994.

<sup>15</sup> *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Pollard 2019a, p. 681.

<sup>17</sup> 1954 Hague, art. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Pollard 2019a, p. 681.

## Research context

As noted above, my research focuses on Allied art theft and damage in wartime Italy, examined through an investigation of two case studies: the events that affected Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds (Naples) and Museo Stibbert (Florence) during their exploitation by the Allies. The sub-theme of this project is the role of the MFAA in preventing theft of and damage to cultural assets at the hands of Anglo-American troops. Both these topics have been addressed but underexplored by scholars. In the following two sections, I analyse the published literature on the theme of Allied art treatment in World War II, divided according to the two main topics of the thesis: *Allied Art theft and damage in World War II*; and *The Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission*.

### *Allied Art theft and damage in World War II*

On this first topic, to date there is no in-depth, comprehensive academic work on the theme of Allied troops and the illicit appropriation and/or damage of cultural objects in Italy during the Second World War. The only noteworthy study is *Bombing Pompeii. World Heritage and Military Necessity*, published by Nigel Pollard in 2020.

Pollard's ground-breaking work on the bombing of Pompeii by the Anglo-Americans in World War II includes a section on the events that affected Museo Nazionale di Napoli during its requisition by British troops, constituting a valuable and original study on the topic of Allied soldiers' unlawful treatment of art in wartime. The scholar's observations on the contexts in which the building's occupation occurred are particularly relevant to this project. Through the analysis of wartime documents, Pollard investigates how the quartering of troops in the museum was officially authorised because perceived as a 'military necessity'. Nevertheless, he argues that this 'military necessity' was dissimulating a 'military convenience'.<sup>19</sup> The juxtaposition between 'necessity' and 'convenience' also informs the author's examination of the

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<sup>19</sup> Pollard 2020a, pp. 171-220. On the opposition between military necessity and military convenience see also the introduction by the eminent historian Richard Overy to Carlotta Coccoli's book (Coccoli 2017, p. 9).

context in which the requisition of other monumental buildings in Southern Italy took place, raising a number of pertinent questions regarding Allied governments' positions in the cultural property protection field.

Moving from a preliminary description of Allied governments' regulations against troops' exploitation of monumental sites, Pollard describes in detail their ineffectiveness in Naples, whose occupation was characterised by an 'uncontrolled military requisition and occupation of historic buildings'.<sup>20</sup> He also thoroughly investigates the lack of authority that MFAA officers had in the city, especially in an early phase.

Pollard anticipated some of the implications connected to the military occupation of historical buildings in Southern Italy in an article published in 2019 ('Refuges for Movable Cultural Property in Wartime: Lessons for Contemporary Practice from Second World War Italy') – a study of risks and damage connected to maintaining secrecy over the location of refuges of movable cultural properties in wartime, as established by the 1954 *Hague Convention*. Pollard's analysis, based on an investigation of case studies from the Second World War, suggests that these examples,

demonstrate that their [of refuges, ed.] secrecy exposed them to damage by (i) careless military occupation, (ii) deliberate combatant damage, (iii) accidental and collateral damage, and (iv) looting.<sup>21</sup>

He then investigates each of the aforementioned collateral events connected to maintaining secrecy over the exact location of artworks' deposits. As far as 'careless military occupation' is concerned – which is the risk that informs this research project – Pollard provides the historical example of Castel del Monte (Apulia), a refuge for Southern Italy's art collections, which was occupied by both a RAF unit and an American army air detachment regardless of the deposit's contents.<sup>22</sup> Although the

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<sup>20</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 176.

<sup>21</sup> Pollard 2019a, p. 667.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 672.

issue of Allied requisition of monumental sites is only partially investigated there, the article constitutes a valid starting point for the enquiry on the topic.

As mentioned above, in his publication on the bombing of Pompeii, one of Pollard's core arguments is a detailed analysis of the British requisition of Museo Nazionale di Napoli and its consequences, resulting in damage to objects with cultural value. However, Pollard fails to characterise the issue of Allied troops' military occupation of historical buildings as persistent during the entire course of the Italian campaign, claiming that,

Those improvements [the implementation of cultural property protection policies by Allied governments, ed.], in response to experience and lessons learned, were successful in that they prevented a repeat of the problems seen during the occupation of Naples when Allied forces occupied Rome, Florence and other Italian cities.<sup>23</sup>

This thesis aims at demonstrating that the problem of troops' exploitation of cultural assets characterised the whole Italian campaign, contesting Pollard's assumption that it was sporadic. Nevertheless, as the author's study constitutes the sole scholarly publication on the topic of Allied treatment of cultural assets in Italy, it thus serves as an invaluable secondary source for my research project.<sup>24</sup>

Other meaningful studies on the topic of Allied art theft in World War II are the ones published by the historian Seth Givens ('Liberating the Germans: the US Army and Looting in Germany during the Second World War', 2014) and by Kenneth Alford (*Allied Looting in World War II. Thefts of Art, Manuscripts, Stamps and Jewelry in Europe*, 2011), although these mainly take the form of a critical enquiry into the illicit crimes committed by Allied troops in Germany.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 213.

<sup>24</sup> Pollard 2020a's contents have been thoroughly investigated by the author in public lectures given at the Gent University (Pollard 2020c) and at the British School at Rome (Pollard 2021).

<sup>25</sup> It is important to note that Alford's study is not an academic publication. Kenneth Alford is a non-fiction writer specialised in art theft by Germans and Allies in World War II. Nevertheless, I have included his work in the literature review of this thesis because it represents the sole examination on

Alford's work is predominantly focused on the stealing of objects with a cultural value by Allied troops in occupied Germany, depicting a picture of widespread actions of objects' illicit appropriation from public and private buildings. He deeply investigates several examples of art theft committed by the Anglo-Americans. In his publication, Alford states that,

widespread ordinary looting – justified in most minds by a universal hatred of German brutality – was, in practical terms, not considered stealing.<sup>26</sup>

With this sentence, the author clearly synthesises the core points that characterise the Allied treatment of cultural property in occupied Germany: the illicit appropriation of works of art was highly recurrent and it was considered as a legitimate activity, because it inflicted punishment on the enemy for its atrocities in Western Europe. This point suggests that even high-ranking officials did not discipline stealing by fighting troops. Alford's book constitutes the most detailed examination on the theme of Allied art theft in Germany to date and, for that reason, it acts as a key source for my research project, to be studied as a comparison between the German situation and the Italian one.

By contrast, Givens' work mainly focuses on the illicit crimes committed by the Allies against the private properties of German civilians during the occupation. Although his examination of the illicit actions perpetrated by Anglo-American troops is exemplary, he fails to give an account of the crimes of art theft committed in wartime. Other than that, in Givens' study there are several shortcomings when he writes about works of art. For example, he confined the MFAA's task only to the protection of artworks from theft and illicit transfer, although one of its major missions was also the safekeeping of historical buildings and protecting the works of art inside them from destruction or damage by bombing raids and military occupations.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, Givens reports very important considerations on the reasons why the Anglo-Americans perpetrated

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Allied troops' stealing activities in wartime. The events recounted in Alford's book have been checked with other sources. Alford also published *Spoils of World War II. The American Military's Role in the Stealing of Europe's Treasure* in 1994, investigating some of the topics of his 2011's book. Of his 1994's publication I have analysed exclusively the first section.

<sup>26</sup> Alford 2011, p. 54-58/3552.

<sup>27</sup> Givens 2014, p. 43.

acts of stealing in war period. The author divides them into five different classes: wartime necessity, opportunity for profit or trade, keepsakes, revenge for Nazi atrocities, battlefield trophy hunting.<sup>28</sup> He also concludes that the higher army's officers were conscious of these facts, but they were more concerned with battlefield operations, confining the punishment for looting crimes to a second offense or, in many situations, allowing troops to commit those acts, and exclusively punishing rape crimes.

From the analysis conducted by Givens and Alford, it is clear that the authors' different approaches to the cultural heritage field affect their conclusions. Alford and Givens treat in two different ways the meaning of 'cultural heritage'. In his text, Givens, unlike Alford, appears to confine the definition of 'cultural properties' exclusively to works of art preserved in museums and public buildings. Throughout his study, the author lists, among the objects stolen by Allied troops, antique firearms, ancient books, medieval weapons, etc., failing to define these as 'cultural objects', and simply confining them to collections in private properties. Starting from these sweeping generalisations, Givens claims that,

American soldiers stealing crown jewels or absconding with European cultural treasures rarely occurred,

even if there are several examples proving the opposite, such as in Alford's work and as demonstrated by the case studies analysed in this research project.<sup>29</sup>

#### *The Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission*

The theme of the MFAA's creation and roles in wartime has been widely treated in scholarly publications. Nevertheless, only a few of them consider monuments officers' involvement in preventing Allied troops' exploitation of cultural assets (Coccoli 2017, Dagnini Brey 2009, Nicholas 1994). One pioneer of modern studies into the role that the MFAA played during the Second World War in Europe is the researcher Lynn

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Nicholas. In her book (*The Rape of Europa. The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War*, published in 1994), she investigates in detail the Nazi actions against the cultural heritage of occupied territories of Europe (vandalism, destruction, looting), and the efforts played by Allied governments in contrasting them. The book opens with an overview of the origins and essence of Nazism, and its uninterrupted and stable links with art. It then moves towards an examination of the obsession of Nazi high-ranking officials with collecting precious artworks, with Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring acting as the most prolific collectors. This fervent interest in art brought to European galleries the stripping of their most valuable possessions, taking art looting activities to an unprecedented scale. Apart from her valuable examination of the Nazis' illicit treatment of art, Nicholas focuses her attention also on the actions undertaken by Allied governments to counter this, especially with the establishment of the MFAA. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research project, Nicholas' work is important because of her investigation into the MFAA's efforts to prevent Allied troops' exploitation of cultural assets. In one section, the author provides an overview on the liberation of the city of Naples by the Anglo-Americans, examining in detail the period that immediately follows, with troops occupying historical sites and ransacking them.<sup>30</sup> Another fundamental passage in Nicholas' work is her account of the events that concerned monuments in France and Germany in relation to their requisition by Allied troops.<sup>31</sup> Thus, despite its focus primarily on Nazi art plundering, Nicholas' study makes a number of important contributions to the topic of monuments officers' activities in preventing troops' exploitation of buildings in several different European countries, providing a useful introduction to the topic.<sup>32</sup>

Secondly, Carlotta Coccoli – eminent researcher on World War II protection of cultural heritage – in her book *Monumenti Violati. Danni Bellici e Riparazioni in Italia nel 1943-1945: il Ruolo degli Alleati* (2017), examines in detail the activities undertaken by monuments officers in Italy from summer 1943 to spring 1945. Her book focuses

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<sup>30</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 233-234, 237.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291, 301-305, 345-346, 354-357.

<sup>32</sup> Nicholas' book was later adapted for a documentary film directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (*The Rape of Europa*, 2006).



primarily on their task of protecting and repairing Italian monuments damaged and destroyed by bombing raids and by retreating Nazi troops. Coccoli's book is introduced by a thorough analysis on the creation of the MFAA, its duties and the personnel attached to it. The study is divided according to Italian regions, and every chapter constitutes an in-depth investigation of MFAA's activities in a particular area. In the section dedicated to Naples and to the Campania region, Coccoli describes in detail the efforts played by monuments officers in preventing Allied troops' exploitation of monumental sites, ineffectual especially in an early phase. The author then illustrates the negative propagandist effect that those illicit actions had on the whole Anglo-American army, causing an immediate interest from the part of Allied governments, resulting in the issue of rules and regulations around cultural property protection.<sup>33</sup> In her study, Coccoli does not address other cases of Allied illicit treatment of cultural properties in Italy, which however was not the subject of her enquiry. Nevertheless, she rightly states that troops' stealing of cultural properties in Italy was never eradicated during the Allies' Italian campaign, having its negative peak in the course of their occupation of the city of Naples, as it will be thoroughly described in this thesis.<sup>34</sup> The author's detailed examination of the roles of the MFAA, its activities in Italy and its involvement in preventing troops' illicit actions against cultural assets in Campania is exemplary, and it thus constitutes one of the main secondary sources of my research project.

Finally, the journalist and writer Ilaria Dagnini Brey, in her work *The Venus Fixers. The Remarkable Story of the Allied Monuments Officers Who Saved Italy's Art during World War II* (2009), considers the role of monuments officers in Italy from the foundation of the MFAA, through monuments officers' deployment in the field, to the end of their activities in Italy in December 1944. Although the author's study is mainly centred on MFAA's duty of safeguarding artworks from bombing raids and from Nazi spoliations, she touches on a number of points relevant to this research project: monuments officers dealing with troops' improper treatment of cultural assets especially in Southern Italy; the increase of instances of soldiers' unlawful actions towards heritage

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<sup>33</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

in an early phase of Allied occupation, when monuments officers had not yet been deployed in the field; and problem's preamble during the British occupation of Cyrenaica, with several propagandist implications.<sup>35</sup> Overall, Dagnini Brey's work constitutes a fundamental contribution to modern studies on MFAA's activities in Italy. Her brief examination of monuments officers' involvement with preventing Allied troops from stealing and damaging artworks and artefacts in occupied Italy cannot be overestimated, acting as a starting point for my research into the topic.<sup>36</sup>

In light of the rationale considered above and the scarce scholarly literature on the topic of Allied troops' treatment of cultural property in wartime, I have demonstrated that my research develops subjects that to date have been studied only marginally. Therefore, its contribution to the academic discourse on the theme of Allied art theft and damage during the Second World War in Italy is significant, updating the existing published literature on this topic, and expanding the field of study.

### **Research methodology**

This project is situated at the intersection between the fields of modern Italian history and museum history: a historical research project based on a critical investigation of primary and secondary sources. The analysis conducted in this thesis concerns a historical approach, encompassing a case study enquiry. The primary and secondary sources used for this thesis are reviewed in each relevant chapter. In the present section, I address historical and case study research methods, and briefly survey the main archives considered in this project.

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<sup>35</sup> Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 79, 97-98, 100, 109, 204-206, 216.

<sup>36</sup> Dagnini Brey's work is recognised by scholars as the foundational study on the topic of MFAA's activities in Italy in World War II (Coccoli 2017, Pollard 2020a, Pollard 2021).

### *Historical research*

This project is informed by the theoretical and analytical approach of historical research, dependent on a critical reading of primary and secondary sources. Accordingly, historical research is based on two strictly connected processes: 'reading through a variety of primary sources, both for information and for quotable material', and 'extracting information from the secondary works as well as analyzing them historiographically'.<sup>37</sup> According to the historian William H. McDowell, the historical record of an event that happened in the past is always incomplete; thus, the researcher's task is to provide the best interpretation possible of that event, supporting his/her analysis on primary and secondary source material. The goal of historical research is to produce a consistent account of events, enhancing people's understanding of the past, through the discovery of new facts, or the analysis of existing research data.<sup>38</sup> That has been the purpose of this research project: through the investigation of data collated from archival records, I have produced a plausible account of the events that concerned the treatment of heritage in Italy by the hand of the Anglo-Americans, enhancing people's understanding of troops' unlawful activities towards cultural properties in World War II.

Primary sources – identified by many historians also as 'documentary evidence' – are characterised as oral or written testimonies of a particular event that happened in the past or of a historical process.<sup>39</sup> They can be categorised and divided into manuscripts, published sources, oral evidence, and visual representations.<sup>40</sup> Secondary sources include all 'the written histories that historians fashion from primary sources' such as books, essays, scholarly articles, dissertations and conference papers.<sup>41</sup> When approaching secondary sources an essential prerequisite is a preliminary awareness of the historiography, namely the variety of interpretations around the same topic by

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<sup>37</sup> Brundage 2017, p. 114.

<sup>38</sup> McDowell 2013, pp. 10-11.

<sup>39</sup> Howell and Prevenier 2001, p. 17. McCulloch 2004 and McDowell 2013 characterise primary sources as 'documentary evidence'.

<sup>40</sup> Brundage 2017, p. 17; Howell and Prevenier 2001, pp. 23-24.

<sup>41</sup> Brundage 2017, p. 17.

different historians.<sup>42</sup> As far as this thesis is concerned, this is the literature review of the research project, analysed in the *Research context* section.

With both primary and secondary sources, it is crucial to be critical. Undeniably, as stated by the historian Anthony Brundage, the essential approach for a researcher working on a new source is to 'x-ray a book' – to aim for a critical reading which includes three basic actions: extracting factual information, following interpretative arguments, and placing the work in a historiographic context.<sup>43</sup> Given the subjectivity of first-person narratives, no account of events can be considered completely credible. However, there are a series of factors that the researcher can take into account in evaluating how much a source can be considered reliable, summarised by the historians Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier: what prejudices would have informed the author; under what outside influences was the source created; how the consciousness in reporting an event is affected by the culture the author inhabits. Only in a second phase, the researcher connects sources into a story about the past, interpreting them critically.<sup>44</sup> With first-hand accounts of events – being they official records or private papers – my approach has been to collate findings together, placing them in a chronological order, and later evaluate their contents critically by comparing them with secondary sources on the topic, with the aim of providing a narrative of events as much logical as possible.

Finally, again according to Brundage, Howell and Prevenier, the researcher should be concerned with intellectual honesty and objectivity, too, especially while investigating primary sources. The researcher must be totally impartial in the selection, analysis, and presentation of documentation, trying to avoid the unconscious tendency of looking for and seeing only the evidence that support his/her preconceptions on the topic of enquiry.<sup>45</sup> For that reason, I have critically compared the data gathered from primary sources with the ones deriving from other archival records and from secondary sources.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>44</sup> Howell and Prevenier 2001, p. 66-69.

<sup>45</sup> Brundage 2017, p. 122; Howell and Prevenier 2001, p. 85.

Nevertheless, the historical reasoning that derives from the researcher's critical analysis of sources is an assumption and a subjective interpretation. This remains an intuitive guess, in spite of his/her attempts in being as much objective as possible.<sup>46</sup> McDowell explains that due to researchers' own interpretation of historical evidence – based on their evaluation of what is pertinent and of the connections between the occurrence of facts – there cannot exist an univocal objective interpretation of events, but solely 'an infinite number of subjective interpretations'.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the outcomes deriving from a historical research reflect the researcher's own assumptions, experiences and principles.<sup>48</sup> For example, my consideration on the extent of damaging and stealing actions undertaken by Allied soldiers in occupied Italian territories indicates my own evaluation of the cultural significance of the objects subjected to these unlawful activities. This will be thoroughly addressed in chapter 7 (section *Reflecting on cultural objects' value*).

Considering the intuitive aspect of historical research, I am conscious of my own subjectivity as a researcher who has critically located, evaluated, and interpreted primary and secondary sources. My selection of the sources studied in this research project has been influenced by my positionality, my position in relation to my subject: my personal biography and my social background. As already described in the *Preface* section, I have decided to undertake this research project because of my fascination for World War II histories, deriving from the personal stories that my grandfather – a war veteran – recounted me when I was young. Moreover, as an Italian museologist and museum historian, I am particularly interested in understanding what happened during the war in my country to museums and monumental sites. Accordingly, I have already conducted some research projects investigating the protection systems adopted in wartime for Italian museum collections. This thesis emerged out of one of these past projects – the study of the events that affected the Civic Museum of Bologna and its collections in World War II – when I first had the opportunity to encounter examples of Allied illicit actions towards cultural heritage in occupied Italy:

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<sup>46</sup> Howell and Prevenier 2001, p. 79.

<sup>47</sup> McDowell 2013, p. 11. Cf. also: McDowell 2013, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Stieg, M. quoted in Hill 1993, p. 59.

the unlawful appropriation of objects from the Civic Museum of Bologna, loaned to Mostra d'Oltremare in 1940 (cf. chapter 5).<sup>49</sup> As just demonstrated, the subjectivity of the researcher largely determines what and how s/he researches.<sup>50</sup> This is one of the core elements of a case study approach, as it will be analysed in the next section of this chapter.

### *Case study research*

Historical research encompasses qualitative methods, which can be described as the analysis of non-numerical data to construct meanings. These differ from quantitative research, which involves counting and measuring data.<sup>51</sup> Qualitative methods are often based on a series of approaches used to investigate a particular phenomenon.<sup>52</sup> The one adopted in this project is the case study research. It involves an investigation into an event/a group/an institution to scrutinise specific research topics.<sup>53</sup> More specifically, this dissertation bases its enquiry around two case studies: the events that affected the exhibition grounds at Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples) and Museo Stibbert (Florence) during their occupation by Anglo-American troops in wartime. In qualitative research, multiple case studies are often examined for comparison and contrast, as in this thesis.<sup>54</sup>

Undeniably, one of the purposes of the case study researcher is to develop a grounded theory – ‘a theory that is grounded in the evidence that is turned up’.<sup>55</sup> The findings gathered from the analysis of the aforementioned case studies helped me in developing a theory around the main research topics of this project: the responsibility of Allied troops in the illicit treatment of art in occupied Italian territories, and the capacity of MFAA officers in preventing this kind of activities. This theory will be

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Tulliach 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Saldana, Leavy, Beretvas 2011, p. 22.

<sup>51</sup> Gillham 2000, p. 10.

<sup>52</sup> Saldana, Leavy, Beretvas 2011, pp. 10-12.

<sup>53</sup> Gillham 2000, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Saldana, Leavy, Beretvas 2011, p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> Gillham 2000, p. 13.

thoroughly scrutinised in chapter 7. For achieving the purpose of creating a grounded theory around his/her main topic of enquiry, the researcher seeks a range of evidence, which is collated together and analysed.<sup>56</sup> The evidence consulted for this research project includes primary sources preserved in historic archives. The use of multiple sources is a key characteristic of a case study research.<sup>57</sup> The fieldwork conducted on these documents is thoroughly analysed in the next section of this chapter.

Apart from incorporating a series of approaches, including the case study research, qualitative methods are also built around specific elements that are necessary for a study to be conducted. These are identified mainly with: researcher/s, epistemology, contextual legacy, purpose, duration, field site and/or repository, data and their collection, analytic approaches, representation/presentation.<sup>58</sup>

The researcher is the principal investigator who plans and oversees all aspects of the project. The biography and identity of the researcher largely determine what and how s/he research. Strictly connected to this is the epistemology element, a theory of knowledge construction based on the researcher's worldview.<sup>59</sup> As the principal investigator of this research project, my biography has influenced the decision to undertake this specific research project, as I have described in the *Preface* section. My subjectivity in evaluating and analysing the sources studied in this thesis has been already addressed in the previous section of this chapter.

Moreover, every research project is situated in the context of the legacy of earlier researchers' studies (contextual legacy).<sup>60</sup> This is represented by the literature review of this project, reported in the *Research context* section. The purpose of this project – namely, the conceptual framework (rationale, research topics, anticipated project outcomes) – has been thoroughly described in the *Aim and objectives* section of this chapter.

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-27.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

The other elements important to qualitative studies are analytic approaches and the appropriate form of representation and presentation. Firstly, an analytic approach encompasses the examination of data to construct meanings. Secondly, the form of representation employed in this project comprises presenting the summary of findings and analysis in an academic thesis.<sup>61</sup> Structurally, the thesis first presents an analysis of the wider context of war, art theft and damage, followed by an analysis of case studies.

Finally, the next section will investigate other aspects of the qualitative method employed in this dissertation: materials (the evidence on which the project relies on – in this case, primary sources located in archives), duration (the period spent on fieldwork), field site (the fieldwork location), and data collection (how the evidence has been gathered).<sup>62</sup>

### *Archival research*

The primary sources used for this research project are identified with the archival documents produced by the MFAA in wartime – preserved at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. (NARA), at the British School at Rome (BSR), and at the American Academy in Rome (AAR) – and with the historical records regarding the military occupation of Museo Stibbert, located at Museo Stibbert's archive (Florence). More precisely, NARA, the BSR and the AAR have copies of all the reports compiled by the MFAA in wartime, comprising *Monthly Reports* on their operations in all the Italian regions – 25 reports covering the period from November 1943 to November 1945.<sup>63</sup> These later aided monuments officers in producing fourteen regional *Final Reports* and a *Final Report General*.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

<sup>63</sup> The *Monthly Reports* consulted for this thesis are: AMG-9, AMG-10, AMG-13, AMG-23, AMG-24, AMG-35, AMG-65, AMG-80a, AMG-80b, AMG-99, AMG-121, AMG-134, AMG-143, AMG-153, AMG-169, AMG-175, AMG-178.

<sup>64</sup> *Final Report General* 1946. The *Final Reports* consulted for this thesis are: AMG-177, AMG-180. A list of the *Final Reports* compiled by the MFAA is included in: *Final Report General* 1946, p. 39.



The aforementioned documents have been consulted in conjunction with bibliographical sources produced in wartime (American Commission 1946, British Committee 1945, British Committee 1946, Molajoli 1944, Woolley 1947), or published in the immediate post-war period by authors who were directly affected by the events subject of study (Flanner 1957, Hammond 1980, Hartt 1949, Maiuri 1956, Molajoli 1948, Rorimer 1950). The secondary sources are identified with books and articles discussing Allied art theft and damage in wartime (Alford 2011, Pollard 2019a, Pollard 2020a), and the MFAA's role in safeguarding cultural heritage in war areas (Coccoli 2017, Dagnini Brey 2009, Nicholas 1994).

Archival research is strictly dependent to the nature and content of archives.<sup>65</sup> In this project I give relevance primarily to first-hand accounts of events, through the study of reports compiled by MFAA officers in wartime, preserved at governmental and institutional archives (NARA, BSR, AAR), and of their memoirs published in the immediate post-war period (Hartt 1949 and Rorimer 1950).

My approach to archival records and recordkeeping has involved, in the first place, their critical enquiry and analysis – the most conventional methods in the fields of social sciences and humanities, as explained by the archivists Sue McKemmish and Anne J. Gilliland.<sup>66</sup> They also demonstrate that archival research built on the mentioned methods 'aims to solve practical problems (action) and generate new knowledge (research)' and 'often makes use of case studies'.<sup>67</sup> These are indeed the principles on which this research project has been based: through the critical analysis of archival records, my purpose has been to conduct a practical enquiry (studying the modalities and contexts of Allied troops' art theft and damage in Italy) and to generate new knowledge (on the theme of Allied troops' art stealing and damaging activities in wartime), starting with an investigation of two case studies (Allied troops' exploitation of Mostra d'Oltremare and Museo Stibbert).

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<sup>65</sup> Hill 1993, p. 58.

<sup>66</sup> McKemmish and Gilliland 2013, p. 93.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Apart from the analysis of archival documents and of modern publications, the research utilises also visual methods, even though in a peripheral and supportive way. In the project, I employ a selective use of visual sources – mainly, historical pictures. These represent Allied soldiers in occupation of monumental sites (Figs. 6, 24-25, 31-34), and the results of their unlawful actions (Figs. 42-46). Apart from figures 6 and 44-46, the others are unpublished pictures preserved in historical archives (Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution; Becker Medical Library at Washington University School of Medicine; British School at Rome Photographic Archive). Although I recognise their importance and their power as images, I am also aware that their complete analysis would extend beyond the scale of this project, and for this reason, their role is supplementary. Thus, the primary sources considered for this project are exclusively archival records and contemporary publications – visual sources are ancillary to the gathered findings. The visual material has been included in the text and it has been catalogued in the *List of figures* section.

I started the fieldwork on primary sources in December 2017, when I conducted preliminary research on wartime papers preserved in Museo Stibbert's archive, in relation to its requisition by Allied troops in 1944 (Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi). The most relevant document in the archive group (U.S.: archival fonds) is the inventory compiled by Alfredo Lensi, museum director, in December 1944 (*Elenco delle Cose Mancanti dopo il 15 Settembre 1944 quando il Battaglione di Fanti Inglesi Lasciò Liberi i Locali del Museo*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324).<sup>68</sup> The inventory describes in detail the activities and the behaviour of the troops in occupation, and it includes a long list of objects disappeared during that period. Concurrently, I reviewed material starting from a MFAA list of museums and cultural institutions which had loaned works of art to Mostra d'Oltremare that had not been returned by December 1944.<sup>69</sup> My work has consisted in contacting some of the cultural institutions mentioned in the list

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<sup>68</sup> An archival fonds – and, accordingly, an archive group – is a group of records that share the same origin. It includes documents created and accumulated by an organisation, family, or individual (cf.: SAA – *Dictionary of Archive Terminology*. Available at: <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/fonds.html>. Accessed 5 January 2022).

<sup>69</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 6.

searching for information about the missing objects. A summary of this portion of fieldwork has been reported in a table attached to Appendix 5.

Secondly, in November 2018, I consulted the reports and documents produced by the MFAA in wartime concerning its activities in Italy in the safekeeping of historical monuments and their contents. These papers are now preserved at NARA, fully accessible online thanks to a major project of digitisation that took place in the past years. More precisely, the archival repository consulted contains the records of the 'American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas' (M1944, RG 239), known as 'Roberts Commission'. The MFAA constituted a branch of the Roberts Commission, and it was created in December 1943 with the task of protecting cultural property in the war field.<sup>70</sup> Records of the sub-commission preserved at NARA include reports and documents compiled by monuments officers during their inspection of historical buildings in occupied territories of Europe.<sup>71</sup> For the purpose of the research project, I have confined my attention exclusively to the records regarding the Italian area. From the papers consulted, I was able to gather a large amount of information about the role that the MFAA played in Italy in trying to prevent the military exploitation of historical buildings. Additionally, I could find specific examples of the illicit crimes committed by Allied troops against the cultural heritage of occupied territories, including instances of the military occupation of historical buildings in Florence and its hinterland, and of stealing acts at Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds, one of the main case studies of the research project.

Thirdly, in March 2019, I started the fieldwork's second phase, with archival research conducted both at the BSR and at the AAR in Rome. At the BSR, I have consulted the archival records gathered and produced by John Bryan Ward-Perkins, a British archaeologist deployed in Italy during the war with the role of MFAA Deputy Director and in peacetime appointed as the BSR Director. He donated to the BSR his private archive, comprised of documents collected during his activity as monuments officer.

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<sup>70</sup> Detailed information on the founding of the MFAA are broadly discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>71</sup> On the NARA's archive group M1944, RG239 cf.: National Archives and Records Administration 2007.

The records are now divided into nine boxes and they also include an inventory of the art refuges used for the evacuation of objects from Italian museum collections, and two boxes of wartime photographs of Italian museums and historical buildings produced by Ward-Perkins and his fellow monuments officers (Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, British School at Rome).<sup>72</sup> My time with this archival repository allowed me to study deeply the reports compiled by the MFAA on requisitioned museum buildings in the occupied areas of Italy and related alleged instances of theft and damage by Allied troops, including documents regarding the situation at Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds. Moreover, at the BSR, I had the opportunity to conduct bibliographical work on two fundamental primary sources for the research project, published in the immediate post-war period, concerning the protection of cultural property in war areas: American Commission 1946 (*Report of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas*) and Woolley 1947 (*A Record of the Work Done by the Military Authorities for the Protection of the Treasures of Art & History in War Areas*). Both sources contain significant references to illicit actions conducted by Allied troops against cultural property in occupied territories of Europe.

At the AAR, I studied official records and reports produced by the MFAA: two boxes of mixed papers and publications, preserved in the Rare Book Room of the AAR's Library (MFAA Commission Archive, Library of the American Academy in Rome).<sup>73</sup> This documentation relates to the role that the MFAA played in Italy in the safekeeping of monuments and their contents from illicit appropriation, damage and/or destruction.<sup>74</sup> The work conducted at the AAR was completed by the study of a major publication by James Rorimer (1905-1966), monuments officer deployed in France and Germany: the diary documenting his activities conducted in wartime in the safekeeping of cultural property (*Survival: the Salvage and Protection of Art in War*, 1950). The book constitutes a fundamental primary source for the research project, because it contains

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<sup>72</sup> On the Ward-Perkins archive at the BSR, cf.: Ciangherotti 2011; Ciangherotti, Coccoli and Giovenco 2019; Giovenco 2011; Pollard 2020d.

<sup>73</sup> On the role of the AAR in wartime in the protection of cultural heritage, cf.: Brennan 2011.

<sup>74</sup> A list of the documents preserved in the MFAA Commission Archive at the Library of the AAR is included in: *Ibid*, pp. 198-199.

several references to the actions conducted by Rorimer in avoiding the military occupation of museums and historical buildings.

Finally, in May 2021, I conducted fieldwork on the private archive of Giovanni Poggi, the Superintendent for Monuments and Galleries for Provinces of Florence, Pistoia and Arezzo in wartime. His papers are now preserved in Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine at Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence.<sup>75</sup> For the purpose of the research project, I have confined my attention exclusively to the documents related to the wartime period (Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi, Serie VIII Protezione Antiaerea e Danni di Guerra). The work conducted on this archive group has allowed me to expand the information regarding the problem of the military occupation of historical buildings in Tuscany reported in the documents preserved at NARA, the BSR, and the AAR.

### **Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into four sections (sections 1 to 4). Section 1 (chapter 1) introduces the research project. Section 2 (chapters 2, 3, 4) analyses the topic of Allied art theft and damage in World War II in all its circumstances and implications. Section 3 (chapters 5, 6) examines specific examples, in form of case studies, to situate the problem in the Italian context and to provide a more practical characterisation of the investigation conducted in the previous section. Section 4 (chapter 7) presents the conclusion of the research project.

Section 1: *Introduction* (chapter 1).

The thesis is introduced by the current chapter (*Introduction*) which analyses the purposes and objectives of the research, namely the main themes investigated in this thesis: the range of roles that Allied troops played during the Second World War in damaging and stealing cultural property in occupied territories of Italy; and the MFAA's capacity in trying to prevent such illicit acts. It also situates the thesis in its research

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<sup>75</sup> For the inventory of Archivio Poggi's archive group, cf.: Lombardi 2011.

context, focusing on an examination of the published literature around the themes of Allied art theft and damage in World War II and of the MFAA's role in precluding them. It argues that, due to the scarce scholarly literature on the topic, the thesis provides a significant contribution to knowledge. Moreover, the chapter introduces the research methodology adopted for this dissertation: a case study approach, and historical research comprising a study of primary and secondary sources.

## Section 2: *World War II Allied Art theft and damage* (chapters 2, 3 and 4)

Section 2 includes three chapters investigating the issue of Allied troops' unlawful activities against cultural properties in World War II in a comprehensive way. The analysis conducted here is not limited exclusively to Allied stealing activities, but also to destructive actions against cultural heritage.

Firstly, chapter 2 (*Preventive measures*) provides a preliminary investigation into the project's main research topic: Allies' treatment of cultural properties in occupied Italy during the Second World War, resulting in damaging and stealing activities. It begins by briefly outlining Fascist propagandist claims against British troops' treatment of heritage in Cyrenaica (North Africa, 1941 and 1942-1951). This caused a renewed interest by Allied governments in the cultural property protection field in light of their entrance to the war against Nazis and Fascists. It also contributed to the creation of a task force deployed in the war field with the purpose to safeguard cultural heritage from stealing and destructive actions: the MFAA. The investigation is then centred around the roles that this sub-commission was asked to cover in the liberated territories. Thus, an early investigation into the research sub-topic of this project – the MFAA's capacity in preventing illicit actions against cultural heritage by Allied troops – is provided here. The second part of the chapter is an in-depth analysis of the rules and regulations issued by Allied governments for troops in the combat field, determining the role that these had in the protection of cultural heritage.

Secondly, chapter 3 (*Enemy propaganda against the Allies*) provides a more detailed investigation of Fascist and Nazi propagandist claims on the Allied treatment of art in occupied territories, briefly introduced in chapter 2. According to the enemy

propaganda, Anglo-Americans were considered both as thieves and as destroyers of art treasures. These claims had some basis in reality, despite being exaggerated. The purpose of chapter 3 is to supplement the findings discussed in chapter 2 regarding the renewed interest by Allied governments in the cultural property protection field – mainly generated from the will of contrasting propagandist allegations – thus acting as a follow-up study. Chapter 3 investigates the preambles to the activities that Allied governments undertook, in wartime, in this area. It is necessary to note that the topic of Fascist and Nazi propaganda against the Allies would constitute a thesis in itself, thus this chapter aims at presenting exclusively a general introduction to the theme.

Finally, chapter 4 (*Allied Art theft and damage in Europe: an overview*) examines instances of Allied illicit acts against heritage in occupied territories of Europe, with a focus on France and Germany. The aim is to set the scene for the analysis conducted later in the thesis with reference to the Italian context. The last section of this chapter highlights Anglo-American acts of theft and damage in Italy, with instances taken from documents consulted at NARA and at the BSR. This study serves as an introduction to the investigation conducted in section 3, thus providing a first examination of Allied illicit actions in relation to Italian cultural heritage. Therefore, this chapter works as an introductory study on the main research topic of this thesis, presenting a preliminary evaluation of instances of troops' stealing and damaging activities in Italy, which will be thoroughly analysed in the next section.

### Section 3: *Case studies* (chapters 5 and 6)

The purpose of section 3 is to provide an accurate investigation of specific case studies regarding Allied art theft and destruction in Italy, with a focus on two different geographical areas: Southern Italy (Naples) and Central Italy (Florence). The chapters argue that the issue of troops' careless actions against heritage were persistent during the entire course of the Italian campaign. The section begins with chapter 5 (*Mostra d'Oltremare, Naples (Italy)*), including a detailed study of the events that interested Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples) in wartime, with a focus on the period concerning the occupation of the area by Allied troops (October 1943 – April 1945), who converted the exhibition grounds into an army hospital. The chapter is introduced by an analysis

of the situation in the Naples area after the liberation of the city in 1943, where instances of stealing and destructive acts against cultural objects occurred at several monumental sites: Museo Nazionale, Palazzo Reale, the University's museums, the archaeological area of Pompeii, and Reggia di Capodimonte among the others.

Chapter 6 (*Museo Stibbert, Florence (Italy)*) is an investigation around the second case study of this research project: the events that affected Museo Stibbert (Florence) during its requisition by British troops in August – September 1944. In this period, the museum had been ransacked of its contents. The chapter is introduced by an examination of the issue of villas' military requisition in Florence and the surrounding areas – a problem that was persistent during the entire first phase of Allied occupation of the city. Museo Stibbert, for being a house-museum located in a private villa on the Florentine hills, is included in this narrative.

All things considered, the two chapters constitute remarkable case studies analysing the project's main research topic: Allied troops' capacity in stealing and damaging activities against cultural properties in occupied territories of Italy. Furthermore, the involvement of MFAA officers in trying to prevent the military requisition of both Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds and Museo Stibbert was extremely active. Thus, the two chapters altogether present conclusive evidence about the role that the MFAA played in preventing troops' illicit treatment of heritage – the sub-theme of this research project.

#### Section 4: *Conclusion* (chapter 7)

Section 4 comprises a single chapter (chapter 7 – *Analysis and conclusion*), which provides a tentative explanation of the findings analysed in the thesis, responding to the main research topic (the Allied troops' treatment of cultural property in occupied territories of Italy in wartime), and to the sub-theme (the MFAA's role in trying to prevent careless actions towards cultural heritage by the hand of Allied soldiers). Moreover, it develops an enquiry around the evaluation of the extent of Allied troops' unlawful activities, considering different points of view in assessing the value of objects stolen, damaged, or destroyed. Furthermore, the chapter presents the



limitations that the project has put forward, especially in relation to the archival research conducted. Moreover, it situates the thesis in the broad field of cultural property protection relevant to this day, providing historical lessons for contemporary practice. Finally, the chapter briefly introduces future lines of reflection that emerge from this research project, investigating troops' potential motives in committing illicit activities against cultural heritage, and considering the importance of constructing a narrative in modern museums around Allied troops' unlawful actions.

### *Appendices*

Finally, this thesis includes a series of appendices which provide a range of supporting materials, including primary source texts, timelines and further information on relevant individuals and institutions. The appendices' purpose is to present the reader with full documentation in order to expand some of the contents investigated in the dissertation. These include: excerpts from Allied governments' documents ('ADM Instruction n. 10' – Appendix 1, *Preservation of Works of Art in Italy* – Appendix 2, Collier Commission's report – Appendix 3); a brief summary of the orders and regulations issued by Allied governments in the cultural property protection field (Appendix 4); a table of the fieldwork done starting from one of the archival documents consulted (AMG-76 1946 – Appendix 5); a list of the MFAA officers cited in the thesis, along with brief biographic details (Appendix 6); and a copy of Bruno Molajoli's *Memorandum Riservato al Governo Italiano per Prevenire i Danni dell'Occupazione Militare nei Musei ed Edifici Monumentali* – a report issued in 1944 directed to the Italian government to prevent damage resulting from the military occupation of monumental sites (Appendix 7).

The present chapter has introduced the main research topic of the thesis – the involvement of Allied troops in damaging and stealing cultural property in occupied Italy – and it has analysed the primary and secondary sources on which the investigation has been based, along with the methods of enquiry (historical, archival, and case study research). The next section gets to the heart of the history that I am

investigating in this dissertation, by studying the measures adopted by Anglo-American governments in preventing troops' exploitation of cultural properties, including the establishment of the MFAA, laying the foundation for the analysis of the main case studies of this research project, which will be conducted in chapters 5 and 6.



Figure 5 - Map of Italy. Highlighted are some of the cities cited in the present thesis. The highlighted area in the top right corner is Istria.

© Author's modification from: *F l a n k e r* derivative work: *Krysis*, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. Available at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Italy-it-2.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Italy-it-2.svg) (Accessed 30 September 2021).

World War II	Requisitioning events	Allied governments' measures
<b>September 1939</b>		
<u>1 September</u> : Germany invades Poland. World War II begins		
<b>June 1940</b>		
<u>10 June</u> : Italy enters the war		
<u>14 June</u> : Paris falls to Nazis		
		The Harvard Group is founded
<b>December 1941</b>		
<u>7 December</u> : Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. The US enters the war		
<b>January 1943</b>		
		The ACLS founds the Committee on the Protection of European Cultural Material
<b>May 1943</b>		
		Cyrenaica: Woolley's enquiry
<b>June 1943</b>		
		<u>23 June</u> : Creation of the Roberts Commission
		ADM Instruction n.8; ADM Instruction n. 12 and DO's and DON'T's pamphlet;
		Advisers on Fine Arts and Monuments are attached to the army
<b>July 1943</b>		
<u>10 July</u> : Allied landing in Sicily		
	Allied troops occupy Palazzo Reale di Palermo	
<b>August 1943</b>		
		Order on Wilful Damage and Looting
<b>September 1943</b>		
<u>8 September</u> : Armistice of Cassibile (Armistizio di Cassibile) between Italy and the Allies		
<u>9 September</u> : Allied landing in Salerno (Campania)		
<u>27-30 September</u> : Liberation of Naples		
		AMGOT Plan
<b>October 1943</b>		
	<u>6 October</u> : Allied troops occupy Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds (Naples)	
		<u>25 October</u> : The MFAA is created within the Roberts Commission
<b>November 1943</b>		
		Woolley is appointed as Archaeological Adviser to the Direction of Civil Affairs
<b>December 1943</b>		
	British soldiers occupy Museo Nazionale di Napoli	
		Administrative Instruction n. 19; PBS Circular n. 37
		<u>28 December</u> : The Collier Commission of Enquiry starts its investigation

		General Order n. 68 and Letter by General Eisenhower
<b>January 1944</b>		
<u>22 January</u> : Allied landing in Anzio (Lazio)		
		Collier Commission of Enquiry's report
<b>February 1944</b>		
		Letter by General Alexander
<b>March 1944</b>		
		ADM Instruction n. 10
		MFAA officers are finally put in close contact with combat troops
		Publication and distribution of the <i>Lists of Protected Monuments</i>
<b>May 1944</b>		
		Foundation of the Macmillan Committee
		<i>Preservation of Works of Art in Italy</i>
		<i>Field Protection of Objects of Art and Archives</i>
<b>June 1944</b>		
<u>4 June</u> : Liberation of Rome		
<u>6 June</u> : D-Day, the Allies invade France		
		<i>Army Service Forces Manual</i>
	British soldiers leave Museo Nazionale di Napoli	
<b>August 1944</b>		
<u>11 August</u> : Liberation of Florence		
<u>25 August</u> : liberation of Paris		
	<u>25 August</u> : British troops occupy Museo Stibbert (Florence)	
<b>September 1944</b>		
	<u>15 September</u> : British soldiers leave Museo Stibbert (Florence)	
<b>December 1944</b>		
		<u>December 1944 – December 1945</u> : The MFAA gradually hands over to the new Italian Government operational activities in the cultural property protection field
<b>April 1945</b>		
	Allied troops leave Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds (Naples)	
		ADM Memorandum n. 20
<u>29 April</u> : Surrender of Caserta (Resa di Caserta), the formal end of the Allied Italian campaign		
<b>August 1945</b>		
<u>6-9 August</u> : Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki		
<u>15 August</u> : Surrender of Japan. World War II ends		

Table 1 – Timeline of major events.

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## **SECTION 2 – WORLD WAR II ALLIED ART THEFT AND DAMAGE**

## Chapter 2 – Preventive measures

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the role and scope of Allied troops in the theft and damage of art and cultural properties during the Second World War. More specifically, this study aims to provide a preliminary analysis of the main topic of the research project: the role of Allies in stealing and damaging artworks and artefacts during their occupation of the Italian area. The objective of the present chapter is to trace the development of the measures employed by American and British governments to discourage troops from perpetrating illicit actions against cultural properties. These acts mainly concerned the appropriation, damage, or destruction of monumental buildings' contents. This chapter argues that the major problem encountered by MFAA officers deployed in the field was the exploitation of historical sites by troops, directly derived from their lack of education on cultural property protection.

Fundamental tools for investigating the MFAA's history are two primary sources, written at the end of the Second World War: Janet Flanner's book *Men and Monuments* (1957) contains a synthesis of the activities conducted by monuments officers in Europe in the safekeeping of artworks and monumental buildings; Sir Leonard Woolley's work (*A Record of the Work Done by the Military Authorities for the Protection of the Treasures of Art & History in War Areas*, 1947) is a record of the work done by the British army, in cooperation with the U.S. army, in protecting monuments endangered by military actions, from the British occupation of North Africa to the end of World War II. Along with these, I have consulted the following secondary sources, already thoroughly described in chapter 1: Carlotta Coccoli's *Monumenti Violati* (2017), Ilaria Dagnini Brey's *The Venus Fixers* (2009), and Lynn Nicholas' *The Rape of Europa* (1994).<sup>76</sup> Finally, to assess the extent of Allied governments' actions in regulating

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<sup>76</sup> From the secondary sources about the MFAA consulted for this research project I have on purpose omitted the books by the best-selling author Robert M. Edsel (*Rescuing Da Vinci: Hitler and the Nazis Stole Europe's Great Art, America and her Allies Recovered it*, 2006; *Monuments Men. Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, 2009; and *Saving Italy. The Race to Rescue a Nation's Treasures from the Nazis*, 2013), because they are popular non-fiction books on the activities of monuments officers in Europe.



military activities concerning cultural property protection, an indispensable tool is the consultation of the records of the 'American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas', preserved at NARA, with reference to the archive group M1944, RG 239.

This chapter is divided into two sections. It begins with an investigation on the foundation of the MFAA – a task force deployed in the war field with the purpose to safeguard cultural heritage. The analysis of findings argues that one of the main purposes of the MFAA was preventing troops' quartering in monumental buildings, and the subsequent appropriation and damage of their contents. The section is followed by an in-depth investigation into the instructions, orders and memoranda issued by Allied governments for troops in the theatre of operation, regulating their role in the cultural property protection field. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that these preventive measures were based also on the organisation of an educational campaign addressed to troops, to make them conscious of the issues deriving from the exploitation of monumental sites and their contents.

In conclusion, this chapter serves as a foundation for the enquiry into Allied art theft and damage in occupied Italy. The purpose is to provide new insights into this issue, for which present understanding is very limited, and to introduce the discussion on the topic, which will be explored further in the next chapters through an in-depth investigation of case studies.

### **The creation of the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission**

Allegations of troops stealing and damaging cultural objects and historical monuments in the war were first raised against the British army by the Italian Fascist government with regard to its occupation of Cyrenaica (North Africa, 1941 and 1942-1951).<sup>77</sup>

Although many of these allegations were false and raised for purely propagandist

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<sup>77</sup> British troops occupied Cyrenaica in February 1941, until the Italians regained the area in the spring of the same year. Allied forces later retook Cyrenaica in 1942. The area remained under the British jurisdiction until 1951 (Pollard 2020a, pp. 109-110).

reasons, they attracted, for the British, high public interest and indignation.<sup>78</sup> The British War Office was preoccupied by the effect that the enemy's propaganda falsifications would have on the military campaigns that Great Britain was about to organise in Europe. Therefore, it tried to contain the situation by sending orders to troops deployed in El Alamein 'to preserve any archaeological monuments which might come into their possession', and by beginning an enquiry on the matter.<sup>79</sup> The task of investigating this issue and of providing technical advice on problems related to the protection of archaeological sites was accorded to Sir Leonard Woolley (1880-1960), one of the most eminent British archaeologists of that time, already employed at the War Office with different duties.<sup>80</sup>

Preliminary work in this direction had been firstly conducted, at their own initiative, by Sir Robert Eric Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976), commander of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Light Antiaircraft Artillery, and by his subordinate officer Maj. John Bryan Ward-Perkins (1912-1981).<sup>81</sup>

Both archaeologists by training, in January 1943, Wheeler and Ward-Perkins had visited some key archaeological areas to evaluate to what extent the passage of war was affecting monumental sites. Wheeler later reported,

On my entry into Tripoli I ... found that no steps whatever had been envisaged for the protection of the libraries, buildings and sites of historical value in Tripolitania ... In Africa, in spite of spurious reassurances from on high, *NO* official steps whatever were taken to preserve any part of our cultural heritage [original emphasis].<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 40. The Fascist allegations of vandalism in Cyrenaica by the hand of British troops will be thoroughly investigated in chapter 3.

<sup>79</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 215-217; Woolley 1947, p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 40; Pollard 2020a, p. 11; Woolley 1947, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Pollard 2019b; Pollard 2020a, pp. 111-115; Pollard 2020d; Pollard 2021. Sir Lt. Col. Robert Eric Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976) was a distinguished British archaeologist. He was director of the National Museum of Wales, keeper of the London Museum, founder of the University of London Institute of Archaeology (Pollard 2020a, p. 111). For biographic details of Maj. Ward-Perkins, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>82</sup> Wheeler, R.E.M. quoted in Pollard 2020a, pp. 111-112.

Thus, in this early phase, cultural property protection in Cyrenaica had been left to its own fate, without any kind of regulation from above.

Wheeler and Ward-Perkins had soon discovered that at Leptis Magna the museum was ransacked – whether by civilians or by troops – and that the RAF was about to establish a radar installation at the archaeological site. Furthermore, troops entertained themselves by writing graffiti on monuments.<sup>83</sup> Wheeler and Ward-Perkins had immediately taken some actions to secure Leptis Magna's archaeological area: the site had been put out-of-bounds; lessons had been provided to troops on the importance of preserving cultural heritage; they had persuaded the RAF officers to move the radar installation; and they had arranged with the local town Major the posting of military guards outside the museum. Furthermore, they had successfully re-established the Italian archaeological service in the area to contribute to the protection and conservation of the major archaeological sites.<sup>84</sup>

After the British War Office's interest in the matter, cultural property protection measures were officially improved: pamphlets describing the need to protect monuments were printed for distribution to troops; a guidebook about the area was published; and informative and warning signs were placed in the archaeological zones.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Ward-Perkins was nominated Acting Adviser in Archaeology for the British Military Administration of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.<sup>86</sup> Woolley, in his account of the actions undertaken by British military authorities in the safekeeping of cultural monuments in war areas (*A Record of the Work Done by the Military Authorities for the Protection of the Treasures of Art & History in War Areas*, 1947), reports that, thanks to these preventive measures, soldiers approaching ruins close to the archaeological site of Leptis Magna secured the area before moving to another zone, and they documented the archaeological finds:

... when troops digging a gun position in the sandhills east of Leptis came upon a Roman villa with well preserved frescoes they carefully cleared out the ruins,

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<sup>83</sup> Pollard 2019b; Pollard 2020a, p. 112; Pollard 2021.

<sup>84</sup> Pollard 2019b; Pollard 2020a, pp. 112-113.

<sup>85</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 215-217.

<sup>86</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 41; *Final Report General* 1946, p. 5.

made a plan of the building, photographed the frescoes and filled the site in with sand, to secure its protection, before shifting their gun-pit to a new position.<sup>87</sup>

This is a pertinent example of the successful preliminary actions employed by the British government in the war field with the purpose of raising awareness, among soldiers, about the importance of safeguarding cultural properties in occupied territories.

In November 1943, Woolley was officially appointed as Archaeological Adviser to the Direction of Civil Affairs. His main role was the supervision of measures for the safekeeping of historical monuments and cultural objects in territories occupied by British troops.<sup>88</sup>

Accordingly, the United States started to create *ad hoc* committees for the protection of monuments and artworks in war areas. To begin with, in 1940, a group of Harvard University faculty members established the American Defense-Harvard Group (hereafter, Harvard Group), with the purpose of alerting the American government and the public opinion to the dangerous situation that the Axis powers were posing for historical monuments and artefacts in Europe, after the fall of France in June 1940.<sup>89</sup> In 1942, the Harvard Group began to cooperate with the American Council of Learned Societies (hereafter, ACLS) in implementing plans for protecting cultural property in the theatre of military operations in Europe.<sup>90</sup> They jointly compiled lists of buildings of artistic and historic significance ('Harvard Lists'), produced large-scale maps ('Frick Maps') showing the exact location of monuments along with detailed information about them, and published a manual with instructions to soldiers about the first-aid measures they should have taken for artworks and archival documents (*Notes on*

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<sup>87</sup> Woolley 1947, p. 15.

<sup>88</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 41; Pollard 2019b; Pollard 2020a, p. 110; Woolley 1947, pp. 5-6.

<sup>89</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 33; Harvard Library n.d; National Archives 2007, p. 1; Pollard 2020a, pp. 126-127.

<sup>90</sup> National Archives 2007, p.1.

*Safeguarding and Conserving Cultural Material in the Field*).<sup>91</sup> More specifically, the manual aimed at suggesting a series of indispensable preliminary actions for preventing further damage to cultural properties, to be applied in the phase immediately before the arrival of experts in the field.<sup>92</sup> The handbook was divided into two sections: the first one providing a rationale for safeguarding cultural properties, along with general procedures; the second section giving more specific recommendations.<sup>93</sup> In January 1943, the ACLS founded a 'Committee on the Protection of European Cultural Material', whose purpose was to investigate appropriate ways of preserving historical monuments and objects in areas occupied by American troops. Its headquarters were located in the Frick Art Reference Library (New York), and its chair was Columbia University's Professor of Archaeology William Bell Dinsmoor (1886-1973). From June 1943, its name was changed to 'Committee on the Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas'.<sup>94</sup> The most important product of this Committee was the production and distribution of the aforementioned 'Frick Maps'.<sup>95</sup>

The collaboration between the ACLS and the Harvard Group led to the idea of creating a Federal Commission whose task of safeguarding monumental sites was clearly synthesised in the *Army Service Forces Manual*:

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<sup>91</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 34-38; *Notes on Safeguarding* 1943; Pollard 2020a, pp. 127-132; Woolley 1947, pp. 5-6. The maps are called 'Frick Maps' from the Frick Art Reference Library of New York, where these were produced (Coccoli 2017, p. 37). These were later substituted by the so-called 'Tedder Maps': air-photographs of Central and Northern Italian cities marking the major monuments. They were easier to consult than the large-scale 'Frick Maps'. The Tedder Maps were jointly prepared by Air Marshal Arthur Tedder – Commander-in-chief of Mediterranean Allied Air Forces – and officers of the Monuments, Fine Art & Archives sub-commission (*Final Report General* 1946, p. 26; Pollard 2020a, pp. 149-150). Lists of monuments to be protected were published also in the Zone Handbooks, but these were not detailed as the Harvard or Frick ones (Pollard 2020a, p. 121).

<sup>92</sup> *Notes on Safeguarding* 1943, pp. 3-4.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 34; Pollard 2020a, pp. 128-130.

<sup>95</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 129. Moreover, in February 1944, Allied governments jointly issued a series of aerial photographs of Italian cities marking the monumental sites that had to be spared during bombing raids, prepared with the informal aid of the MFAA (*Ancient Monuments of Italy: Aerial Photographs*) (*Final Report General* 1946, pp. 47-48; Pollard 2020a, pp. 152-153; Pollard 2021). Pollard reports that only two copies of *Ancient Monuments of Italy* have survived the war. These are preserved in the archives of the BSR, and in the British National Archives (Kew, London) (Pollard 2021).

It is a concrete expression of the determination that the cathedrals, museums, libraries, historic archives, laboratories and other media ... should be preserved. ... Their preservation is vital for the continuity of the history of western civilization.<sup>96</sup>

Thus, the focus of the Commission should have been the safekeeping of heritage in Allied occupied territories with the aim to preserve memoirs of Western civilisation's history for posterity.

On 23 June 1943, the U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt approved the creation of this Federal Commission, called the 'American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in Europe', under the chairmanship of Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts (1875-1955), from whom it took the name of 'Roberts Commission'.<sup>97</sup> The Commission was officially established by Presidential approval on 20 August 1943, having its headquarters in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C..<sup>98</sup> From the very beginning it closely cooperated with the U.S. government, the War Department, the Navy Department, the Office of War Information, the Treasury Department, and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, the predecessor of the CIA).<sup>99</sup>

With the aim of better implementing the several tasks which the Roberts Commission had to face, seven sub-committees were created in late August 1943.<sup>100</sup> The Roberts Commission's activities varied during the course of the war serving,

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<sup>96</sup> *Army Service Forces Manual M353-17*, p. v. Cf. also: Coccoli 2017, p. 33; National Archives 2007, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 38; National Archives 2007, p. 2; Pollard 2020a, pp. 124-126; Woolley 1947, p. 5-6. In 1944, the term 'Europe', in 'American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in Europe', was substituted with 'War Areas', after a request by the Navy Department to include the Far East in the Commission's scope (National Archives 2007, p. 1; Pollard 2020a, pp. 125, 139).

<sup>98</sup> The Roberts Commission was officially dismissed on 30 June 1946 (National Archives 2007, p. 1). Important documents regarding the establishment and functions of the Roberts Commission are included in the archival record *Miscellaneous Material* 1945, pp. 32-38.

<sup>99</sup> *Miscellaneous Material* 1945, pp. 24, 33-38; National Archives 2007, p. 4. The OSS was created in 1942. Its role was to investigate the movement of German assets to secret locations in Europe and to neutral countries. Nazis, indeed, frequently used art as funding for subversive activities during and after the war (National Archives 2007, pp. 1, 4).

<sup>100</sup> The sub-committees in which the Roberts Commission was divided were: Committee on Definition of Works of Cultural Value and Property; Committee on Administration; Committee on Books,

as a clearinghouse for information of war damage and art looting. The Commission's work helped protect many historic monuments and buildings, assisted in the restitution of millions of works of art and artifacts to their rightful owners, helped prevent looted art from being used to fund postwar Nazism, and aided prosecution of war criminals involved with art looting.<sup>101</sup>

Finally, in May 1944, following the American example, the British government founded the 'British Committee for the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives and Other Material in Enemy Hands'. The committee was commonly known as the 'Macmillan Committee' from the name of its chairman, Lord Hugh Pattison Macmillan (1873-1952). Its primary aim was to act for post-war restitution of works of art misappropriated during the war. In September 1944, its activities started covering functions also in the field of monuments' preservation.<sup>102</sup>

Thus, both Anglo-American Allies reached a common position, even if through different modalities: they finally understood the primary necessity of protecting cultural monuments in war areas, although their actions in this preliminary phase were still disjointed.<sup>103</sup>

In preparing the landing to Sicily, Allied governments wanted to pay special attention to the safeguarding of the cultural heritage in the territories they were going to occupy. Thus, they included in the AMGOT (Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories) two Advisers on Fine Arts and Monuments – the American Mason Hammond (1903-2002) and the British Frederick Maxse (1904-1970) – whose task was to guarantee cultural properties' safekeeping:

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Manuscripts, and Other Printed and Written Material of Cultural Value; Committee on Collection of Maps, Information, and Description of Art Objects; Committee on Personnel; Committee on Art Instruction in Military Government Schools; Committee on Axis-Appropriated Property (National Archives 2007, pp. 2-3).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> British Committee 1945; Coccoli 2017, p. 42; Pollard 2020a, p. 122.

<sup>103</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 42.

an appointment which indicated a civilized recognition on the part of the Allies of the importance of preserving, as far as war conditions allowed, the artistic patrimony of the island.<sup>104</sup>

Despite all the efforts mentioned above, after the Allied landing in Southern Italy in June 1943, problems with troops' exploitation of historical buildings, with subsequent instances of thefts and damage, were significant. Concerns among higher U.S. military levels started to increase, especially in relation to their attempts in contrasting enemy propagandist allegations. To be noted is that Lt. Col. Mason Hammond was able to reach Sicily only three weeks after the Allied landing.<sup>105</sup>

As mentioned by the war journalist Janet Flanner, the U.S. Department, after the liberation, feared that the positive attitude towards U.S. troops from freed people and from the public opinion worldwide would have possibly changed into a negative one due to the issues concerning the exploitation of historical properties by American soldiers, thus paving the way to propagandist accusations:

It was the worry of our State Department, especially after the Liberation idyll began to fade, that the prestige of the United States Army and the American idea would decline still further if the USA troops and officers manhandled or lawlessly occupied the western democracies' historic properties.<sup>106</sup>

Therefore, the creation of a task force focused primarily on the protection of monuments and artworks, attached to the army in the field, was an urgent necessity. On 25<sup>th</sup> October 1943, the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives sub-commission (hereafter, MFAA) was created within the Roberts Commission.<sup>107</sup> Its primary tasks were: protecting works of art, monuments, archives and other cultural sites in theatres of war from damage and thefts; giving first-aid assistance to monumental buildings,

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<sup>104</sup> Harris 1957, p. 8. Cf. also: Coccoli 2017, p. 39; *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 2-3.

<sup>105</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 42, 57; Pollard 2020a, p. 107.

<sup>106</sup> Flanner 1957, pp. 270-271.

<sup>107</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 44, 66; *Final Report General* 1946, p. 3; National Archives 2007, p. 3. At the beginning of its operational activities, the MFAA was established within the Educational sub-commission of the Roberts Commission, following the Italian structure where the Fine Arts activities belonged to the Minister of Education. Only at a subsequent stage, the MFAA was detached from the Educational section, forming a separate sub-commission (*Final Report General* 1946, p. 3).



partially destroyed by the passage of war; investigating on disposition of Nazi looted art and its subsequent restitution to the rightful owners; and reactivating the Italian state-service for the preservation and administration of Antiquities and Fine Arts.<sup>108</sup> In facing the task of cultural property protection in the field, the so-called 'monuments officers' were aided by the use of the previously mentioned 'Frick Maps' and of the manual *Notes on Safeguarding and Conserving Cultural Material in the Field*.

Moreover, as a result of their operations, monuments officers assisted the ACLS and the Harvard Group in compiling lists of monuments to be protected against bombing, billeting and theft (*Lists of Protected Monuments*).<sup>109</sup>

As far as its structure was concerned, in relation to its activity in Italy, the MFAA was composed of a general headquarters, subordinate to the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, and by several sub-commissions, one for each AMGOT's Italian Region.<sup>110</sup> Two officers were attached respectively to the U.S. 5<sup>th</sup> army (Capt. Deane Keller, 1901-1992) and to the British 8<sup>th</sup> army (Maj. Norman Newton, 1898-1992). They were supposed to inspect cities just after their liberation, to survey damaged historical buildings, and to compile reports to be handed over to the AMGOT of that Region.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, at least one monuments officer was actively at work in each Region as Regional Commissioner, cooperating with the local Superintendents in the organisational, operative and economic activities in connection to the reconstruction, restoration and safeguarding of monumental buildings and their contents.<sup>112</sup> The Regional Commissioner had to

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<sup>108</sup> AMG-121 1946, p. 97; American Commission 1946, pp. 2-3; British Committee 1946; Coccoli 2017, p. 34; Coles and Weinberg 1964, p. 861; *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 17-18; *Final Report on Archives* 1946, p. 20; Fratarcangeli and Salvagni 2013, pp. 726-727; National Archives 2007, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> National Archives 2007, p. 3; *Notes on Safeguarding* 1943; Flanner 1957, p. 267.

<sup>110</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 44; Woolley 1947, p. 21. The AMGOT changed its name into AMG (Allied Military Government) in January 1944. In 1943, the AMGOT for Italy was divided into seven regions, coinciding with the areas occupied by the Allies: Region I (Sicily), Region II (Calabria, Lucania, Apulia), Region III (Campania), Region IV (Abruzzi-Lazio), Region V (Umbria-Marche), Region VI (Sardinia), Region VII (Rome). In a second phase, when the AMGOT controlled the entire territory of Italy, the Regions became twelve: Region I (Sicily), Region II (Apulia-Lucania), Region III (Campania), Region IV (Lazio), Region V (Abruzzi-Marche), Region VI (Sardinia), Region VII (Calabria), Region VIII (Tuscany), Region IX (Emilia), Region X (Piedmont), Region XI (Lombardia), Region XII (Veneto-Venezia Tridentina-Venezia Giulia) (Coccoli 2017, pp. 44-45). On the AMGOT's structure and the role of the ACC, cf. also: Gargiulo 2018, pp. 19-20. For biographic details of Capt. Keller and Maj. Newton, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>111</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 44, 51; Hartt 1949, pp. 5-6.

<sup>112</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 44, 51; Hartt 1949, p. 7; Woolley 1947, p. 21.

work in his Region until this would have remained under the AMGOT's administration.<sup>113</sup> The demands of monuments officers in the field would have been progressive, depending on the rate at which the Allies freed new Italian territories.<sup>114</sup> One of the first officers to be attached to the sub-commission and deployed in the field was Lt. Col. Mason Hammond, who served firstly in Italy and later in Germany. He was the first monuments officer to be deployed in Sicily after the Allied freeing of the area.<sup>115</sup> Regarding the Italian area, Maj. Paul Baillie Reynolds (1896-1973) was appointed director of the MFAA, and Lt. Col. Mason Hammond as deputy director. They were later substituted respectively by Maj. Ernest T. De Wald (1891-1968) as director, and Maj. John Bryan Ward-Perkins as deputy director.<sup>116</sup>

The personnel attached to this sub-commission included curators, researchers, academics, art historians, archivists, architects, etc. working in museums and cultural institutions in countries belonging to the Allied coalition.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, the tasks they carried out in the field were not usually strictly related to their areas of expertise. These varied accordingly to the needs of the moment and to the presence of officers in the area.<sup>118</sup> As far as Italy was concerned, candidates needed to have an in-depth knowledge of Italian art history.<sup>119</sup>

As clearly described by Woolley, the personnel was selected keeping in mind one of the primary roles that this was assigned to carry forward: the safeguarding of historical buildings from acts of theft and damage by troops.<sup>120</sup> For that purpose, members of the MFAA were not supposed to have in any case any association with the art market

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<sup>113</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Woolley 1947, p. 21.

<sup>115</sup> Lt. Col. Mason Hammond arrived in Sicily on 29 July 1943, twenty days after the Allied landing (Coccoli 2017, p. 57). For biographic details, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>116</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 67-68, 91; *Final Report General* 1946, p. 5; Fratarcangeli and Salvagni 2013, p. 729; Hartt 1949, p. i; Ranieri 2015, p. 371. For biographic details on Maj. De Wald, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>117</sup> American Commission 1946, pp. 2-3; Fratarcangeli and Salvagni 2013, p. 729; Molajoli 1944, pp. 6-8. A list of the personnel attached to the MFAA is included into: *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 40-41.

<sup>118</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 18.

<sup>119</sup> Molajoli 1944, pp. 6-8.

<sup>120</sup> Woolley 1947, pp. 7-8.

world, to refute enemy propagandist accusations that the Allies were deploying art dealers in the war field to loot objects in occupied territories:

The finding of personnel was not easy matter. It must be remembered that in creating a Monuments and Fine Arts service the Army's first and most legitimate aim was the preservation of its own good name. As the champions of civilisation, the troops must be guarded against all charges of vandalism. It was desirable that the Monuments and Fine Arts officers should not only possess the technical qualifications which would command the respect of the soldier, but should also automatically commend themselves to outside critics; in other words, the reason for their selection should be generally obvious, and therefore it was preferable that they should be associated with one or other of the recognised centres of professional knowledge, a museum or art gallery. Further, in view of the stories broadcast by enemy press and radio that the Allies were sending art experts to loot the territories occupied by them, no one connected with the art dealers' trade could be admitted.<sup>121</sup>

Months after the preliminary organisation of the task force, a significant step was taken by the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who supported the creation of the MFAA by providing British personnel to be attached to it.<sup>122</sup> He, together with the U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, decided to include the post of 'Fine Arts and Monuments Officer' in the joint British and American AMGOT.<sup>123</sup> As a consequence, the MFAA resulted as being 'a completely integrated Anglo-American body, within which British and American officers worked together in complete harmony towards a common end'.<sup>124</sup> However, the British government did not have the same enthusiasm in assisting the sub-commission as the American one. At the beginning, the single

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 42.

<sup>123</sup> Hammond 1980, p. 87. The original appellation 'Fine Arts and Monuments' was later changed into 'Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives' (*Ibid.*, p. 66). One of the reasons for this modification is explained by Lt. Col. Mason Hammond in his book (*Ibid.*, p. 88): 'The original term in AMGOT for the officer or section concerned with the protection of cultural treasures was Fine Arts and Monuments. I was told in Sicily that my Boston accent made this sound to our British colleagues like Finance and Monuments, so the name was changed to Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives'.

<sup>124</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 2.

British interlocutor to the Commission was Woolley.<sup>125</sup> Only in May 1944, the British government established the Macmillan Committee, recognising the primary importance of the safeguarding of works of art.<sup>126</sup> From now on, the United States and Great Britain worked closely, 'in a particular happy accord', in the safeguarding of historical monuments in the war field.<sup>127</sup>

In the months following its foundation, the position of the MFAA among Allied army forces was confused. Indeed, at the very beginning of their operations, monuments officers were not physically present in the field at the liberation of cities, leaving therefore the protection of historical monuments and their contents to their own fate. They were occupied with General Civil Affairs duties in other areas of Italy or waiting to be deployed from the Military Government holding centre in North Africa (Tizi Ouzo, Algeria). Some American monuments officers were still quartered at the School of Military Government (Charlottesville, VA), which served as a training centre for the military personnel soon to be deployed in theatres of war.<sup>128</sup> Sir Leonard Woolley understood this dangerous situation and pressed the army in favour of the instant deployment of monuments officers with troops fighting in Italy.<sup>129</sup>

In spring 1944, after months of uncertainty around the precise roles that monuments officers had to undertake in the field, they were officially put in close contact with combat troops. As a result, they could enter towns just after their liberation, survey damaged sites and compile reports on the situation, and start to organise first-aid repairs to monuments. Moreover, they could act against the billeting of troops in historical buildings, preventing soldiers from stealing and damaging objects housed there. Accordingly, they started to put 'out-of-bounds' signs on historical monuments,

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<sup>125</sup> Another significant data in this sense is the fact that, among the MFAA officers, more were the American ones than the British (Coccoli 2017, p. 18).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 42.

<sup>127</sup> British Committee 1946.

<sup>128</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 57-58; *Final Report General* 1946, p. 5; *Miscellaneous Material* 1945, p. 27; Pollard 2019b; Pollard 2021.

<sup>129</sup> Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 109; *Final Report General* 1946, p. 3; Ranieri 2015, pp. 370-371; Woolley 1947, p. 26. The issue of the late arrival of monuments officers in the war field is thoroughly discussed by Pollard (2020a, pp. 183-184) with regards to the city of Naples.

to provide field commanders with the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, to arrange for military guards wherever necessary, to inspect buildings already occupied by soldiers, and eventually move them to more proper billeting sites in the surrounding areas.<sup>130</sup> All these precautions in many cases proved adequate, while in other situations they were completely ineffectual, as demonstrated by the several examples investigated in the next chapters of this thesis.

Flanner again provides a clear picture of the situation in the war field, this time mentioning the difficult, and at times demanding, task for monuments officers to prevent soldiers from exploiting cultural monuments and to transfer them to more suitable buildings:

In their billeting-overseeing job, the Monuments men were like frantic boardinghouse keepers, trying to put thousands of lodgers into the right rooms and out of the wrong ones, and, above all, trying to prevent them from pocketing everything pretty that belonged to the house.<sup>131</sup>

For example, just after arriving in the recently freed Sicily, monuments officers began their tour through recent theatres of operations, where they discovered that the major problem encountered was not the battle itself, but the period immediately following the liberation of cities, when Allied troops 'freed from the simple need to survive turned to souvenir collecting and graffiti painting'.<sup>132</sup> Significantly, Flanner defines the MFAA's task of preventing U.S. troops from damaging and stealing art objects as their 'greatest single problem':

As long as the American armies remained in Europe, 'the greatest single' MFA&A problem ... was saving the Continent's art 'from spoliation and damage by the US Armed Forces'.<sup>133</sup>

Flanner refers exclusively to American soldiers, but the problem interested the Allies as a whole. Indeed, although monuments officers' efforts to intercept acts of stealing

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<sup>130</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 42; Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 109; Hartt 1949, pp. 6-7.

<sup>131</sup> Flanner 1957, p. 50.

<sup>132</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 226.

<sup>133</sup> Flanner 1957, pp. 270-271.

and destruction were remarkable, examples of troops' exploitation of historical monuments were innumerable during the entire course of the Italian campaign. Several documents remain today to prove these assumptions, as this thesis will demonstrate. However, visual testimonies are rare. As far as the Italian territory is concerned, one outstanding piece of evidence is reported in figure 6, showing American soldiers locating a provisional outpost in a Greek temple at Paestum.<sup>134</sup> This picture represents one of the few visual documentations concerning military occupation of monumental sites in Italy. Others will be analysed in chapter 5 with reference to Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds (Naples). All these pictures prove how difficult it was for the MFAA to prevent soldiers' requisitioning of historical monuments, usually converted into army bases, provisional outposts – as in the case of Paestum – or hospitals – like at Mostra d'Oltremare.

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<sup>134</sup> Casiello 2011; Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 39-40. Worth noting is that the archaeological area of Paestum was requisitioned despite its three-stars ranking in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. The Greek temples are there described as 'among the most important monuments of all Italy' (*List of Monuments, South Italy. Regions Abruzzi e Molise, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania*, Prepared by American Defense – Harvard Group, Committee on the Protection of Monuments, MFAA Commission Archive, Box 1, Library of the American Academy in Rome). The monumental sites were ranked with three stars also in the booklet *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Sardinia and Sicily. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* 1944, p. 38.

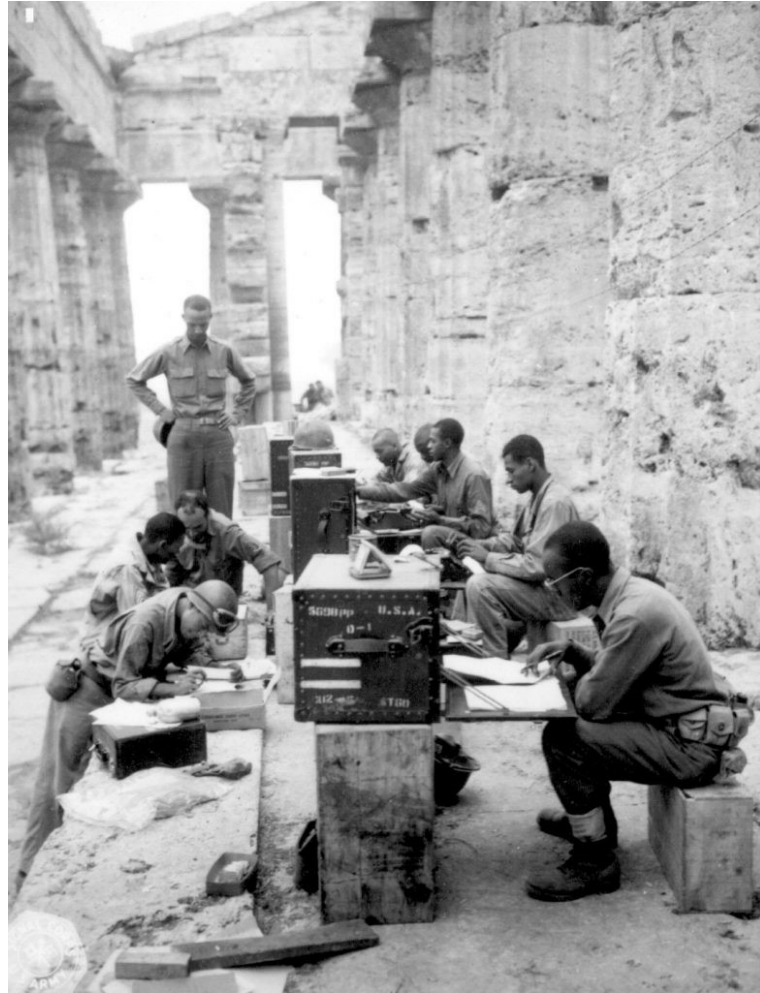


Figure 6 - American soldiers locating a provisional outpost in the archaeological site of Paestum, in the area of the Greek 'Basilica' temple.

Source: Casiello 2011, 72a.

As described by the Macmillan Committee's post-war report on war damage to Italian monuments (*Works of Art in Italy. Losses and Survival in the War*, Part I, 1945), several logistic problems were encountered by monuments officers in Italy. First of all, they had issues in sharing information one with each other and with Italian heritage functionaries, because of the country's rigid bureaucratic system. Secondly, the activities regarding the examination of the situation in newly freed territories and early repairs to damaged monuments were slowed down by the lack of transport and of construction material. Thirdly, as already mentioned above, they had to deal with problems regarding the exploitation of historical buildings by troops, and the recurrent instances of damage and theft mainly caused by ignorance and by the almost non-existent outreach, training and education on cultural property protection to soldiers,

prior to the occupation.<sup>135</sup> In addition to this and arising from the previous issue, there was a general belief among soldiers and commanders that the responsibility for the safeguarding of heritage was a task purely belonging to monuments officers and not to the army as a whole. There were many cases where the role of the MFAA was not recognised by troops. Commanders and soldiers fighting in the field were resistant to receive orders from functionaries with lower military grades, as was unfortunately the case with monuments officers.<sup>136</sup>

Problems connected with troops' billeting in protected monuments gradually decreased towards the end of the war, although they never disappeared. The Macmillan Committee recognised two causes for this decrease: the rapidity of the final advance and the subsequent lack of need for places to quarter troops; and the 'Protected Monument' notices placed by monuments officers on the main art repositories.<sup>137</sup>

After the country's total liberation, the operational activities conducted by MFAA officers in Italy started gradually to decrease. By December 1945, the transfer of responsibility to the new Italian government was completed and the MFAA no longer had any officer in the Italian theatre of operations.<sup>138</sup> Thus, monuments officers moved their activities to other European countries. In these areas, their attention was focused primarily on the systematic art looting campaigns conducted by the Nazis against public and private collections.<sup>139</sup> After the end of the war, MFAA's roles progressively diminished. Nevertheless, it continued to assist liberated countries with the restitution processes of artworks and artefacts stolen by the Nazis.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> British Committee 1945, pp. 77-78. Logistic issues encountered by the MFAA in Italy are reported also in: Molajoli 1944, pp. 6-8.

<sup>136</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 58, 69, 71; Gargiulo 2018, p. 24; Pollard 2021; Woolley 1947, pp. 21-22.

<sup>137</sup> British Committee 1946.

<sup>138</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 17.

<sup>139</sup> For the activities covered by MFAA officers after the Italian campaign, cf.: Coles and Weinberg 1964.

<sup>140</sup> American Commission 1946, pp. 2-3; Wolley 1947, p. 25. The task of investigating Nazi art looting and of intercepting individuals involved in these illicit actions was proper of the Art Looting Investigation Unit (ALIU), which had a direct liaison with the Roberts Commission and the MFAA. The unit was founded on 21 November 1944 and placed under the OSS. It had its administrative headquarters in Washington, D.C. and its field headquarters in London. The unit's personnel were composed by ten field representatives, with extensive pre-war experience in Fine Arts (War Department, pp. 1-2).



Coccoli recognises three different phases of the MFAA's operational activities in Italy. The first phase, called 'experimental', characterised the period between July 1943 and the end of May 1944, with a gradual recognition by Allied governments of the importance of protecting cultural heritage, issuing a series of regulations on the matter. These will be thoroughly analysed in the next section of this chapter. The first phase saw monuments officers mainly dealing with the issue of troops' billeting in monumental buildings. In this phase, they operated in the Southern regions up to Rome. In the second phase, between the fall of Rome (June 1944) and the breaching of the Gothic line (April 1945), they worked in Central Italy again against military occupations. They also prepared first-aid repairing programs to damaged monuments, and they helped in restoring the local administration of cultural heritage. Finally, the third phase (April 1945 – beginning of 1946) saw MFAA officers operating in Northern Italy mainly in first-aid activities to monuments.<sup>141</sup>

In conclusion, together, archival materials and historical accounts demonstrate that the Second World War was the first major war in which concrete steps towards the safeguarding of cultural heritage were finally taken.<sup>142</sup> The greatest aid to heritage protection in the field was the creation of the MFAA and the deployment of monuments officers in the theatre of war.<sup>143</sup> Although the several issues that the MFAA had to deal with, actions undertaken by monuments officers in Italy were unprecedented, and the results achieved were against every expectation, as clearly emphasised by Dagnini Brey:

By December 1 [1945, ed.], when the Subcommittee for Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives ended its activities in Italy ..., twenty-seven monuments officers, fourteen of them American and thirteen British, had visited one thousand Italian towns, cities, and villages and surveyed twenty-five hundred damaged monuments from Sicily to the Alps. At the time of their leaving, two

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<sup>141</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 21-22.

<sup>142</sup> Hammond 1980, p. 87.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

and a half million dollars had been advanced by the Allied Military Government for reconstruction, and seven hundred buildings of historical and artistic significance were being repaired. ... Their performance could not be compared with earlier examples of military art protection in wartime, as there were no such precedents.<sup>144</sup>

Here Dagnini Brey, by providing a detailed account of monuments officers' actions, precisely outlines the magnitude of the task that MFAA officers had been called to undertake in Italy.

The next section of this chapter will again investigate measures taken by the American and British governments in heritage safekeeping. This time, the attention will be focused on the instructions issued by both governments to prevent troops' exploitation of historical buildings and their contents in occupied territories of Europe.

### **Allied governments' orders and instructions**

As the last section of this chapter has suggested, problems with troops' theft and vandalism in Italy were serious concerns for the MFAA, especially in the first phase of Allied occupation in Southern Italy. As already mentioned, some of monuments officers' precautions, like the use of surveillance systems and the placing of 'out-of-bounds' signs to historical monuments, were insufficient against the quartering of troops in historical buildings.<sup>145</sup> Also the regulations specified in the 1907 *Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land* could do nothing against the illicit activities perpetrated by soldiers. More precisely, the Convention, at article 56, specified that the occupation and destruction of properties belonging to institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education located in territories of hostile states – along with historic monuments, works of art and science – were forbidden and subjected to legal proceedings.<sup>146</sup> Article 47, instead, prohibited every form of

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<sup>144</sup> Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 254-255.

<sup>145</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 104.

<sup>146</sup> 'The property of municipalities, that of institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, even when state property, shall be treated as private property. All seizures of

pillaging.<sup>147</sup> Thus, at the outbreak of World War II, a regulation disciplining the military requisition of historical buildings in occupied territories and the destruction of objects with a cultural value existed, even if it was connected to more general considerations regarding the regimentation of war on land.

Given the ineffectiveness of preventive actions and of the 1907 *Hague Convention's* prescriptions, preliminary general instructions against the damage to monuments in occupied territories were issued in 1943. The first one, the 'ADM Planning Instruction n. 12', was circulated in June 1943. It was directed to all ranks, asking them to adopt an appropriate approach with the Italian people, their institutions, and their properties.<sup>148</sup> It emphasised that specific attention had to be paid to souvenir hunting in relation to ancient monuments and works of art.<sup>149</sup> It was of primary importance to prevent the acquisition of artistic souvenirs and their trafficking. Their export was prohibited, and any infraction would have been punished as a disciplinary offence. Souvenirs were neither to be acquired by theft, nor by gift or purchase. Those who were found responsible for art theft, were liable to Court Martial. To prevent all these illicit acts, historical buildings should have been closed and placed off-limits to troops. Moreover, in this Instruction, stress was placed on the will of Allied governments 'to use the protection of monuments ... as counter propaganda to German looting'.<sup>150</sup> Namely, Allied governments would have used the positive outcomes deriving from their efforts in protecting art in the occupied countries as a propagandist tool against the Nazis and their massive art looting campaigns. Therefore, instances of troops' thefts in occupied territories could cause the opposite effect, depicting the Allies as thieves themselves.

Attached to this ADM Instruction was a pamphlet entitled 'DO's and DON'T's' (Fig. 7), directed to all troops deployed in Italy.<sup>151</sup> Apart from the need to respect Italian

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destruction, or wilful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art, science, is forbidden and should be made the subject of legal proceedings' (1907 *Hague Convention*, art. 56).

<sup>147</sup> 'Pillage is formally forbidden' (1907 *Hague Convention*, art. 47).

<sup>148</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 108-109; Pollard 2020a, pp. 120-121.

<sup>149</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 108-109.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*; Pollard 2020a, pp. 120-121

people and their private properties, particular attention was directed to the necessity of protecting public properties and especially ones with a cultural value. Therefore, soldiers were not to allow the theft and trafficking of works of art and valuables of any kind. Moreover, they themselves were not to destroy or remove archives, documents or books held in the premises they had access to. Finally, soldiers were to consult Civil Affairs Officers about the requisition of monumental buildings, or about buying precious objects. They were not to accept any kind of gifts from anyone.

COPY.

ANNEXURE 14 (contd)

APPENDIX "A" to Adm Planning  
Instruction No.12 Dated  
14 Jun 43.

DO's and DONT's.

DO. #

1. Remember that the Italians are not Germans and many of them dislike the Germans almost as much as we do.
2. Remember that the Italians have millions of relatives in U.S.A. where they have learned to value the liberty they have lost in Italy; and that the British fought to help Italy gain her unity and independence.
3. Remember that the Allies don't want to destroy Italy but to deliver the people from the Fascist regime which let them into the war.
4. Remember that the Italians who don't know U.S.A. or Britain will judge Your country by your behaviour and that of your troops.
5. Be firm and correct, bad manners are not a sign of toughness.
6. Respect private and public property as you would your own. Plant and machinery is necessary for the Allied War Effort and must not be damaged.

ON ENTERING A TOWN.

7. Post Guards on power stations, wireless, telephone and telegraph stations, banks, warehoused goods, post offices, museums etc. to prevent looting. Remember that when there is disorder the local population may try its hand at looting. Bank and treasury safes and buildings with public records, are to be locked up. The bank staff must not have access to remove valuables. Take the keys and give them to the nearest Civil Affairs Officer or to the Provost Marshall or Military Police.
8. Let shops and markets re-open as soon as possible. The population must eat, and if they can't get their food, we shall have to issue them some of ours.
9. Remember that all the people who will offer their assistance are not necessarily disinterested. The best people are not the turncoats and the traitors.
10. Essential services and the local machinery of government must be kept going. Don't make this more difficult. Certain officials will be arrested or interned; it is not your business to decide which.
11. Consult your nearest Civil Affairs Officer about buying or requisitioning.

DON'T.

1. Don't fraternise with the population, male or female. The Italian Army is still fighting you.
2. Don't talk politics or religion.
3. Don't believe all the stories you will hear from Italians about their undying friendship for the Allies.
4. Don't allow, or close your eyes to looting, theft or trafficking in money, works of art, or valuables.
5. Don't destroy or allow to be destroyed or removed any archives, documents or books in any premises you may enter. They will be needed for the Allied Government of the country.

ANNEXURE 14. (contd).

6. Don't occupy any government office if you can avoid it. The Allied government of the country will need the offices to govern from. Use as offices hotels, business premises, apartment houses, etc.
7. Don't requisition goods unnecessarily "just because they might come in useful". Don't remove bits of machinery or loose tools, if it can be avoided; we may need the equipment as a whole and the removal of one piece or certain tools, may destroy its utility.
8. Don't allow favouritism to individuals. Don't let them try to bribe you by presents, entertainment, or "bargains". Don't accept presents from anyone.
9. Don't take or use motor transport without higher authority. If you take all the trucks, food can't be brought into the markets.
10. DON'T FORGET WE ARE FIGHTING FASCISM IN ALL ITS FORMS.

Figure 7 - The pamphlet 'DO's and DON'T's', disciplining troops' treatment of cultural properties. It was published as Appendix A to the 'Administrative Planning Instruction n. 12', dated 14 June 1943.

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Because of the ineffectiveness of the previous instructions, an order was issued in August 1943, specifically addressing problems regarding troops' vandalism and theft ('Order on Wilful Damage and Looting'). This time the concern was about damage to lives and properties, not specifically of cultural value, but civil and military. Nevertheless, it again emphasised the 'seriousness of the crimes of looting, stealing and causing wilful damage to ... property'.<sup>152</sup> As a consequence, these actions had to be prevented with all the measures possible, and soldiers who had been found 'guilty of misdemeanour or neglect of duty in this matter' should have been punished.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, in September 1943, an AMGOT Plan was circulated drawing attention to the prohibition of purchasing and exporting art objects 'by members of the Allied forces or others', and to the necessity of placing historical buildings out-of-bounds to soldiers 'to avoid damage to historical and classical monuments and objects'.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, a preliminary general list of buildings that should have not been occupied by troops in any circumstance was addressed to the Headquarters of the U.S. 5<sup>th</sup> army on 9 December 1943, by the Commanding General Mark Clark (1896-1984). More specifically, the 'Administrative Instruction n. 19' reported that churches, convents, other religious institutions, museums and national shrines should always be excluded from troops' billeting, except when permitted by special authority of the Commanding General.<sup>155</sup> It should be noted that, at that time, more frequently than in contemporary times, the devotional aspect of an object was considered stronger than its artistic value.<sup>156</sup> Finally, in December 1943, with the 'PBS Circular n. 37', the duty of protecting historical and cultural objects in Italy was addressed to unit commanders, who had to supervise troops' actions, to protect artworks encountered during their activities, and to report situations where experts' assistance was necessary.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 112.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Commission* 1944, p. 52.

<sup>155</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 119; Gargiulo 2018, pp. 21-22.

<sup>156</sup> Franchi 2013, p. 440.

<sup>157</sup> *Commission* 1944, pp. 55-56.

Despite all these efforts, unlawful activities still took place. Instances of theft and damage by troops in historical buildings in Southern Italy, especially in the Naples area, continued to discredit Allied forces. Immediate action was needed. Therefore, with the purpose of regulating the role that troops had in the safeguarding of cultural heritage, General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969), Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, issued the 'General Order n. 68' on 'Historical Monuments' (Fig. 8).<sup>158</sup> It prohibited the occupation, for military purposes, of all the buildings listed 'in the sections "Works of Art" in the "Zone Hand-Book" of Italy', apart from when it was permitted by the Commander-in-Chief, or by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief.<sup>159</sup> Commanders would have been provided with a list of historical buildings considered of secondary importance and, therefore, that could have been exploited for military use. It is significant to note that the Order reminded that sites containing art collections and objects with a scientific value, along with any type of religious institutions, should not be occupied when alternative accommodations were available. Moreover, the Order stressed the need for commanders to put 'out-of-bounds' notices for troops and to provide guards for 'any of the buildings listed in the AMG "Zone Hand-Book"'. It also emphasised the common responsibility for commanders in preventing 'looting, wanton damage and sacrilege of buildings'.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 105-106; Coles and Weinberg 1964, p. 860; *Commission* 1944, p. 63; Pollard 2020a, p. 193. The General Order was published on 29 December 1943.

<sup>159</sup> *Commission* 1944, p. 63.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.* 'Zone Hand-Books' were military manuals published for the use of AMGOT officials (Coccoli 2017, p. 105).



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U.S. RESTRICTED  
(Equals British RESTRICTED)

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS  
APO 512

GENERAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 68 )

29 December 1943,

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

1. Buildings.

a. No building listed in the sections "Works of ART" in the "Zone Hand-Books" of ITALY issued by the Political Warfare Executive to all Allied Military Government officers will be used for military purposes without the explicit permission of the Allied Commander-in-Chief or of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, 15th Army Group in each individual case.

b. Commanders concerned are authorized, as a further measure of security, to close and put out of bounds for troops any of the buildings listed in AMG "Zone Hand-Book" that they deem necessary. Notices to that effect will be affixed to the buildings, and guards provided to enforce them if necessary.

c. Allied Military Government officers are prepared to furnish commanders with a list of historical buildings other than those listed in the AMG "Zone Hand-Book". These buildings are of secondary importance and may be used for military purposes when deemed necessary. Commanders are reminded that buildings containing art collections, scientific objects, or those which when used would offend the religious susceptibilities of the people, should not be occupied when alternative accommodations are available.

2. Looting, Wanton Damage and Sacrilege.

The prevention of looting, wanton damage and sacrilege of buildings is a command responsibility. The seriousness of such an offense will be explained to all Allied personnel. (AG 000.4-1 GCT-AGM)

By command of General EISENHOWER:

OFFICIAL: W. B. SMITH  
Major General, GSC, Chief of Staff

/s/ T. J. Davis  
T. J. DAVIS  
Brigadier General, United States Army  
Adjutant General

Reproduced, Hq Peninsular Base Section,  
APO 782, 9 January 1944 S.R.

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Figure 8 - 'General Order n. 68' on 'Historical Monuments', limiting the military occupation of monumental sites (issued on 29 December 1943).

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To the General Order a letter was attached, compiled by General Eisenhower (Fig. 9) and probably prepared by Sir Leonard Woolley (December 1943).<sup>161</sup> There, Eisenhower pointed out that quartering troops in cultural properties was not always of extreme operational necessity and, therefore, these sites had to be spared. The letter opened with a paragraph where he addressed the importance of the Italian cultural heritage, perceived as the main actor in the growth and history of global civilisation – from this, the necessity to respect monuments and works of art in the country. The document is particularly significant because it definitely settled the preliminary importance played by the protection of cultural heritage in military politics and the fundamental role of monuments officers in achieving this purpose. They were finally no longer seen by commanders and troops as pure obstacles to military operations.<sup>162</sup> Therefore, the letter finally recognised the central role that monuments officers had in the protection of cultural heritage of occupied territories, and the crucial cooperation between them and commanders in determining the locations of historical monuments.<sup>163</sup> As Coccoli argues, General Eisenhower's Order and Letter constitute a step forward in reducing losses to heritage caused by troops deployed in the Italian theatres of operations.<sup>164</sup>

Additionally, General Harold Alexander (1891-1969), Commander-in-Chief for the Allied forces in Italy, issued a letter directed to commanders of all formations and units on the protection of properties 'of historical and educational importance in Italy' (February 1944 – Fig. 10).<sup>165</sup> He opened the letter addressing the concern generated by reports of damage done by troops to monumental buildings, caused especially by 'thoughtless and carelessness, and even by few wilfully destructive individuals'.<sup>166</sup> He then specifically addressed the responsibilities carried out by unit commanders in guaranteeing that troops under their authority behaved 'in a manner which safeguards the good name of our armies and brings credit to their race'.<sup>167</sup> In that sense, soldiers

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<sup>161</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 106-108; *Commission* 1944, p. 57; Pollard 2020a, p. 192.

<sup>162</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 106.

<sup>163</sup> *Commission* 1944, p. 57.

<sup>164</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 106.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107; *Italy* 1945, p. 4; *Miscellaneous Material* 1945, p. I; Pollard 2020a, p. 197.

<sup>166</sup> *Italy* 1945, p. 4.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

had to protect and respect all art treasures and monuments encountered during their advance, in accordance with operational conditions. Therefore, it is emphasised that, in some situations, military operations had the priority over the safekeeping of artworks and historical buildings. However, 'the phrase "military necessity" should have not been interpreted as personal convenience', as reported by General Eisenhower in an extract published in the *Union Jack* on the same day.<sup>168</sup> In spite of the relevance given to military operations over heritage protection, the letter constitutes a major step forward in the awareness-raising campaign conducted by higher military rankings around the importance of protecting cultural heritage by fighting troops, now finally perceived as one of the goals of the Allied campaign in Italy.

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<sup>168</sup> *Commission* 1944, p. 134. The words of General Eisenhower were reported also in a Parliamentary Debate in the House of Lords on 16 February 1944 (*Miscellaneous Material* 1945, pp. 78-103).

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ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS

Office of the Commander-in-Chief

AG 000.4-1

29 December 1943

SUBJECT: Historical Monuments

TO : All Commanders

Today we are fighting in a country which has contributed a great deal to our cultural inheritance, a country rich in monuments which by their creation helped and now in their old age illustrate the growth of the civilization which is ours. We are bound to respect those monuments so far as war allows.

If we have to choose between destroying a famous building and sacrificing our own men, then our men's lives count infinitely more and the buildings must go. But the choice is not always so clear-cut as that. In many cases the monuments can be spared without any detriment to operational needs. Nothing can stand against the argument of military necessity. That is an accepted principle. But the phrase "military necessity" is sometimes used where it would be more truthful to speak of military convenience or even of personal convenience. I do not want it to cloak slackness or indifference.

It is a responsibility of higher commanders to determine through A.M.G. Officers the locations of historical monuments whether they be immediately ahead of our front lines or in areas occupied by us. This information passed to lower echelons through normal channels places the responsibility on all Commanders of complying with the spirit of this letter.

s/ Dwight D. Eisenhower

t/ DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER,  
General, U.S. Army,  
Commander-in-Chief.

DISTRIBUTION:  
"C"

U.S. CONFIDENTIAL EQUALS BRITISH CONFIDENTIAL

(Reproduced by  
AMG HQ) 5 Jan 1944

U. S. SECRET Equals British SECRET

Figure 9 - Letter by General Eisenhower, recognising the primary importance of cultural property protection in military politics. It was published as an Annexure to the 'General Order n. 68', dated 29 December 1943.

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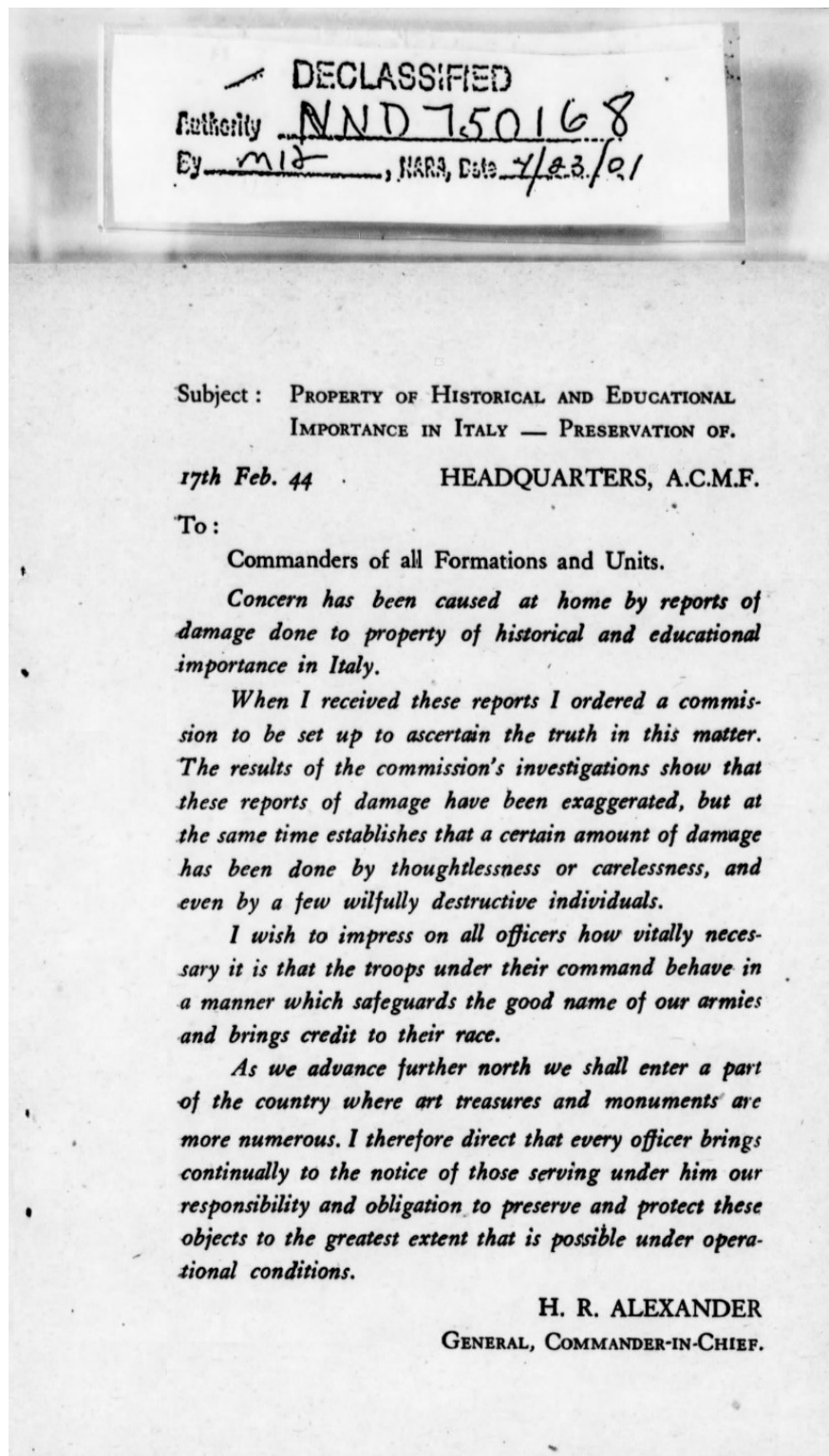


Figure 10 - Letter by General Alexander, acknowledging the protection of cultural heritage as one of the goals of the Allied campaign in Italy (issued on 17 February 1944).

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Another Administrative Instruction was issued on 30 March 1944, immediately following the aforementioned letter by General Alexander ('ADM Instruction n. 10' on the 'Preservation of Property of Historical and Educational Importance in Italy').<sup>169</sup> The Instruction established precise rules for the protection of buildings and their use for military purposes.<sup>170</sup> The directives listed were addressed to all commanders, who were again made responsible for conducting 'a rigid control' over the occupation of historical buildings by their troops.<sup>171</sup> The sites not to be occupied, 'when alternative accommodation is available', were the ones recorded in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, which will be investigated later in this section.<sup>172</sup> Buildings that were always forbidden to quartering by troops were churches. The decision of selecting properties to occupy were undertaken exclusively by commanders. They, also, had to place guards on all monumental buildings in the phase between the proceeding of the battle to other areas and the time when military reserve formations and administrative units took complete control, namely the phase when 'the greater part of the damage is likely to occur'.<sup>173</sup> When, for tactical reasons, a historical monument had to be occupied, the ACC (Allied Control Commission) and the AMG (Allied Military Government) had to be promptly informed and commanders had to immediately take all the possible precautions to prevent 'careless or wilful damage and especially souvenir hunting'.<sup>174</sup> Moreover, only troops billeted in that building were provided permission to enter and, more important, all the artworks preserved there had to be transferred to a separate shelter and placed off-limits to troops. Particular attention had to be paid by soldiers to books and written papers of all kinds because,

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<sup>169</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 107; *Italy* 1945, pp. 5-9; Pollard 2020a, p. 197. For a copy of this ADM Instruction, cf.: Appendix 1.

<sup>170</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 107; *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 4-5; Ranieri 2015, pp. 366-367.

<sup>171</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 5-9.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* The AMGOT changed its name into AMG in January 1944. The 'AMD Instruction n. 10' substituted the 'ADM Instruction n. 8' (June 1943). This last one was published in the operational phase of landing in Sicily, and it regarded the protection of monuments in occupied Italian territories. It warned that the purchase and export of objects of art was prohibited, that civil affairs officers would advise on placing cultural sites off-limits, that precautions should be taken to protect monuments from occupying troops and from the civilian population, and that who treated illicitly monuments and works of art should be punished by appropriate authorities (Pollard 2020a, pp. 119-120).

even those which do not appear to be ancient may be of great importance, not only historically, but as containing information necessary for the practical purposes of the war.<sup>175</sup>

Finally, even art refuges, in unknown locations at that time, needed to be granted the same status as the buildings listed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* and, therefore, their occupation had to be avoided and their exact location had to be reported to the ACC/AMG.

The 'ADM Instruction n. 10' was later substituted by the updated 'ADM Memorandum n. 20' on the 'Preservation of Property of Historical and Educational Importance in Italy', issued on 3 April 1945. The 'ADM Memorandum n. 20' recalled many of the themes of its predecessor, but this time more responsibility on the matter was finally given to the MFAA: troops and commanders had to consult monuments officers in case of extreme necessity in occupying historical buildings, or while in doubt. Moreover, they had to ask to MFAA officers for the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, and they had to notify them when troops found the exact location of museums' and galleries' repositories of artworks.<sup>176</sup>

Both the letter by General Alexander and the 'ADM Instruction n. 10' cited the work of the so-called 'Collier Commission'.<sup>177</sup> This was a commission of enquiry appointed to investigate allegations of damage caused by troops to properties of historical and educational importance in Southern Italy. It had to assess the extent of the damage and to make recommendations on the steps to be taken to prevent these illicit actions in the future. President of the commission was Major General A.L. Collier, aided by members of the American and British Armies and by monuments officer Maj. Theodore Sizer (1892-1967).<sup>178</sup> Initially, the commission had to enquire about the entire area occupied by troops in Southern Italy, but after having started their investigations, they were forced to address their attention exclusively to the Campania

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<sup>175</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 5-9.

<sup>176</sup> AMG-134 1946, pp. 123-125, Cocoli 2017, pp. 220-221.

<sup>177</sup> AMG-11 1946.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

region, because of the magnitude of allegations against Allied troops.<sup>179</sup> A detailed investigation on the outcomes of the Collier Commission will be thoroughly discussed in chapter 5. However, it is now important to emphasise that this enquiry acted as a watershed in troops' awareness of the importance of preserving monumental buildings and their contents in occupied territories. Moreover, it demonstrated that it was essential that all military rankings became conscious of their responsibilities over cultural properties.<sup>180</sup>

General recommendations on the need of safeguarding Italian heritage were reported also in the *Army Service Forces Manual* (issued in July 1944), prepared for the military government by the Roberts Commission.<sup>181</sup> In this document, 'cultural heritage' was defined as the group of monuments including churches, art galleries and museums, libraries, archives, palaces, villas, castles and ancient remains. These had to be protected not only for their historical, artistic, and national importance, but also for economic reasons because, in peacetime, they were and would have been the main actor in the Italian tourist industry, 'one of the largest of its kind in the world'.<sup>182</sup> The definition of 'cultural heritage' also included buildings in ruinous states, which thus had to be safeguarded like any other monumental site. These included Roman ruins, Greek temples, Etruscan tombs and more ancient remains.<sup>183</sup> The need of underlining this characteristic is not surprising, especially given soldiers' and commanders' ignorance towards archaeology and ancient history. An amusing episode stands out in giving an explanation to this last statement. In her book, Nicholas reports a conversation that General George Smith Patton (1885-1945) had with a local resident, close to the Greek temples of Agrigento (Sicily). General Patton asked if the roofless temples had been damaged by the American artillery,

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>180</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 109.

<sup>181</sup> *Army Service Forces Manual M353-17A* 1944.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*



‘No,’ answered the farmer through an interpreter. ‘That was done during the last war.’ Patton, who considered himself a history buff, was puzzled. ‘Last war?’ he asked. ‘When was that?’ ‘Oh, that,’ replied the Italian, ‘that was the Second Punic War’.<sup>184</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the lack of knowledge around history, art and archaeology was highly common among soldiers, even of higher rankings. Another example regards the city of Rome. There, some soldiers approaching the Colosseum exclaimed: ‘Gee, I didn’t know our bombers had done *that* much damage!’ [original emphasis].<sup>185</sup> Generating from this widespread ignorance was the need recognised by MFAA officers of educating soldiers on the importance of artworks, artefacts, and monumental buildings through an awareness-raising campaign, as will be thoroughly investigated later.

The spiritual, aesthetic and economic value of cultural heritage in occupied countries was emphasised also in the *Civil Affairs Information Guide* about the *Field Protection of Objects of Art and Archives* (issued on 12 May 1944).<sup>186</sup> It was prepared by the Roberts Commission to aid civil affairs officers in taking first emergency measures aiming to prevent any further damage to cultural treasures, until experts from the MFAA would have arrived.<sup>187</sup> The responsibility for the care of art and monuments fell upon the occupying forces. They would have been regarded, by local authorities, as accountable for all damage occurring during the occupation period. For this reason, civil affairs officers had to carefully look after troops, which could have been tempted to destroy objects belonging to the ‘enemy’, or to search for souvenirs.<sup>188</sup> Therefore, soldiers’ quartering in historical buildings had to be avoided.<sup>189</sup> Apart from these general considerations, the book was structured as a real manual on first-aid assistance to cultural properties, similar to the previously mentioned *Notes on Safeguarding* (1943). It included considerations on: the classification of art treasures and monuments

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<sup>184</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 224.

<sup>185</sup> Anderson 2019, p. 33.

<sup>186</sup> *Field Protection* 1944.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

(monumental or immovable, non-monumental or movable); the dangers attending military operations (direct hit, blast, fire and smoke, gas, etc.); specific problems on archaeological sites and on undamaged buildings and structures; packing problems and procedures; records and labels; protection and salvage of books, manuscripts, archives and records.<sup>190</sup>

Finally, as already briefly mentioned, a central tool in the protection of cultural heritage by Allied troops was the production and distribution of *Lists of Protected Monuments* (Fig. 11).<sup>191</sup> The lists consisted of seven booklets, each of them related to an Italian geographical area.<sup>192</sup> Every publication began with a copy of the aforementioned letter by General Alexander and of the 'ADM Instruction n. 10'. The booklets included lists of monuments to be protected, specifically buildings recognised as having a significant cultural value, divided into the cities where these were located. Their classification followed a ranking system with zero to three stars. Publications were prepared according to the material made available by the Harvard Group and in consultation with tourist guides accessible at that time (e.g. the volumes of *Guida d'Italia* published by the Touring Club Italiano).<sup>193</sup> As Coccoli clearly explains in her book, the lists had a primary role in helping monuments officers controlling and evaluating damage made by troops, and containing the situation with regard to military exploitation.<sup>194</sup> However, if a monument was not included in the lists, it would be very difficult for monuments officers to proceed with its safeguarding in the pre- and post-occupation periods.

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4, 6-8, 27-35, 39-40.

<sup>191</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 107-108; Hartt 1949, p. 5; Pollard 2020a, p. 199; Ranieri 2015, pp. 365-366. Copies of *Lists of Protected Monuments* are deposited in the archives of the AAR (MFAA Commission Archive, Box 2. Rome, Library of the American Academy in Rome), the BSR (Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box C-Documents. Rome, British School at Rome), and of the NARA (Records of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas 1942-1946, MFAA Field Reports. Washington D.C., National Archives and Records Administration).

<sup>192</sup> The booklets were divided as follows: 1. Sardinia and Sicily; 2. Apulia, Calabria, Campania, Lucania; 3. Abruzzi and Lazio; 4. Le Marche, Toscana, Umbria; 5. Liguria and Piedmont; 6. Emilia and Lombardia; 7. Le Tre Venezie (*Lists of Protected Monuments, Italy. Regions of Emilia and Lombardia* 1944, p. 10).

<sup>193</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 6; Pollard 2020a, p. 199.

<sup>194</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 108.



Figure 11 - Cover of the booklet *Lists of Protected Monuments, Italy. Regions of Tuscany, Umbria and Le Marche* (1944).

© The National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. - RG239, M1944, Materials Concerning the Subcommission for Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives.

As already concisely reported, an awareness-raising campaign addressed to soldiers deployed in the field was conducted by the AMG and the MFAA thanks to the organisation of tours for troops (Fig. 12), and the publication of guides about the most significant Italian cities as far as their artistic and cultural relevance was concerned. These guides were called *Soldier's Guides* (Fig. 13). The first ones published in 1943 were about Sicily and the whole Italy. These were followed by guides on the cities of Naples, Rome, Florence, a more general one about Italy and other ones about the regional areas of Umbria, Emilia, and Tuscany.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>195</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 109, 150. Following is a preliminary list of the *Soldier's Guides* published from 1943 to 1945, reported here in chronological order: *Soldier's Guide to Italy* (1943), *A Soldier's Outline of Italian History* (1943-45), *Soldier's Guide to Sicily* (1943), *Notes on the History, Art and Monuments of*

This awareness-raising campaign was necessary given the already thoroughly investigated allegations of damage and theft by Allied troops in Southern Italy, especially in a time when soldiers were approaching the city of Rome, the richest one as far as cultural treasures were concerned. The fear about the conduct of troops entering Rome is clearly expressed in a letter sent to headquarters of the 5<sup>th</sup> army by the Commanding General Clark.<sup>196</sup> He asked troops for appropriate conduct while occupying the city of Rome – they were not allowed to enter or bivouac in the city centre except for operational reasons, and they were not authorised to occupy buildings placed out-of-bounds. Soldiers had to respect these principles because,

the standards and conduct of the occupying military forces will be scrutinized carefully by the peoples of all nations, and will set the pace for future conduct of the Allied Forces in other parts of Europe.<sup>197</sup>

General Alexander made a similar remark in the introduction to the *Soldier's Guide to Rome*:

The eyes of all the world are upon our actions in the 'Eternal city', and we will show the world by our example the high standard of conduct and bearing of our victorious Allied armies.<sup>198</sup>

The awareness-raising campaign passed also through the organisation of special exhibitions of works of art from the major Italian museums, specifically addressed to

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*Sicily* (1943), *Soldiers Guide to Naples* (1944), *The Royal Palace of Naples* (1944), *Pompei* (1944), *A Soldier's Guide to Tuscany. Siena, Pisa, Lucca* (1944), *A Soldier's Guide to Naples* (1944-45), *History of Medical Center and Area* (1945), *The Turistico* (1945), *Soldier's Guide to Rome* (1944), *A Soldier's Guide to Rome* (1944), *Rome* (1944), *A Soldier's Guide ... Rome* (1945), *Rome. Allied Soldiers' Souvenir Guide* (1944-45), *A Soldier's Guide to Florence* (1944), *Florence* (1944), *Florence. Eighth Army* (1944), *A Soldier's Guide to Umbria* (1944-45), *A Soldier's Guide to Emilia* (1944-45) (source: Coccoli 2021). For an analysis on the *Soldier's Guides* published on the city of Rome, cf.: Anderson 2019; Brennan 2021. The *Soldier's Guides* consulted for this thesis are the following: *A Soldier's Guide to Florence* 1944; *A Soldier's Guide to Naples* 1945; *A Soldier's Guide to Rome* 1944; *Soldier's Guide to Rome* 1944; *A Soldier's Guide to Tuscany. Siena, Pisa, Lucca* 1944; *A Soldier's Guide to Umbria* 1945; *Rome. Allied Soldier's Souvenir Guide* 1944; *Soldier's Guide to Italy* 1944.

<sup>196</sup> AMG-16 1946, p. 3; Coccoli 2017, p. 149.

<sup>197</sup> AMG-16 1946, p. 3.

<sup>198</sup> *Soldier's Guide to Rome* 1944. Cf. also: Anderson 2019, p. 31; Brennan 2021.

troops to show them examples of the artworks they were called to protect.<sup>199</sup> The AMG, in cooperation with the MFAA, published also short articles and photographs on newspapers distributed in the theatre of war (*Union Jack, Stars and Stripes, Parade, Yank, Crusader*), about monuments and cities of historic relevance.<sup>200</sup>

Quoting the words of Carlotta Coccoli, the aforementioned sets of educational instruments addressed to soldiers,

reveal an attempt to transmit to Allied troops curiosity and respect for a collective cultural heritage heavily damaged by bombing and considered to be the very foundation of Western civilisation.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 150-152, 208, 373-375; Coccoli 2021; *Final Report General* 1946, p. 33. A preliminary list of the expositions organised by the MFAA is included in: *Final Report General* 1946, p. 34.

<sup>200</sup> AMG-13 1946, p. 19; Coccoli 2021.

<sup>201</sup> Coccoli 2021.



Figure 12 – New Zealander soldiers on conduct tour at the Colosseum (Rome, Italy), July 1944.

© New Zealand. Department of Internal Affairs. War History Branch. Photographs relating to World War 1914-1918, World War 1939-1945, occupation of Japan, Korean War, and Malayan Emergency. Ref: DA-06333-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand (<https://natlib.govt.nz/records/23083415>, Accessed 16 June 2021).

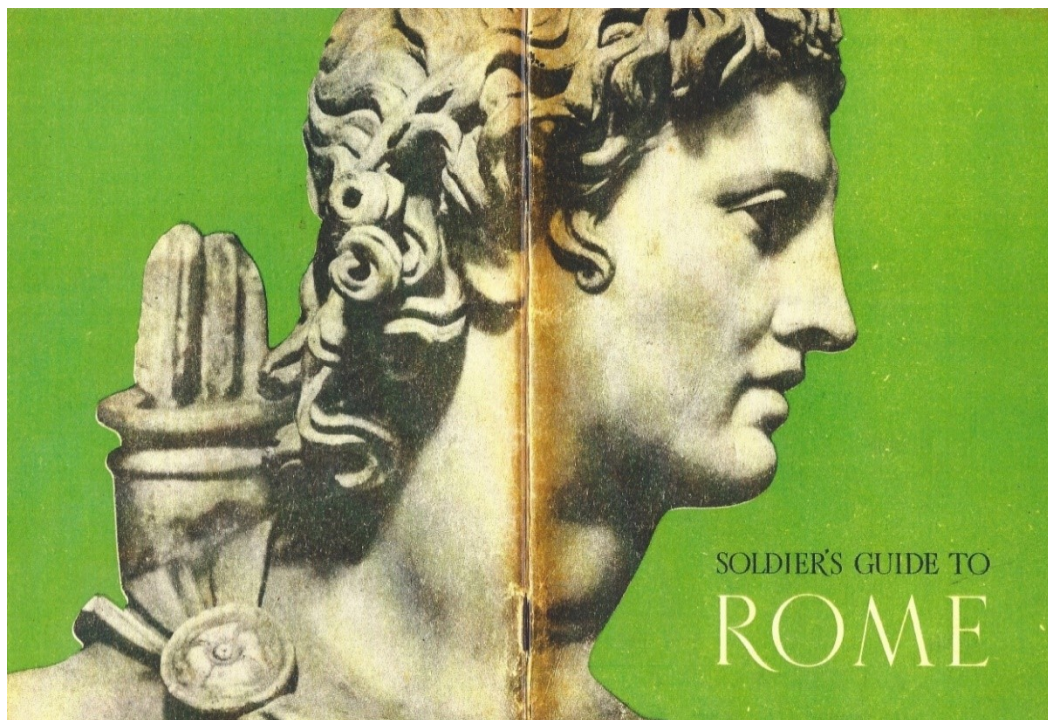


Figure 13 - Cover of the guidebook *Soldier's Guide to Rome* (1944), picturing the Apollo Belvedere from Musei Vaticani.

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Apart from the *Soldier's Guides*, a pamphlet called *Preservation of Works of Art in Italy* (issued on 8 May 1944) was distributed to troops to make them conscious of the issues deriving from a thoughtless abuse of monumental buildings and cultural treasures encountered during their advance through Italy.<sup>202</sup> The introductory section emphasised the difference between the damage inflicted to buildings of great historical value due to operational needs, and the destruction caused by negligent and wanton actions, to be considered 'a crime against civilization' – each member of the United Nations should have considered himself 'as a trustee' of art collections belonging to the occupied countries.<sup>203</sup> The main body of the pamphlet was focused on defining what is a work of art and which is its value, and on outlining the history of art in Italy, explaining why the country is so rich in artworks. More specifically, art was defined as the product of an artist with inspiration and vision, and not with just technical skills – 'the deeper the vision the greater the art'. This is what distinguished men from beasts.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the value of a work of art is not only monetary, but it is also given by its uniqueness – 'Their creators are dead, and no money could ever replace them'.<sup>205</sup> Its value is given also by its capability to shape people and a country, and to give them power:

There have been a few nations completely without art or learning, like the Hun or the Vandal; but they perished swiftly, and their names remain only as a by-word for ignorant savagery.<sup>206</sup>

As explained by the pamphlet's authors, Italy's rich historic artistic heritage has been generated mainly by the influence that the Church had through the centuries, becoming a patron of every expression of art (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature). This in addition to the great power of Renaissance patron families, like the Medici in Florence, the Sforza in Milan and the Este in Ferrara.<sup>207</sup> The pamphlet then

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<sup>202</sup> AMG-11a 1944, p. 4; Pollard 2020a, p. 200. Given the primary importance of the handbook, it has been copied in Appendix 2.

<sup>203</sup> AMG-11a 1944, p. 4.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

went on by briefly investigating what Nazis did to European cultural heritage, systematically looting movable works of art. The reasons for these actions were recognised by the pamphlet's authors as:

- a. In their opinion [In Nazi opinion, ed.], Germany has to be supreme in Art collections as in everything else.
- b. To destroy a nation utterly ... you must also destroy its cultural heritage of science, literature, and art.
- c. Works of art, like jewellery, are a good form of investment against the day of reckoning.<sup>208</sup>

Given these illicit actions perpetrated by the Nazis in Europe, Allied troops were asked to act with the best behaviour in order not to be accused of the same crimes. Opposed to what Nazis believed, 'Art and science are not things that belong to any one nation', but to all of humanity and, therefore, should be kept safe.<sup>209</sup> Finally, the pamphlet ended with a list of things a soldier should do to achieve the purpose of protecting cultural treasures in occupied countries: not damaging pictures by carving graffiti, by chipping off souvenirs, or by cutting out pieces of them; treating with extreme care occupied historic buildings; helping preserve books and libraries from damage, because they will be needed in the future for the re-education of Italian people; treating laboratories and their contents with respect – 'Have you thought who, in the long run, pays for the damage you do?'.<sup>210</sup>

Concluding this section, as Coccoli argues, the measures taken by the Allies to prevent issues deriving from troops' exploitation of monumental buildings can be divided into

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid*., p. 7.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid*. Despite the efforts by the MFAA and the AMG to prevent troops' theft and damage, instances were accounted during the last months of 1944, too. In the MFAA *Fourteenth Monthly Report, for December 1944*, compiled by monuments officer Major Ernest T. De Wald, it was described a new procedure in trying to avoid the persistent requisition of monumental buildings by troops: posting three different kinds of signs, whether the building was historical, educational or artistic; and a MFAA officer had to be consulted before the requisition of one of the previously mentioned sites, also in case the building was subjected to demolition (AMG-80b 1946, p. 12).



two categories: prevention and education.<sup>211</sup> On the one side, under the prevention category lie all the instructions, orders and memoranda issued by the AMGOT/AMG, and addressed to unit commanders and their troops. On the other side, but strictly linked to the first group, is the education category, under which are positioned all the measures taken, especially by monuments officers, to change the attitude of troops towards the heritage of the occupied countries – a real awareness-raising campaign, based on the organisation of guided tours, and the publication and distribution of books, pamphlets and articles to the troops deployed in theatres of war. It is essential to emphasise that, thanks to this educational campaign, with the northward advance in Italy, problems connected with soldiers' damage and theft of cultural properties progressively decreased, but without disappearing completely.<sup>212</sup> As stated by monuments officer Mason Hammond,

advance indoctrination of troops might reduce, but probably could not entirely prevent, playfulness, souvenir collecting, or looting.<sup>213</sup>

Furthermore, the findings gathered from the investigated documents suggest that the measures taken by the AMGOT/AMG in preventing troops' exploitation of historical buildings can be divided into two phases: a preliminary one from June to December 1943, and the second one from December 1943 to April 1945. More specifically, the first phase saw increased attention paid specially to souvenir hunting and the trafficking of objects ('ADM Instruction n. 12'; 'AMGOT Plan'), still without a precise mention to the billeting of troops in monumental buildings. The need of protecting heritage in occupied countries was perceived exclusively as counter propaganda ('ADM Instruction n. 12'). Moreover, this phase was guided by a more general concern for damaging lives and properties of any kind, not merely of the cultural type ('Order on Wilful Damage and Looting'). Nevertheless, something started to change in December 1943, when a preliminary list of monumental buildings to be protected and not to be occupied was published with the 'ADM Instruction n. 19'. Furthermore, the responsibility of taking all the possible precautions in preventing carelessness and

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<sup>211</sup> Cocoli 2017, pp. 106-108.

<sup>212</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 10-11.

<sup>213</sup> Hammond 1980, p. 96.

souvenir hunting of cultural treasures was placed to unit commanders ('PBS Circular n. 37'; 'General Order n. 68'; Letter by General Alexander; 'ADM Instruction n. 10').

With the distribution of the letters by Generals Eisenhower and Alexander, the period I acknowledge as the second and most important phase started, which finally recognised the primary importance, in military operations, of protecting cultural treasures in occupied countries and the responsibility of the army as a whole for such protection. This and the definitively identified central role of monuments officers in aiding the military in the safekeeping of occupied countries' heritage, in conjunction with the appointment of the Collier Commission, were important steps forward in recognising not only the critical need to protect cultural heritage, but also the primary role that Allied troops played in destroying, damaging, and stealing cultural treasures. Finally, in this second phase, a more comprehensive list of buildings that should have not been occupied was published – firstly, with the 'General Order n. 68', mentioning all the sites listed in the 'Zone Handbook' and all the ones containing art collections and scientific objects; secondly, with the last and most important ones, the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.

Nevertheless, the document which can stand as the peak in the variety of measures taken by Allied governments in preventing troops' vandalism and theft is the pamphlet *Preservation of Works of Art in Italy*. The document clearly summarises the precepts contained in all the previous published instructions and orders. Moreover, apart from making troops conscious of the problems deriving from a thoughtless abuse of monumental buildings, it considered for the first time these actions as 'crimes against civilisation'. The pamphlet's core point is the recognition of art as pertaining to the entirety of humanity and, therefore, soldiers were identified, by the document's compiler, as art 'trustees'. Finally, the need for constructing a strong counter propaganda against the Nazis, thanks primarily to the positive behaviour of Allied troops towards the heritage of the occupied countries, is emphasised once again here. In the same direction goes General Eisenhower's letter and the Manual *Field Protection of Objects of Art and Archives*.

A table summarising the contents and issue dates of Allied governments' regulations in the cultural property protection field is reported in Appendix 4.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed the efforts undertaken by Allied governments in the cultural property protection field in wartime, generated primarily for contrasting troops' unlawful activities towards cultural heritage, in an early phase willing to oppose Nazi and Fascist propagandist allegations. These preventive measures passed through the issue of rules and orders, and the creation of the MFAA as a task force deployed in the war field aiming at protecting art and monuments from every type of accident (vandalism, destruction, looting). Through the analysed archival records, it has been possible to demonstrate that the MFAA was initially founded with the primary aim to discipline troops' treatment of cultural properties in occupied territories of Italy. To be noted is that World War II was the first conflict where such a broad regulation in the cultural property protection field was organised.

Moreover, through the investigated archival documents, this chapter has presented a tentative explanation for the topic of Allied art theft and damage during the occupation of Italian territories, providing a preliminary discussion of the main topic of this research project. A number of key issues viewed in isolation by earlier studies have been considered together here, with the purpose to provide an in-depth analysis regarding the role of Allies in stealing and damaging artworks and artefacts during the Second World War.

From the data collected and investigated in this chapter, I can conclude that recurrent events regarding troops' unlawful activities towards cultural assets were mainly in connection with the military occupation of historical buildings. Furthermore, these accidents were caused by an extensive administrative laxity in the cultural property protection field, and by troops' carelessness. The first circumstance recognisable from the analysis of archival records is a general permissiveness on the issue of troops' exploitation of monumental sites, especially in the early phase of the Allied advance in new territories. For example, this chapter has demonstrated that in Southern Italy monuments officers were deployed in the war field exclusively in a later phase, thus providing soldiers unlimited space for souvenir hunting and destructive actions. Secondly, these unlawful activities against the heritage of occupied territories were caused by a negligent attitude towards cultural property protection, deriving from a

lack of education among troops deployed in theatres of war. In order to change soldiers' approaches to heritage, Allied governments issued a series of instructions, and monuments officers organised an awareness-raising campaign directed to soldiers of all ranks. Although in an early phase Allied governments published rules and regulations exclusively to contrast enemy's propagandistic allegations, governments finally understood the importance of preserving the memoirs of the past for the future generations, thus circulating ever more effective instructions to troops. Thanks to the distribution of rules and regulations to soldiers and to monuments officers' awareness-raising campaigns, troops' exploitation of historical buildings and the subsequent illicit appropriation of their contents gradually decreased, but never disappeared completely.

In conclusion, this chapter has made a contribution towards a better understanding of the issue of Allied troops' art theft and vandalism during the Second World War, demonstrating the primary role that those had in these illegal acts. However, it is necessary to emphasise that Allies' art stealing activities were not as systematic and organised as the ones perpetrated by the Nazis before and during the war, which can be viewed as real campaigns of plundering. Furthermore, the present chapter has also provided a conclusive explanation to the sub-theme of this thesis, outlining the responsibility that the MFAA had in trying to prevent troops' unlawful activities against the heritage of occupied territories.

After having provided a wide picture of the measures adopted by Allied governments in trying to contain the unlawful actions perpetrated by troops against cultural properties in occupied countries, the next chapter will investigate further enemy propagandist allegations against the Allies, seen as thieves and destroyers of artistic treasures.

### Chapter 3 – Enemy propaganda against the Allies

This chapter presents a concise study of the Fascist and Nazi propagandist campaigns against the Anglo-Americans in World War II. The purpose is to provide a preliminary investigation into propagandist allegations against the Allies in the cultural field, which, as demonstrated in chapter 2, were the cause of the renewed and recalibrated interest by British and American governments in the protection of cultural heritage. This study, thus, contributes towards a better understanding of the preambles to the activities undertaken, in wartime, by Allied governments in the cultural property protection field.

The chapter addresses a number of issues. Firstly, it begins by briefly investigating current theories around propaganda as a means of communication, and by analysing whether present definitions of ‘propaganda’ fit within the propagandist campaigns arranged by Fascists and Nazis against the Anglo-Americans before and during the Second World War. The chapter, then, more closely examines propagandist allegations against the Allies, often characterised both as thieves and as destroyers of art treasures. They were accused of deploying art dealers in the war field – disguised as monuments officers – to strip Europe of their treasures, and of conducting air-bombardments aiming at destroying not only buildings with a military function, but also historical monuments. The last section of this chapter is an analysis of the one I recognise as the ‘Cyrenaica matter’, namely the propaganda undertaken by the Fascist government against the British in occupation of Cyrenaica (1941 and 1942-1951). It is reasonable to acknowledge this as the beginning of the Fascist propagandist campaign against the Anglo-Americans in World War II.

Fundamental sources concerning current theories around propaganda are the studies of Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell (*Propaganda and Persuasion*, 2012) and Nicholas Cull, David Culbert and David Welch (*Propaganda and Mass Persuasion. A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present*, 2003). The first is an in-depth analysis of propaganda as a means of communication, also examining its relationship with ‘persuasion’. The second one is a review of the historical evolution of propaganda, in

the form of an encyclopaedia, from 1500 to the present time. Indispensable primary sources in the investigation of propagandist allegations against the Allies in World War II are the booklets published by the Fascist government between 1944 and 1945 with the purpose of depicting the Anglo-Americans as destroyers of civilisations: *La Guerra contro l'Arte* (1944), *Barbarie Anglo-Americana* (1944), *Torino Ferita Mutilata* (1945), and the series *I 'Liberatori'* (published in 1945 on the cities of Bologna, Milan, Parma, Padua and Treviso).<sup>214</sup> The findings gathered from these booklets have been integrated with information collected from secondary sources: the works by Raffaella Biscioni on the fundamental role of visual means for Fascist propaganda ('*La Propaganda Fotografica dei Danni al Patrimonio Artistico durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale*', 2009; and '*I Monumenti e la Loro Protezione. La Propaganda Fotografica nei Periodici Illustrati durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale*', 2010), and by Luca Ciancabilla on the main instruments used by Fascists in constructing false allegations against the Allies in the cultural field ('*La Guerra contro l'Arte. Dall'Associazione Nazionale per il Restauro dei Monumenti Danneggiati dalla Guerra alla Ricostruzione del Patrimonio Artistico in Italia*', 2008). Finally, the study on the allegations raised by the Fascists against British troops in Cyrenaica has been based on the analysis of two fundamental primary sources: the booklet published by the Fascist government describing the alleged unlawful actions committed by British troops (*Che Cosa Hanno Fatto gli Inglesi in Cirenaica*, 1941); and the report produced by Sir Leonard Woolley, who was appointed by the British government to enquire on the matter (*A Record of the Work Done by the Military Authorities for the Protection of the Treasures of Art & History in War Areas*, 1947).

To conclude, this chapter serves as a follow-up study on the investigation conducted in chapter 2 as far as the first phases of Anglo-American governments' actions in the cultural property protection area are concerned, supplementing information regarding the reasons why they decided to take concrete actions in this field. This study does not claim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the topic, but exclusively an overview of

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<sup>214</sup> *I 'Liberatori' su Bologna* 1945; *I 'Liberatori' su Milano* 1945; *I 'Liberatori' su Parma* 1945.

the main elements characterising Fascist and Nazi propaganda against the Allies in World War II from the point of view of their treatment of heritage.

### **Fascist and Nazi propaganda against the Allies**

The overall objective of this section is to analyse the distinctive features of propaganda in general, linking them to more specific characteristics defining Fascist and Nazi propaganda against the Allies in the cultural field. After this brief introduction, this chapter's section investigates in detail the propagandist allegations raised against the Anglo-Americans, portrayed both as art thieves and as destroyers of civilisations.

In their foundational work on propaganda, Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, communications scholars, define 'propaganda' as,

the *deliberate, systematic* attempt to *shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions*, and *direct behavior* to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist [emphasis added].<sup>215</sup>

They consider propaganda as 'deliberate' and 'systematic' for being intentional, premeditated, and methodical, based on a careful consideration of the most effective strategies to be used to convey a specific ideology. It is also an 'attempt' because it *tries* to create a certain condition in a specific audience, following two distinct objectives: 'shape perceptions' and 'manipulate cognitions'. The first one includes remodelling people's understanding of a particular message or situation through language and images. This is influenced by individuals' own culture, values, and roles. The second objective, instead, consists of directing people's beliefs and attitudes around a specific idea. Again, this is regulated by cultural and personal values and emotions.<sup>216</sup>

For Jowett and O'Donnell, the primary goal of propaganda is to 'direct behavior': to guide individuals' conduct towards a certain situation. As Adolf Hitler argued in his

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<sup>215</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-17.

manifesto *Mein Kampf* (1925), the function of propaganda is to converge people's attention towards specific facts, processes, and necessities, 'whose significance is thus for the first time placed within their field of vision'.<sup>217</sup> Another aim of the propagandist is 'achieving a response'. Namely, provoking a specific reaction to the propagandist's message in an audience. In this case, the ones who benefit from people's response are the organisms making propaganda.<sup>218</sup> To substantiate these assumptions, I recall the words of Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler's Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda), who identified the scope of propaganda as 'to undermine quite rigidly held ideas and to construct new ones that will take their place'.<sup>219</sup>

Another foundational study on propaganda is the comprehensive work around this topic published by the historians Nicholas Cull, David Culbert and David Welch in 2003: a historical encyclopaedia of propaganda from 1500 to the present time. Here, the historian David Welch provides his own definition of 'propaganda':

the deliberate attempt to influence public opinion through the transmission of ideas and values for a specific persuasive purpose that has been consciously devised to serve the self-interest of the propagandist, either directly or indirectly.<sup>220</sup>

There, again, are summarised the aforementioned peculiarities of propaganda: to be systematic and methodical in its attempt to control information flow; to manage a certain public's opinion by shaping perceptions; to manipulate behavioural patterns; and to advantage the individuals making propaganda. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler described other peculiar characteristics of propagandist messages: being clear and focused on as few concepts as possible, the repetition of those concepts, and the emphasis on

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<sup>217</sup> Hitler, A. cited in Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, p. xvii.

<sup>218</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, pp. 7-17, 48-49.

<sup>219</sup> Goebbels, J. quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 240. For a detailed analysis of Goebbel's views on propaganda, cf.: Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, pp. 441-444; Taylor 2015.

<sup>220</sup> Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, p. xix.



personal emotions.<sup>221</sup> All the investigated characteristics of propaganda are what distinguish it from a free and open exchange of ideas.<sup>222</sup>

The definitions provided by Welch, Jowett and O'Donnell fit perfectly with the typical features of the propaganda put in place by Fascists and Nazis against the Anglo-Americans before and during World War II. It was a well-organised and coordinated attempt of weakening Allies' power and of presenting their actions in a negative light, especially through the manipulation of images, visual symbols and messages directed to a domestic audience – the Italian and German population. The principal means of Fascist and Nazi propaganda were radio, documentary films, pamphlets, posters, and newspapers.<sup>223</sup> Indeed, propagandists' preferred strategy is a control over media as an agent of information distribution, presenting distorted messages from what appears to be a credible source.<sup>224</sup>

Fascist and Nazi propaganda against the Allies was vigorous especially in interwar years and during World War II, when reaching a widespread approval was a central aim for both regimes. Propaganda is a common means of communication during wars, and it has been an essential element in warfare for centuries.<sup>225</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell quote the powerful saying 'the first casualty during war is truth' for emphasising the very common and, at the same time, aggressive information control by governments in wartime.<sup>226</sup>

The main topics used by Nazi and Fascist propaganda during World War II were: the invulnerable power of Germany and Italy; the demonisation of the Anglo-Americans; and the unconditional trust for the commander-in-chief (respectively, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini).<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Hitler, A. cited in *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

<sup>222</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, pp. 7-17, 45, 49.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-249.

<sup>224</sup> Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, pp. xvi-xvii, 125-127, 442; Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, p. 46.

<sup>225</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, p. 14, 211.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>227</sup> Biscioni 2009, p. 10; Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, pp. 166, 442.

In the next two sections, I will specifically study Fascist and Nazi propagandist allegations against the Anglo-Americans in the cultural field. I will provide several pertinent examples referring to those alleged accusations.

### *Art thieves*

The propaganda generated by Fascists and Nazis in the cultural field, against the Anglo-Americans' treatment of monuments, artworks and artefacts, was extremely forceful. The Allies were generally depicted both as destroyers and thieves of Italian art treasures. Trying to 'save Italian art' from Allied 'terror' bombings and from 'greedy' American art dealers was one of the aims of the German Kunstschutz – a governmental body created in 1940 for protecting cultural heritage from war dangers, but later to become one of the primary entities organising the vast Nazi art looting campaigns throughout Europe.<sup>228</sup> As an example, I report here the words of the German newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung in Norwegen*, where it stands clear the aforementioned association of Allies with thieves and destroyers of art:

While the Anglo-American cultural barbarians ruthlessly destroy Italian art treasures or, if they escape bombs, gather them up and ship off great boatfuls, Germany has been constantly concerned to protect their precious possession of Europe against destruction ... it is clear that it is due solely to the energetic initiative of Germans that the most valuable art objects of various parts of Italy have been brought to safety or been protected from the dangers of bombing and enemy attack.<sup>229</sup>

This is only one of the many allegations reported in German newspapers. Nazis there characterised themselves as protectors of art, in opposition to the supposed

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<sup>228</sup> Flanner 1957, pp. 235-236. Cf. also: Paoletti 1991, p. 46. The MFAA compiled a *Report on the German Kunstschutz*, outlining its objectives, structure, and illicit activities (*Report on the German Kunstschutz (MFAA Branch) in Italy between 1943 and 1945*, in: Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box E- Documents; a copy of the same document is preserved also in: MFAA Commission Archive, Box 1, Library of the American Academy in Rome). Head of the Kunstschutz was Col. Prof. Alexander Langsdorff (Hartt 1949, p. 30; Paoletti 1991, p. 46). The Kunstschutz's headquarters in Italy had been located in Rome until 1944, when it was transferred to Florence (Paoletti 1991, p. 46).

<sup>229</sup> The article has been translated and copied in the MFAA report *General* 1945, p. 264.

wrongdoings perpetrated by Anglo-Americans in Italy. Furthermore, in this article, apart from being portrayed as destroyers of art – a characterisation which will be investigated in detail in the next section of this chapter – Allies were also represented as thieves. They had been accused of having deployed several art dealers in the war field to deliberately steal European artworks to be transferred to museums or sold to private collections in the U.S.. More precisely, MFAA officers were frequently associated with art dealers deployed in the theatre of war to strip Europe of its art treasures. As an example, I report here two remarkable passages from the studies of Nicholas and Dagnini Brey:

... the German radio continually broadcast bulletins such as the following: ‘Like hyenas the Anglo-American barbarians in the occupied western territories are falling upon German works of art and beginning a systematic looting campaign. Under flimsy pretexts all private houses and public buildings in the whole area are searched by *art experts*, most of them Jews, who “confiscate” all works of art whose owners cannot prove beyond doubt their property rights ... These works of art, stolen in true Jewish style, are transferred to Aachen, where they are sorted and packed and then dispatched to the U.S.A.’ [emphasis added].<sup>230</sup>

Again,

Italian newspapers reported ships sailing daily from the port of Palermo loaded with treasures headed for the New York art market; a bunch of Jewish dealers, posing as ‘*monuments officers*’, were supposedly scouting the theatre of war in search of prized pieces to send overseas [emphasis added].<sup>231</sup>

Recurrent in these passages is the use of epithets in depicting the Allies as vandals and barbarians, as it will be comprehensively investigated in the next section of this chapter.<sup>232</sup> However, in the above excerpts, the characterisation of Anglo-Americans

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<sup>230</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 328.

<sup>231</sup> Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 40.

<sup>232</sup> Another example of this kind is mentioned in Woolley 1947, p. 7 (footnotes), where he quoted the following broadcast from the Rome radio (15 October 1943): ‘The first ships left Sicily for London today with precious works of art, some of which will go to the British Museum and some to private collections’.

went further, labelling MFAA officers both as art dealers – assuming there a negative connotation – and as Jews – historical enemies of both Nazi and Fascist regimes. Thus, defining monuments officers as ‘a bunch of Jewish dealers’ was one of the most negative identifications propaganda could make at that time, especially for its anti-Semitic connotation.

Nazis and Fascists skilfully planted in the local population the idea of the presence of art dealers between Allied soldiers, by mentioning various staged cases of art stealing activities in newspapers and radio broadcasts. For example, the following charge of wrongdoing reported in another German newspaper, the *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*:

The American wholesale art dealer Cadoorie and Company has given a commission for the purchase of Sicilian antiquities. This is the same business that made great purchases from European emigrants and arranged auction sales of paintings, furniture, porcelain and other art objects. ... Behind the name Cadoorie the Jew Pimpernell is hidden ... the representative in Algiers, Sally Winestone, has arranged connections with the staff of the Anglo-American hospital ships who endeavor to carry out her commissions.<sup>233</sup>

Again, the association between American art dealers and Jewish people is central in this article. This is a recurrent theme in the Nazi propaganda, as just demonstrated by this passage and by the excerpts mentioned before.<sup>234</sup>

Furthermore, German radios frequently reported the propagandist message that several maps had been distributed to Allied soldiers ‘to enable them to trace artistic treasures easily’.<sup>235</sup> These were, instead, the so-called ‘Frick Maps’, circulated among

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<sup>233</sup> The *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*’s article has been translated and quoted in Nicholas 1994, p. 231.

<sup>234</sup> Other examples of the association between monuments officers and Jewish art dealers are mentioned in Woolley 1947, p. 7 (footnotes). I copy here the reported radio messages: ‘The Commission of American Art experts in Italy are not historians acting for the sake of science and from an unselfish love of art, but are mostly Jewish buyers of the big New York and London art firms’ (German radio, January 1944); ‘A new batch of Jewish art dealers has arrived in South Italy from the U.S.A.’ (German Home Service Broadcast, 11 April 1944); ‘On the market there is wild competition between the English and American Jew art dealers whose agents are bidding against each other to get out of South Italy anything of any interest at all’ (*Völkischer Beobachter*, 16 March 1944).

<sup>235</sup> The radio message has been translated and copied in Woolley 1947, p. 7 (footnotes).

soldiers to spare the highlighted monuments from being destroyed or damaged by wartime actions.<sup>236</sup>

Germans constantly emphasised their role of protector of European art treasures and defender of its civilisation – another propagandist claim used to put their actions under the best light, in spite of what was happening in reality with their massive art looting campaigns throughout all Europe. Apart from the *Deutsche Zeitung in Norwegen* article mentioned above, another example of the kind is reported in the MFAA *Final Report for Campania*. There, the stealing act perpetrated by the Hermann Göring Division against some of Mostra d'Oltremare's artworks preserved at Abbazia di Montecassino is described; this will be investigated in chapter 5. Significantly, officers of the Göring Division transferred those works of art to their headquarters in Spoleto 'to protect the treasures from the Anglo-American barbarians'.<sup>237</sup> This was, undoubtedly, an excuse for hiding their true intentions: stealing artworks for the private collection of their commander, Hermann Göring. A similar event happened with reference to artworks in Florentine museums and galleries, stolen by the Germans from refuges in the Tuscan countryside. They transferred the artworks, 'allegedly for safety', to Tyrol at San Leonardo (Val Passiria, Merano) and at Campo Tures (Valle Aurina, Brunico) – at that time subjected to a complete German administration.<sup>238</sup> The stolen works of art, apart from a few paintings, were soon recovered by monuments officers Capt. Deane Keller and Lt. Frederick Hartt (1914-1991), and handed over to Florence with an official ceremony on 21 July 1945 (Fig. 14).<sup>239</sup> The true intentions of the Germans were reported in the following remarkable excerpt from the MFAA *Final Report on Tuscany*:

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<sup>236</sup> For more information about the 'Frick Maps', cf. chapter 2.

<sup>237</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 18.

<sup>238</sup> AMG-177 1946, pp. 8-9.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9. For a detailed analysis of the looting of Florentine artworks transferred to Tyrol by the Germans, cf.: Hartt 1949, pp. 97-115; Fasola 1945b. On their return to Florence, cf.: Hartt 1949, pp. 139-159. For biographic details of Lt. Hartt, cf.: Appendix 6.

... the interrogation of the captured members of the Kunstschutz organisation at Bolzano revealed a strange and characteristically German tale of honest intentions mixed with an opportunism which, if not at the outset deliberately dishonest, all too rapidly degenerated in the minds of its prime movers into an unparalleled scheme for the artistic enrichment of the Reich at the expense of Italy.<sup>240</sup>

Here, again, Germans used the alleged intention of saving Italian art from the Anglo-Americans as a pretext for enriching Nazis' art collections. Using the alibi of saving European art from the Allies was a constant thread for the Nazis in their art looting campaigns.

Fascist and Nazi propaganda was exacerbated by the questionable treatment of cultural assets by Allied soldiers. This is described in a passage of Dagnini Brey's study, where she refers to troops' occupation of the archaeological area of Paestum (Salerno, Campania – Fig. 6), where Allies located a provisional outpost, therefore giving place for propagandist accusations:

British soldiers who had established a makeshift office in the cool shade of the columns of one of Paestum's ancient Greek temples were proof that the Allies were to modern Italy what the Huns, the Goths, and the Vandals had been to ancient Rome. ... The beauty that the Allies could not understand they would trample and destroy. Or steal.<sup>241</sup>

In this excerpt, Allies were assimilated to barbarians for acting as ransackers and as thieves of art treasures due to their lack of knowledge in this field. Allied governments were preoccupied with the idea that this kind of propaganda would have damaged their image towards Italian people during the liberation of cities, and thus weakened their power, otherwise strengthening Fascist and Nazi forces thanks to the support of

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<sup>240</sup> AMG-177 1946, p. 8.

<sup>241</sup> Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 39-40. In this passage, the author refers to British troops, instead figure 6 portrays an American detachment in occupation of one of Paestum's temples.

the local population. Indeed, the idea that Allied soldiers were scores of pilferers started permeating Italian society, as clear in the following excerpt:

I have been told by many people in Naples that damage caused by Allied troops in the Palace [Palazzo Reale di Napoli, ed.] was the subject of much adverse comment among people from all classes of society and that sometimes there was the statement that 'even the Germans did not do that'.<sup>242</sup>

The quote refers to the report compiled by Colonel Edgar Erskine Hume (1889-1952, Chief of the AMG for General Clark's 5<sup>th</sup> army Italian sector) on the Allied troops' occupation of Palazzo Reale di Napoli, which will be thoroughly investigated in chapter 5. For now, it must be remarked that Palazzo Reale was one of the most affected monuments in Italy by Allies' indiscriminate requisitions.

Propaganda directed at Allied soldiers' treatment of art preoccupied Anglo-Americans also because this had proved to have some basis in reality, as just noted, although this was exaggerated. As already comprehensively investigated in chapter 2, Allied governments were preoccupied with Nazi and Fascist propagandist allegations, and they were aware that some of these accusations could be proven right, which contributed to a renewed interest in cultural property protection, with the establishment of the MFAA, and the dissemination of rules and regulations directed to soldiers of all ranks.

The next section will study enemy propagandist allegations against the Allies, described as destroyers of civilisations for their supposedly inaccurate air-bombardments, aiming to destroy European – and particularly Italian – art treasures.

### *Destroyers of civilisations*

As briefly mentioned at the beginning of the previous section, Allies were characterised by Nazi and Fascist propaganda not exclusively as art thieves, but also as destroyers of heritage, especially due to their aerial bombing campaigns over European cities. The researcher Raffaella Biscioni rightly divides Fascist propaganda

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<sup>242</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 39-40.

against Allied air-bombardments in Italy into three phases, following the main events of the Second World War. During the first three years of war, Allied destruction of cultural heritage was substantially censored. The turning point was in spring 1943, when the feeling of a forthcoming invasion by Allied troops in Italy – both by land and by air – started to rise exponentially, with Axis forces losing ground. This was the phase in which propaganda against Allied bombings reached the highest point, instilling the idea of a heroic country destroyed by ferocious enemies (Great Britain, United States and Russia). Finally, with the fall of the Fascist regime, and with the sub-sequent control over Italy by the Nazis, the topic of Allied air-bombardments lost interest in favour of counter-propagandist campaigns against the accusation of German art stealing activities.<sup>243</sup>

The preferred instrument of Fascist and Nazi propaganda was the use of newspapers, pamphlets and publications distributed to the largest portion possible of the population. This happened with reference to the entire European scenario, with Germans circulating a number of illustrated leaflets showing the damage caused to European historic monuments by Anglo-American bombings.<sup>244</sup>

As far as Italy was concerned, the Fascist government issued a series of propagandist publications, showing the extent of the damage done by Allied bombing-raids over Italian monuments. The most striking examples are two booklets published in 1944 with the intent to present to the public the effects of Anglo-American air-bombardments against the Italian cultural heritage: *La Guerra contro l'Arte* and *Barbarie Anglo-Americana*. Both contained an overview of the monuments destroyed or damaged, divided into cities – the first publication with detailed descriptions, the second one in form of a list. Introductions outlined the purposes of both publications – showing to the Italian people the destruction caused by the enemy to cultural heritage – using incisive propagandist words to identify the offense caused by Allied air-raids: a ‘dishonour’ to the most ‘intimate’ assets of Italian people and to the precious

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<sup>243</sup> Biscioni 2009, pp. 20-21, 25-26. Cf. also: Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, p. 126.

<sup>244</sup> *Special Meeting* 1945, p. 5.



inheritance of a glorious past; an 'injury' caused not only to an 'holy' art legacy, but also to the entire Italian civilisation; a 'slaughter' for Italian people and for the entire world.<sup>245</sup> Moreover, the publication *La Guerra contro l'Arte* made extensive use of images accompanying the text. As an additional visual effect, the publisher also included a series of pictures taken before the destruction of monuments occurred, adding a cross on them to mark the irreparable loss – as an example: the images of Mantegna's frescoes in Cappella degli Ovetari at the Eremitani (Padua), destroyed by air bombardments (Fig. 15).<sup>246</sup> The booklet's publisher made also a sharp use of words in the images' captions: 'martyrdom', 'devastation', 'injury', 'mutilation', 'pain' are the most recurrent ones describing the offense caused by the Allies to the Italian artistic heritage.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Author's translation from the original texts: '... un disonore di chi ha voluto colpirci nel più intimo dei nostri beni, cioè nel retaggio più prezioso del nostro grande passato e della nostra coscienza nazionale.' (*La Guerra contro l'Arte* 1944, pp. 5-7); '... offesa recata, non solo ad uno dei più sacri patrimoni dell'arte, ma alla stessa civiltà' (*Ibid.*); '...scempio, per noi e per il mondo' (*Barbarie Anglo-Americana* 1944, p. 5).

<sup>246</sup> Biscioni 2009, p. 17; Ciancabilla 2008.

<sup>247</sup> Ciancabilla 2008. Author's translation from the Italian words: 'martirio', 'devastazione', 'offesa', 'mutilazione', 'dolore'.



Figure 14 - On 21 July 1945, Florentine museums' artworks looted by the Germans were returned to the city of Florence with an official ceremony. They were transported to Piazza della Signoria on American trucks.

Source: Paoletti 1991, p. 102.

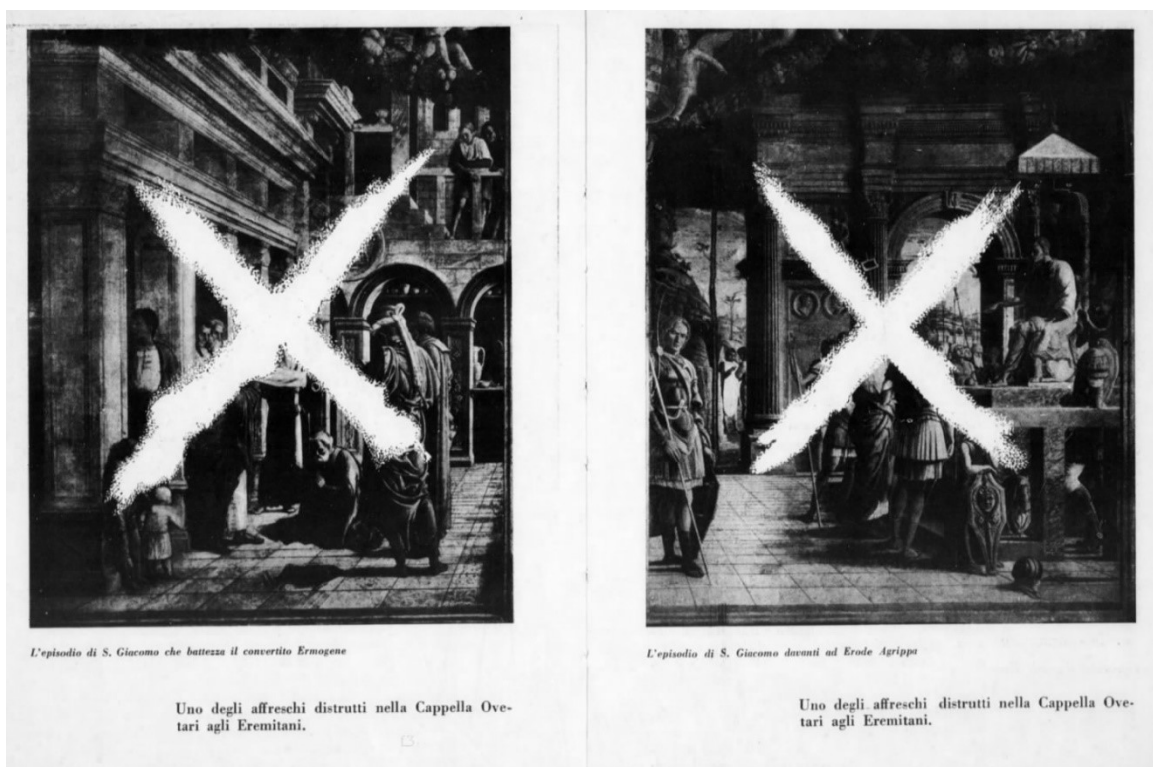


Figure 15 - The crossed images of the Mantegna frescoes in Cappella degli Ovetari (Padua), marking the irreparable artworks' loss due to a bombing raid (La Guerra contro l'Arte, 1944).

Source: La Guerra contro l'Arte 1944, pp. 90-91.

The Fascist government also issued booklets depicting in detail acts of destruction occurring in several different Italian cities. This is the case, for example, of the publication *Torino Ferita Mutilata* (1945) and of the series *I 'Liberatori'* (1945). The first booklet contained a catalogue of Turin's monuments destroyed and damaged by Allied air-raids.<sup>248</sup> There, the use of words was again extremely powerful. More precisely, recurrent were the term 'slaughter' to describe the results of enemy's air-bombings, and the designations 'terrorist' and 'cruel' to characterise the Allies.<sup>249</sup> Furthermore, the journalist and politician Ezio Maria Gray (1885-1969), author of the booklet's introduction, emphasised the opposition between creators and destroyers of civilisation – the Italians on the one hand, and the Anglo-Americans on the other. He also underlined that Allies, for having perpetrated this 'slaughter', would not ever pertain to humanity.<sup>250</sup> The art historian Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), in a passage on his diary, railed against this condemnation of Allied actions, emphasising the antinomy between Fascist and Anglo-American treatment of art: Fascists were free to demolish and disfigure whatever in a city like Rome, without any kind of opposition from scholars and, in general, from the population (cf. Mussolini's urban policy with the destruction of ancient buildings and ruins to build Fascist monuments aiming at creating a new Rome, capital of the Fascist Empire); on the contrary, the Allies, whose 'accidental destruction of this or that bit of ancient building' was considered a crime against humanity.<sup>251</sup>

The series *I 'Liberatori'* (1945) consisted of five publications on the cities of Bologna, Milan, Parma, Padua and Treviso, with detailed accounts of the damage occurred to monuments, accompanied by several pictures. Again, the publications used extremely sharp words to characterise both the actions of the Anglo-Americans and the Allies themselves. The use of these designations was stronger and more recurrent than in the previously mentioned booklets *La Guerra contro l'Arte*, *Barbarie Anglo-Americana* and *Torino Ferita Mutilata*. Allied acts were outlined with the following terms: injury,

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<sup>248</sup> *Torino Ferita Mutilata* 1945.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 6.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>251</sup> Bernard, B. cited in Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 106. Cf. also: Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, p. 126.

terroristic, horror, slaughter, blind violence, Anglo-Saxon barbarity, iconoclastic fury, stupid cruelty, cold and nameless perversity, martyrdom, hate.<sup>252</sup> Anglo-Americans were described with the words 'vandals', 'barbarians', 'primitive', and with the sarcastic designations of 'heroes', 'friends', and 'liberators', as the title of the series suggested ('liberatori').<sup>253</sup> In the booklet dedicated to the city of Milan they were even characterised as 'barbarians of jazz and cocktail' ('barbari del jazz e del cocktail').<sup>254</sup>

Fascist propaganda took advantage not only of the incisiveness of words in characterising the destructive Allied aerial bombing campaigns against the Italian artistic heritage, but recurrent was also the use of visual symbols, such as images. These could be considered more direct than the written text, because they were more immediate and understandable even by the large illiterate portion of the Italian population at that time. From this moment onwards, visual communication was conceived not only as an illustration accompanying the text, but as a fundamental part of information control.<sup>255</sup> As pointed out by Biscioni, the primary aim of the Fascist visual propaganda was to build the internal consensus, by showing the supposed atrocities of Anglo-Americans in opposition to the positive actions of the Fascists.<sup>256</sup> For example, one of the propagandist topics used to emphasise this juxtaposition was the frequent mention, through the use of pictures on newspapers, to the care used by Fascists during their bombardments over British cities, which allegedly exclusively hit buildings with a military function and thus spared artistic sites.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Author's translation from the Italian words: 'offesa', 'terroristico', 'orrore', 'scempio', 'cieco furore', 'barbarie anglosassone', 'furia iconoclasta', 'malvagità stupida', 'perversità fredda e senza nome', 'martirio', 'odio' (*I 'Liberatori' su Bologna* 1945, pp. 3-6, 12, 17, 20; *I 'Liberatori' su Parma* 1945, pp. 3-4).

<sup>253</sup> Author's translation of the following: 'vandali', 'barbari', 'incivili', 'eroi', 'amici', 'liberatori' (*I 'Liberatori' su Bologna* 1945, pp. 3-6, 17, 20, 25, 28; *I 'Liberatori' su Parma* 1945, pp. 3-4; *I 'Liberatori' su Milano* 1945, p. 58). On the pejorative origins of the term 'vandal', cf.: Boldrick and Clay 2007; Gamboni 2013.

<sup>254</sup> *I 'Liberatori' su Milano* 1945, p. 58.

<sup>255</sup> Biscioni 2009, p. 9.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5; Biscioni 2010, p. 54.

<sup>257</sup> Biscioni 2009, p. 18.

The central role of visual communication in the Fascist propaganda was emphasised by the creation, in 1924, of Istituto LUCE to supervise the production and dissemination of images (both photographic and cinematographic), and by the control over censorship put in place by the Ministry of Popular Culture (Ministero della Cultura Popolare), founded in 1937.<sup>258</sup>

Similar to the case of the previously mentioned *La Guerra contro l'Arte*'s crossed images, depicting the irreparable loss of destroyed monuments, the Fascist government issued two series of stamps depicting Italian damaged historical buildings, called 'Hostium Rabies Diruit' (Latin for 'the enemy's fury destroyed'). The first series was issued in June 1944 and it depicted three destroyed monuments (Palazzo della Mercanzia in Bologna – Fig. 16, Chiesa di San Lorenzo in Rome, Cattedrale di Palermo) and the Fascist propagandist symbol of 'Tamburino' (a drum player in military marching bands). The series circulated in winter 1944-1945 represented other damaged historical buildings (Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Chiesa di San Ciriaco in Ancona, Abbazia di Montecassino) and the image of 'Italia turrita' (the allegorical representation of Italy as a young woman with a crown composed of walls and towers), along with a verse from Giacomo Leopardi's poem *All'Italia* ('To Italy').

As a further example of the power of visual symbols in the Fascist propagandist campaigns against the Allies, it is important to consider the use they made of graffiti, painted on walls of buildings damaged by air-bombardments. There, it appeared words like 'made by the liberators' (e.g., on Chiesa del Sacro Cuore and Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna – Fig. 17), or 'national monument destroyed by the Anglo-Saxon liberators' (e.g., on Palazzo Silvestri in Milan) to mark the supposed inaccuracy of Allied bombings, and as visual proofs of their barbaric actions.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6; Biscioni 2010, p. 54. The Ministry of Popular Culture substituted the Ministry of Press and Propaganda (Ministero per la Stampa e la Propaganda) (Cull, Culbert and Welch 2003, pp. 126-127).

<sup>259</sup> Ciancabilla 2008; *I 'Liberatori' su Milano* 1945, p. 52.



*Figure 16 - A stamp of the 'Hostium Rabies Diruit' series (1944-1945), representing Palazzo della Mercanzia in Bologna, destroyed by a bombing raid.*

*Source: Ciancabilla 2008, p. 2.*



*Figure 17 - Propagandist graffiti 'Opera dei liberatori' ('Made by the liberators') on the wall of Chiesa del Sacro Cuore in Bologna.*

*Source: Ciancabilla 2008, p. 13.*



Finally, a striking recap of the main features characterising enemy propaganda against the Allies was mentioned in the MFAA *Ninth Monthly Report*, where peculiarities are summarised as follows:

- a) exaggeration to, or invention of, bomb-damage to monuments.
- b) accusations that Allied troops are preparing to strip Italy of her art treasures
- ...
- c) a particular ripe specimen is the statement that the Ponte S. Trinita at Florence, (confessedly blown by the Germans) has been destroyed by Allied gunfire. The leaning tower at Pisa has been reported similarly destroyed.<sup>260</sup>

Remarkably, monuments officers described there the main propagandist topics used against the Allies: as demonstrated before, they were wrongfully labelled both as destroyers and as thieves of art treasures. The passage closed by mentioning the wreck supposedly done by the Allies to Ponte Santa Trinita in Florence and to the world-famous Torre di Pisa. Nazi propaganda, through the use of pamphlets left behind by retreating German troops from the city of Florence, accused the Anglo-Americans of having destroyed the first one and damaged the second.<sup>261</sup> The reality, however, was completely different. Ponte Santa Trinita was blown up by retreating German troops on the night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1944 with the purpose to slow down the Allied advance. The bridge was mined in its entirety and completely wiped out (Fig. 40).<sup>262</sup> The total destruction of Ponte Santa Trinita is recognised as one of the most significant acts of damage suffered by the Italian cultural heritage in World War II along with Mantegna's frescoes in Padua, Campo Santo in Pisa, Basilica di Santa Chiara in Naples and Abbazia di Montecassino.<sup>263</sup>

On the other hand, the city of Pisa, for being an important hub of railroad communications, suffered devastating consequences from the forty days of artillery

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<sup>260</sup> AMG-24 1946, p. 7.

<sup>261</sup> Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 148.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147-149. A brief account of the events that interested Florence in World War II is included in chapter 6.

<sup>263</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 22.

battle between the Germans and the Anglo-Americans on the banks of the river Arno (July-September 1944).<sup>264</sup> At the end of the war, Pisa turned out to be one of the most damaged cities in Italy.<sup>265</sup> The Germans established an observation post inside the leaning tower, thus attracting Allied forces to the monumental area, which also includes Campo Santo and the Cathedral.<sup>266</sup> Nevertheless, the tower remained intact apart from very few hits.<sup>267</sup> The most relevant battlefield damage took place at Campo Santo, whose wooden roof was completely destroyed by the fire caused by a bomb fallen in the proximity, damaging the below frescoes and leaving them exposed to weather for months (Fig. 18).<sup>268</sup> As described in MFAA reports, this constituted ‘one of the major artistic tragedies of the war’.<sup>269</sup>

To conclude this section, I report here the words of Lt. Hartt, recorded in his memoir of the activities he undertook in Florence as MFAA Regional Commissioner for Tuscany:

Constant amusement was afforded the officers of the Subcommittee by the daily German and Fascist Republican broadcasts, referring to us as the ‘American art-Jews’ who were pillaging Italy. According to these stories the captured works of art were spread out for the Allied generals to take their pick, and the remainder went to America and Britain as fast as the ships could carry them. Every month a convoy was assembled in Salerno Bay for this purpose.

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<sup>264</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 176, 199; Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 218; Hartt 1949, p. 117.

<sup>265</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 199.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>267</sup> Allied officers in a first phase wanted to destroy Torre di Pisa for being a German observation point. Fortunately, officers later decided not to proceed further, and the tower had been spared (cf.: ‘Leon Weckstein, the man who saved the Leaning Tower’ – <https://vimeo.com/108358762>, Accessed 24 May 2021).

<sup>268</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 176, 200; Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 220-221; Hartt 1949, pp. 117-118. A detailed account of the events that interested Campo Santo is included in Coccoli 2017 (pp. 200-205) and in Hartt 1949 (pp. 117-127). Hartt 1949 (pp. 118-121) also encompasses the copy of the ‘Chronicle of the Destruction by Fire, Caused by an Artillery Shell, of the Incomparable Jewel of Art which was the Celebrated Campo Santo of Pisa, which Took Place July 27, 1944’ by Bruno Farnesi, technical assistant of the Opera del Duomo and one of the first to arrive to the Campo Santo trying to extinguish the flames.

<sup>269</sup> AMG-177 1946, p. 7. It is again characterised as ‘one of major tragedies of Italian campaign’ in the same report, but at p. 41. Hartt (1949, p. 118) described Campo Santo’s destruction with the following words: ‘[the destruction of the Campo Santo, ed.] must rank immediately after the loss of the Mantegna frescoes in Padua as the most severe artistic disaster of the war in Italy’.



We had dismantled the cathedral of Monreale stone by stone, and sent that along too. A huge auction had taken place in New York, in which all the finest things from Sicily were offered for sale to the public; the Germans even had a copy of the sale catalogue. When in a ceremony at the National Gallery in Washington the late President Roosevelt expressed the gratitude of the nation for the gift by Mr. Samuel Henry Kress of his splendid collection of Italian paintings, the radio screamed that the 'Jew' Kress was giving to the Americans all the treasures of Italy which had been stolen by Negro troops. But the humor of the situation wore a bit thin for those of us who were then working in the midst of the rubble to which the Germans had reduced the center of Florence (after blaming it on us), or struggling to reach deposits [of artworks, ed.] the Germans had just emptied.<sup>270</sup>

Undoubtedly, this passage constitutes a relevant summary of the main topics used by Nazi and Fascist propaganda against the Anglo-Americans, as described in the last two sections of this chapter: the characterisation of the Allies as Jewish art-dealers stealing Italian works of art to transfer them to the U.S. and Great Britain; the accusations to the Allies of the destructive actions undertaken, in reality, by the Germans themselves; and the depiction of Anglo-Americans as destroyers of art. Very important is also the last paragraph of the excerpt, where Hartt put in sharp contrast the actions undertaken by the MFAA in protecting Italian art to the Nazi propagandist allegations against them.

The next section of this chapter will investigate Fascist propagandist claims against the treatment of art and monuments by British soldiers during their campaign in Cyrenaica (1941), which I recognise as the starting point of Fascist – and later Nazi – propaganda against the Allies in the cultural field.

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<sup>270</sup> Hartt 1949, pp. 111-112.



*Figure 18 - Campo Santo (Pisa) after wartime damage. Campo Santo's wooden roof had been destroyed completely by a fire caused by a bomb fallen in the proximity.*

© Opera della Primaziale di Pisa, Attribution, via Wikimedia Commons. Available at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pisa\\_Camposanto1944.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pisa_Camposanto1944.jpg) (Accessed 16 February 2021).

### **The Cyrenaica matter**

To completely understand the implications around enemy propaganda against Allied troops in World War II, it is necessary to take a step back and focus on its preambles. As mentioned in chapter 2, allegations of troops' stealing and damaging cultural objects and historical monuments were first raised against the British army by the Fascist government during the British campaign in Cyrenaica (Eastern Libya, 1941 and 1942-1951). Chapter 2 focuses on the entanglements that those false accusations had at a societal level, consequently causing an exponential interest in the cultural property protection field by the British government, preoccupied that future allegations of this kind would have weakened the home front support in entering the war against Germany and Italy. Instead, this section aims at investigating in detail the

accusations raised against the British in Cyrenaica, which can be identified as the starting point of the Fascist propagandist campaign against the Allies in World War II.

British troops occupied Cyrenaica on 3 February 1941, until the Italians retook the area in the spring of the same year.<sup>271</sup> Libya was considered by the Fascist regime as one of the 'jewels' of the Empire conquered by Benito Mussolini.<sup>272</sup> Thus, Fascists perceived the British occupation as an outrage that had to be fought with every means possible – the principal among those means was propaganda. Mussolini wanted to construct a precise narrative around the British in occupation of the area, characterising their actions as much negative as possible. By designing a negative aura around the British, Italian people would have immediately perceived them, and consequently their allies, as brutal forces, to be fought and not to be encouraged – in opposition to the positive attitude of the Fascists, who thus had to be supported and favoured.

The propagandist campaign against the British in Cyrenaica was centred around the publication of a booklet entitled *Che Cosa Hanno Fatto gli Inglesi in Cirenaica* ('What the English Did in Cyrenaica' – Fig. 19), published by the Ministry of Popular Culture in summer 1941.<sup>273</sup> The publication comprised articles, letters, and pictures describing the supposedly illegal actions undertaken by Commonwealth troops especially against private properties and people, but not exclusively. The booklet reported alleged instances of thefts, assaults, profanations of graves, killings, and rapes. All these actions concurred to what was defined as 'il martirio della Cirenaica' ('the martyrdom of Cyrenaica').<sup>274</sup>

The publication also described the negative treatment that troops had of Cyrenaica's cultural heritage. The text was accompanied by pictures as proofs. They showed ancient statues – brought to light by Italian excavations in the area – overthrown and

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<sup>271</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 109; Woolley 1947, pp. 10-12. Allied forces later retook Cyrenaica in 1942; the area remained under the British jurisdiction until 1951 (Pollard 2020a, p. 110).

<sup>272</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 215.

<sup>273</sup> Ministero della Cultura Popolare 1941; Nicholas 1994, pp. 215-217; Pollard 2020a, pp. 109-110; Woolley 1947, pp. 5, 10-12.

<sup>274</sup> Ministero della Cultura Popolare 1941, p. viii.

reduced to fragments in the Museum of Cyrene (Fig. 20). Pictures illustrated also empty pedestals, from which statues were taken away (Fig. 21, left), and graffiti inside museum galleries' rooms (Fig. 21, right). The subjects involved in these activities were for the majority Australian soldiers, frequently described in the booklet as drunk, troublesome, and insubordinate.<sup>275</sup>

In the publication, Commonwealth troops were often depicted as ignorant and underdeveloped, in opposition to the Italians, seen as agents of culture and innovation. Troops' actions were characterised with the following words: 'cruelty', 'brutal fury', 'systematic destruction', 'barbaric acts', 'atrocities', 'abomination'. Soldiers were described as: 'looters', 'pirates', 'ignorant', 'mercenaries', 'thieves', 'killers', 'beasts', 'vandals', 'criminals'.<sup>276</sup>



Figure 19 - Cover of the propagandist booklet *Che Cosa Hanno Fatto gli Inglesi in Cirenaica* ('What the English did in Cyrenaica'), published by the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture in 1941, aiming at addressing the illicit actions allegedly committed by Commonwealth troops against public and private properties of Cyrenaica.

Source: Ministero della Cultura Popolare 1941.

<sup>275</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 215-217; Pollard 2020a, pp. 109-110.

<sup>276</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 215-217.



Figure 20 - Propagandist picture showing ancient statues supposedly overthrown and damaged by British soldiers in the Museum of Cyrene (from the booklet *Che Cosa Hanno Fatto gli Inglesi in Cirenaica*).

*Source: Ministero della Cultura Popolare 1941.*

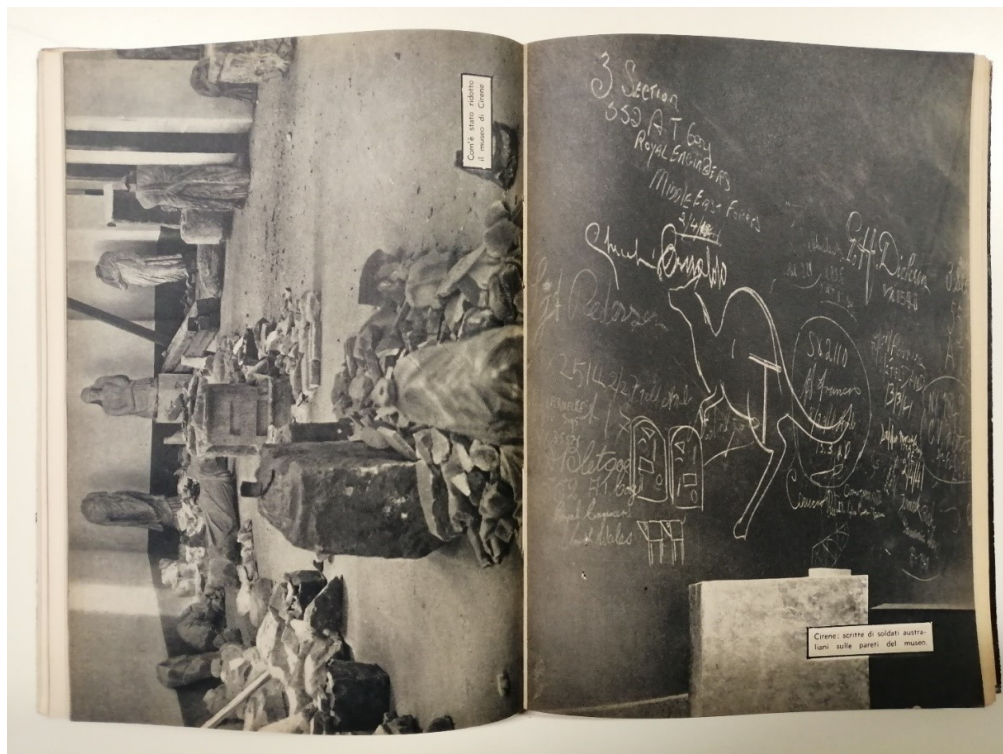


Figure 21 - Propagandist pictures showing empty pedestals in the Museum of Cyrene, and graffiti inside the museum galleries' rooms (from the booklet *Che Cosa Hanno Fatto gli Inglesi in Cirenaica*).

Source: Ministero della Cultura Popolare 1941.

The British government started an enquiry on the matter in May 1943. Pictures proved to be falsifications, as recounted by Sir Leonard Woolley, appointed to investigate on these accusations:

When Cyrene was finally re-taken [by British troops, ed.], we were able to establish the fact that all this evidence has been deliberately falsified by the Italians. The broken statues had been broken, not recently by our troops, but in antiquity; they were photographed not in the Museum galleries but in the workshop where the 'formatori' had been building them up from fragments collected in the course of the excavations. The statues that had stood upon the empty pedestals had been carried off by the Italians themselves and were in Tripolitania. The rooms on whose walls Australian soldiers had inscribed their names were not the art galleries, but empty rooms, whose walls already bore Italian graffiti of a precisely similar sort. The damage done by our troops was in facts negligible.<sup>277</sup>

Thus, the broken statues were in reality located in Italians' repair shops, and they had been smashed in ancient times; the supposedly stolen statues had been removed by the Italians and transferred to another area; graffiti was not in museum galleries, but in empty rooms and close to graffiti of the same kind made by the Italians.<sup>278</sup>

Woolley closed the above excerpt by stating that 'the damage done by our troops was in facts negligible'. According to Woolley, soldiers caused only minor damage to archaeological objects and to historical monuments, generated primarily by their ignorance in the cultural property protection field:

during our occupation the presence in large numbers of soldiers ignorant of the importance of the monuments was only too likely to give rise to unfortunate incidents.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Woolley 1947, pp. 10-12.

<sup>278</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 215-217.

<sup>279</sup> Woolley 1947, pp. 10-12. Woolley's publication also contains a detailed account of the damage done by British troops in Cyrene, Leptis Magna and Sabratha (*Ibid.*).



To avoid further episodes of the same kind, historical buildings were put out-of-bounds, pamphlets on the need of protecting monuments were distributed to troops, and a guidebook about the area was published.<sup>280</sup>

In conclusion, Italian people were not aware of the reality of the facts narrated by the Fascist government in relation to the Cyrenaica: the accusations raised against the British were staged and constructed for purely propagandist reasons. With these allegations, Fascists wanted to put their actions under the best light, in opposition to the supposedly brutal treatment that the British had inflicted on both cultural heritage and the population. As a matter of fact, the Fascists, in their African territories, set up a segregated system affecting colonised people, for example through the establishment of concentration camps in Libya or the use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia.<sup>281</sup> The reality was totally different from the messages presented by the propaganda.

## **Conclusion**

The study on the Fascist and Nazi propaganda against the Anglo-Americans – especially in the cultural heritage field – is of relevance because it lays the foundation for the enquiry on the motives behind Allied governments' interest for the protection of heritage in occupied territories of Europe. As already thoroughly investigated in chapter 2, enemy propagandist allegations against Allied troops as thieves and destroyers of art played an important role in the British and American governments' development of enquiries and subsequent policies on the matter. They discovered that some of these allegations had some basis in reality, although they were exaggerated for propagandist reasons. Thus, Allied governments organised awareness-raising campaigns willing to sensitise troops on the importance of protecting monuments and their contents, they founded the Roberts Commission and consequently the MFAA, and they issued a series of rules and regulations on the matter.

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<sup>280</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 215-217; Woolley 1947, pp. 10-12.

<sup>281</sup> Pretelli 2004, p. 193.

A theme I have not considered in chapter 2 is that of Allied bombardments. I must clarify here that it is undeniably true that Anglo-Americans have destroyed artistic treasures, in some cases irreparably (e.g., Cappella degli Ovetari in Padua with astounding Mantegna's frescoes). There have been also instances of military operations developed under incorrect assumptions, such as the bombardment of Abbazia di Montecassino, wrongly declared a German observation post. However, Anglo-Americans were the first to implement an active cultural heritage protection policy in warfare, with the foundation of the MFAA, and with the issue of detailed maps showing the exact location of monuments that had to be spared during air-raids. This is recognised also by contemporary specialists, like Gallerie degli Uffizi's official Cesare Fasola (1886-1963), who in 1945 wrote:

The Allies have come among us with a precedent which stands out as one of the few attempts, perhaps the earliest, to regulate the situation [in the field of the protection of cultural property, ed.].<sup>282</sup>

Furthermore, to be noted is that systems which allowed precision bombardments started developing during that time. As rightly emphasised by Pollard, World War II bombing technology made almost impossible to attack targets close to monumental sites without some bombs accidentally hitting them.<sup>283</sup> Moreover, as stressed by the eminent historian Richard Overy, 'Italy was ... the victim of its own geography', for being heavily urbanised.<sup>284</sup> These circumstances resulted in bombing as being the cause of most damage to cultural assets caused by the Anglo-Americans in World War II.<sup>285</sup> Thus, all things considered, I am able to conclude, without any doubt, that Anglo-Americans acted with best intentions in trying to spare monumental sites from being destroyed or damaged by bombing raids.

As demonstrated by this chapter, in accusing Anglo-Americans of being both destroyers and thieves of art treasures, a common trait of propaganda was the use of remarks forged to address Allied actions. Frequent were the designations of

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<sup>282</sup> Fasola 1945b, p. 66.

<sup>283</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 212.

<sup>284</sup> Overy, R. in the preface to Coccoli 2017, p. 9.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.



‘terrorists’, ‘vandals’, ‘barbarians’ and ‘liberators’ in referring to the Anglo-Americans, and epithets like ‘injury’, ‘martyrdom’, ‘slaughter’, ‘violence’, ‘fury’ and ‘cruelty’ in describing their shameful treatment of artistic heritage. Another instrument adopted by Fascists and Nazis in characterising Allied actions as extremely negative was the use of images. As proved by the analysis conducted in this chapter, both images and words became as incisive as possible with the loss of power by Axis forces in the war. Indeed, that was the time when forces losing ground had to try to regain it by finding support from the local population in their war against the enemy. From Fascist false accusations in Cyrenaica, through allegations of Allied monuments officers as Jewish art dealers, words and images became always more powerful. The highest point was reached with the characterisation of Anglo-Americans as destroyers of civilisations – at this point, negative epithets describing Allied actions were more frequent than before, and images even more dramatic (e.g., the use of crossed pictures in the booklet *La Guerra contro l’Arte* for showing the extent of losses caused by Allied bombing campaigns over Italian cities).

Through the use of images and words, Fascists constantly promoted the enemy’s ignorance as opposed to the moral and cultural elevation of the Italian people, as in a clash of civilisations – the Italians as creators, and the Allies as destroyers.<sup>286</sup> The same opposition was established by Nazi propaganda, which depicted the Anglo-Americans as ransackers of art treasures, and the Germans as protectors of art. In both cases, these propagandist themes were used to put Fascist and Nazi actions under the best light, in opposition to the negative Anglo-American treatment of monuments, again to find as much support possible from the home front. This strong propaganda against the Allies served also to obscure the reality – for example, to cover Nazi art looting campaigns that were stripping Europe of their art treasures, or the Fascist government’s treatment of colonised people in Africa with the establishment of concentration camps and the use of chemical weapons.

It is reasonable to conclude that, despite being exhaustive in the description of the main features characterising enemy propaganda against the Allies in the cultural field,

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<sup>286</sup> Biscioni 2010.

the study of this topic, for the many implications it raises, warrants further investigation, which is beyond the scope of this research project. The next chapter will analyse proven facts concerning damaging and stealing activities perpetrated by the Anglo-Americans in Europe, with a particular focus on Germany and France.

## Chapter 4 – Allied Art theft and damage in Europe: an overview

Instances of Allied army's theft and damage to artworks and artefacts in World War II have been recorded in archival documents and discussed in secondary sources. The present chapter aims at analysing some of them, focusing in particular on events from the occupied territories of France, Germany and Italy. While it would be important to examine the European situation in greater detail, this thesis is restricted exclusively to the Italian territory, to present a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon limited to a single area. Therefore, instances of Allied illicit actions against cultural property in Europe are confined solely to the first section of this chapter.

The chapter is divided into two sections. Firstly, the investigation is introduced by a brief overview of the problem related to Allied troops' damaging and stealing activities against cultural objects, in Germany and France. The aim is to set the scene for the analysis conducted later in the study with reference to the Italian situation. Secondly, the last section of this chapter highlights examples of art theft and damage by the hand of Allied troops in Italy. The enquiry is conducted on instances reported in documents preserved into the archives of NARA and of John Bryan Ward-Perkins at the BSR.

To assess whether Germany and France had been affected by Allied troops' illicit activities against cultural properties, I have consulted the works of Kenneth Alford (*Allied Looting in World War II*, 2011), Seth Givens ('Liberating the Germans', 2014), Lynn Nicholas (*The Rape of Europa*, 1994), and Mary Ellen Stanley (*Plunder and Profit: Museums, Private Collectors, and Nazi Looted Art*, 2013). As already investigated in the *Research context* section of chapter 1, while Alford provides a clear picture of the extensiveness of Allied art theft in Germany, Givens focuses his analysis exclusively on Allied stealing activities against private properties of German civilians, claiming that Allied art theft was not extensive, providing therefore a simplistic assumption concerning this issue. Besides, Nicholas records several examples of Allied art theft from both Germany and France. Moreover, although the main themes of Stanley's work are Nazi art looting and the restitution processes in post-war period, she briefly

analyses Allied stealing activities in Germany, concerning both cultural and private properties. Finally, as far as the Italian area is concerned, I have consulted reports and documents produced by the MFAA in wartime regarding its activities in Italy in the safeguarding of historical monuments and their contents, preserved at NARA and at the BSR.

This chapter aims to provide a general picture of the European situation as far as Allied troops' illicit activities against cultural assets are concerned. Thus, it serves as an introductory study to the topic, presenting an early examination of evidence of troops' stealing activities and vandalism, which will be thoroughly scrutinised in the case studies section of this thesis.

### **Germany and France**

This section seeks to introduce the topic of Allied troops' treatment of art in World War II, by investigating instances of stealing and acts of damage by Anglo-American troops in occupied areas of Europe. The aim is to provide a wide picture of the phenomenon, investigating several examples reported from Germany and France. My enquiry on this topic has been mainly based on the investigation of secondary sources, as already thoroughly described. A comprehensive account of the events that involved the European territories occupied by the Allies is beyond the scope of this study. Thus, the most striking examples are exclusively discussed here. Moreover, the enquiry excludes the Italian area, which will be the subject of a more accurate analysis conducted later in the next section of this chapter and in other thesis' sections.

Firstly, I briefly evaluate the issue of Allied troops' stealing activities in Germany, which involved not only cultural heritage, but also – and more extensively – private properties of German civilians. The first section argues that troops, in their illicit activities, were moved by a will of revenge for Nazi atrocities. Secondly, the following section provides evidence of Allied art stealing activities in Germany by analysing two of the most peculiar art thefts conducted by Anglo-Americans in wartime, rightly defined as 'the most highly disputed instances of American looting': the Quedlinburg

treasure and the Hesse jewels.<sup>287</sup> Finally, the last section examines to what extent French cultural properties were affected by Allied troops' stealing and destructive actions. Examples of these illicit activities abound, but only some of them are discussed here.

### *Germany*

Recently, there have been significant advances in the study of the role that Allied troops played in looting private properties in occupied Germany. According to the historian Seth Givens, Anglo-American troops in Germany stole civilian possessions on a large scale for several different reasons: wartime necessity, profit or trade, keepsakes, and revenge for Nazi atrocities.<sup>288</sup> For instance, Allied soldiers searched homes and forced families out to find a place for billeting – German houses, indeed, still had electricity and running hot water, unlike homes found in the previous military campaigns in France and Holland. For the same reason of staying alive and keeping warm, troops ransacked homes to find fresh food and alcohol. While in Germany, soldiers also stole currency and broke into bank safes. A remarkable example is the stealing of Dutch Gold coins and Reichsmarks, which disappeared from the Merkers mine – one of the Nazi repositories of artworks and valuables – while in Allies' hands. Moreover, Anglo-Americans looted equipment, radios, cameras, watches, weapons, and anything with an economic value. The majority of these objects were later shipped home as mementoes or souvenirs for families and friends.<sup>289</sup>

Significant for understanding the extent and the distinctive features of these illegal acts is the following quote, reported by Alford:

Everybody sends home souvenirs through the [Allied, ed.] Army Post Office, whose sign over the door reads 'The best loot in the world passes through these doors'.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> The quote is from Stanley 2013, p. 27.

<sup>288</sup> Givens 2014.

<sup>289</sup> Alford 1994, pp. 11-14; Givens 2014, pp. 33, 37-39, 41-43; Stanley 2013, pp. 26-27.

<sup>290</sup> Alford 1994, p. 7.

The quote helps to identify peculiar characteristics of Allied stealing activities: *consciousness* – soldiers and commanders were aware that these acts were wrongful for the fact they identified them with the term ‘loot’; *extensiveness* – these acts were a daily routine; *positive perspective* – despite their identification as prohibited, these actions were perceived with a confident attitude, namely as something common among soldiers fighting in an enemy territory.<sup>291</sup>

To substantiate his argumentation concerning the extensiveness and ferocity of Allied unlawful actions against the German population, Givens cites the words of Serg. Raymond Gantter, from a letter dated 23 April 1945:

We are devastation .... Where we have passed, little remains – no cameras, no pistols, no watches, very little jewelry, and damn few virgins. We leave behind us a spoor of broken dishes, emptied fruit jars, and plundered, dirty houses. And our general attitude (which I’m inclined to share) is: So you wanted total war? You believed in it, boasted of it? Well, this is it!<sup>292</sup>

As clear from this passage, stealing was not the only illegal act soldiers perpetrated while in Germany. Unfortunately, the rape crimes committed by troops against German women, who in the mind of Allied soldiers were all associated with Nazism, were very extensive. From 7 January 1945, when the first rape was reported, to 23 September 1945, the U.S. army convicted 284 soldiers for rape crimes against German civilians.<sup>293</sup> Rape and looting were a daily occurrence, justified by the need for revenge in response to the devastation that Nazis perpetrated, especially in Eastern Europe: ‘We were giving the Germans a taste of what they had been doing to others for years’.<sup>294</sup> These actions were perceived by Allied soldiers as a symbolic punishment for Nazi crimes. In this context, they did not consider the ordinary looting activities properly as ‘stealing’, but they called it ‘liberating’.<sup>295</sup> The most striking example is the

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<sup>291</sup> As already investigated in chapter 1, the term ‘loot’ identifies an act of stealing goods from empty buildings (*Compact Oxford English Dictionary* 2000).

<sup>292</sup> Givens 2014, p. 33.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>294</sup> Pfc. Richard Courtney, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

ransacking of the German town of Berchtesgaden, the holiday destination for the Nazi elite. Allied troops entered the town on 4 May 1945 (Fig. 22) and, from the very beginning, they started a real 'open season of plundering'.<sup>296</sup> Berchtesgaden soon became 'the most thoroughly looted town in all of Germany'.<sup>297</sup>

A similar point is made by Alford in his book on Allies' art stealing activities in Germany. He defines these widespread actions as 'a festive treasure hunt' and a 'soldierly sport', which interested the whole army: enlisted men, nurses, officers, and commanders.<sup>298</sup> The favourite 'hunting grounds' were vacated towns. Troops stole every valuable item: 'The only limit to one's daily looting was the size of the sack'.<sup>299</sup> These illegal actions were not usually punished by the army. Soldiers were not allowed to ship home souvenirs taken from occupied territories, but, as a matter of fact, this rule was rarely applied. High-ranking officials, who should have enforced these regulations, were primary actors in this looting campaign, as clearly suggested in the following account of events:

Looting became an art. ... U.S. tactical units posted contraband lists that included automobiles and jewelry, and military government detachments would 'enforce' the lists by 'requisitioning' items for high-ranking U.S. officers. Officers specialized in the appropriation of fine German automobiles. A colonel would simply drive an automobile out of a family garage, paint it olive drab, and register it at headquarters as his own property. The retreating German army had confiscated many bicycles and automobiles, but U.S. troops took the rest.<sup>300</sup>

Given the extensiveness and ferocity of crimes against the German population, Allied troops were soon compared to the Soviet army and its brutality. Alford reports that a

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<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*. Cf. also: Alford 2011, p. 53/3552.

<sup>298</sup> Alford 1994, pp. 11-14.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

common joke among German civilians was that the only difference between an American and a Russian soldier was that the American one took a bath.<sup>301</sup>



*Figure 22 - American soldiers toast victory in the town of Berchtesgaden (Germany), the holiday destination for the Nazi elite. The town resulted in being one of the most looted places in Germany by Anglo-American troops.*

© Wikimedia Commons, U.S. Army photo [Public domain]. Available at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:American\\_soldiers\\_at\\_Berchtesgaden\\_toast\\_victory,\\_1945.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:American_soldiers_at_Berchtesgaden_toast_victory,_1945.jpg) (Accessed 31 October 2019).

In his paper, Givens claims that Allied troops' stealing of cultural heritage rarely occurred.<sup>302</sup> The analysis of documents proves this statement to be an oversimplification of a much more complex context. Undoubtedly, the truth lies between two poles: Allied troops committed crimes of stealing cultural properties in wartime, but their actions, despite being extensive, were not as systematic and organised as those undertaken by Nazi and Soviet armies. This argumentation is

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<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> Givens 2014, pp. 35, 43.



emphasised by Alford, who makes a clear distinction between the well-organised looting methods of Nazi troops and the Allies' disorganised ones:

The only difference between the Germans and the Americans in looting was [that] the Germans *kept very accurate records* and with the Americans *it was free enterprise unchecked* [emphasis added].<sup>303</sup>

The topic of Allied art theft in Germany has been the focus of several studies. In the 1990s, Lynn Nicholas first remarked that Allies perpetrated illicit actions against the cultural heritage of occupied European territories, Germany included.<sup>304</sup> Clear-cut cases are the thefts of the Quedlinburg treasures and the Hesse jewels, which will be closely investigated in the next section of this chapter.

Mary Ellen Stanley, provenance expert, has likewise addressed the problem. She has argued that the majority of Allied art thefts took place in the post-war period by the hand of American soldiers.<sup>305</sup> The motivation is that the U.S. army had under its control the majority of the Nazi art repositories, thus having direct access to a hoard of artistic treasures. Furthermore, they had to guard several other buildings in Germany, such as castles and inhabited family estates, again having the opportunity to steal household valuables with no repercussions. To take the most striking example, soldiers of the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division were soon identified as 'souvenir hunters' for having regularly stolen art objects from estates and created an artistic collection of their own. One such case is the theft of the painting *Madonna with Child* by Hans Memling. Initially in the illegal collection of Hermann Göring, the artwork was later put under Allied jurisdiction and moved to the office of Colonel William W. Quinn (1907-2000) for protection before processing its restitution. The painting suddenly disappeared, presumably stolen by an Allied officer, and it has never been recovered.<sup>306</sup>

Similar examples are reported by Alford in his book, which can be recognised as the most detailed examination of the events that afflicted cultural properties in occupied

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<sup>303</sup> Howard A. Mackenzie, quoted in Alford 2011, p. 2984/3552.

<sup>304</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 354.

<sup>305</sup> Stanley 2013, p. 24.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26; 28-29.

territories of Germany to date. Here, the author thoroughly investigates several case studies concerning Allies' misappropriation of artworks and artefacts, only some of which can be discussed here. Alford observes that soldiers, hardened by the daily contact with death and tired from the war efforts, were not concerned about cultural property protection – they considered art objects as something valuable, but exclusively from an economic point of view, thus not in need of being properly safeguarded.<sup>307</sup> Therefore, stealing was a common practice, as synthesised by the following quote, reported by Alford: 'those were the days when the thought most frequently spoken was "How's looting?"'.<sup>308</sup>

Firstly, Alford reports the example of Villa Wiede's art collection. During the Allied occupation of the area, Villa Wiede (Trebsen, Leipzig) had been initially requisitioned by soldiers of the 9<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division and then by the ones of the 273<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, who transformed the building into their headquarters. Villa Wiede's owners were forced to quickly evacuate personal items from the house, which included mostly food and basic necessities. They did not have the time to remove the precious collection of rugs, paintings, jewellery, and Meissen porcelain. When the troops left Villa Wiede at the end of June 1945, all these objects suddenly disappeared.<sup>309</sup>

Another notable example reported by Alford regards the German town of Bad Wildungen, where Allied troops entered on 30 March 1945. The town had been chosen by the Germans as the refuge of artworks from museums and churches of Frankfurt, Hanover, Wiesbaden, and Kassel. The works of art had been stored, for their safekeeping, into the Goecke Hotel's basement and into two concrete bunkers. Soon, these repositories were discovered by Allied troops, who stole the large part of the collections deposited there. Among the illicitly appropriated objects were two precious manuscripts – the *Liber Sapientiae* and the *Willehalm Codex* – and 114 paintings by Ruysdael, Tiepolo, Courbet, Cézanne, and Matisse among the others.<sup>310</sup> This theft is

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<sup>307</sup> Alford 2011, p. 1801-1805/3552.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1805/3552.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145-191/3552.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1014-1141/3552. The stolen paintings originally belonged to the Städelsches Kunstinstitute (Frankfurt), to the Städtische Galerie (Frankfurt), and to some private collections.

defined by Alford as ‘the greatest single blow to art and literature resulting from World War II’.<sup>311</sup> After long years of investigation, the *Liber Sapientiae* was returned to the Kassel Library in 1953, and the *Willehalm Codex* in 1972. Moreover, between 1948 and 1984, the majority of the stolen paintings were recovered and returned to their rightful owners.<sup>312</sup>

Finally, Alford provides a detailed account of the events that affected the artworks stored for safekeeping at the Schwarzburg Castle (Schwarzburg, Thuringia).<sup>313</sup> The town of Schwarzburg had been occupied by the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, and the castle had been put under the responsibility of Lt. Wooten, who placed guards at its entrance to avoid anyone from breaking in. Despite this preventive measure, the castle was not in a good condition for having many broken windows and shattered doors, which provided several possible entrances for thieves. Apart from a military supply of submarine parts, the castle’s basement contained a large number of artworks, moved there by the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar for their safeguarding from bombing raids – 121 paintings were stored there. They were deposited together with other works of art from several German art collections. On 27 June 1945, Dr. Walther Scheidig – director of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar – inspected the castle’s basement to ascertain the state of the artworks stored there. He soon discovered that the crates containing the paintings had been opened and their contents stolen. Many of the paintings had been removed from their frames, which laid abandoned on the floor. Among the thirteen missing artworks: Albrecht Dürer’s *Hans Tucher and Felicitas*, Cranach’s *Venus with Cupid*, Caspar David Friedrich’s *Landscape with Rainbow*, Jacopo de’ Barbari’s *Bust of Christ*, Johann Heinrich Tischbein’s *Portrait of Lady Elizabeth Hervey*. Apart from the paintings, Allied soldiers illicitly took antique weapons belonging to the State armoury collection. When Dr. Scheidig reported the unfortunate event to the commanding officers of the division guarding the castle, they answered that they were not responsible for protecting

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<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1040/3552.

<sup>312</sup> For a detailed account of the events regarding the restitution of the *Liber Sapientiae* and the *Willehalm Codex*, cf.: *Ibid.*, p.1143-1274/3552. For the restitution process of the paintings stolen at Bad Wildungen, cf.: *Ibid.*, p. 1297-1350/3552.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1357-1445/3552.

artworks, but exclusively the submarine parts. Dürer's *Hans Tucher* and *Felicitas* have been returned to the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar in 1982; Tischbein's *Portrait of Lady Elizabeth Hervey* in 1997; and de' Barbari's *Bust of Christ* in 2000. Cranach's and Friedrich's paintings have never been recovered.<sup>314</sup>

The next section will analyse two of the most peculiar examples of Allied art theft in wartime, again regarding the occupied German territories: the case of the Quedlinburg treasure and the Hesse jewels.

*'The most highly disputed instances of American looting'*

This section presents an investigation around two of the major examples concerning Allied art theft in Germany: the Quedlinburg treasure and the Hesse jewels. Many authors view both cases as the most remarkable instances of art stealing activities conducted by Allied troops in Europe in wartime. These are also widely accepted as the most sensational.<sup>315</sup> Both examples can be appropriately defined as 'the most highly disputed instances of American looting'. With that definition, Stanley refers specifically to the affair of the Hesse jewels, but, undeniably, it rightly applies also to the case of the Quedlinburg's theft.<sup>316</sup> Indeed, both had a great impact on the American public opinion, especially because they involved precious and well-known objects, symbols of the German power. Moreover, their restitution processes have both been highly disputed, for having taken a long period of time and for having involved many actors.

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<sup>314</sup> For an account of the events that interested the restitution process of some of the stolen paintings, cf.: *Ibid.*, p. 1451-1745/3552. Alford 2011 (p. 3129-3148/3552) also reports a detailed list of the paintings stolen from the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar's collections. Also monuments officer James J. Rorimer, in his book, registered a series of instances concerning Allied troops' illicit treatment of cultural assets in occupied German territories (Rorimer 1950, pp. 234-248). The examples regarded: Leiningen Castle at Ernstal; the University of Würzburg; the castles of Count Erbach-Fürstenau at Michelstadt and at Erbach; the castles of Prince Hohenlohe at Oehringen and Neuenstein; the castle of Klein Heubach near Miltenberg; Ellwangen castle; the houses of Baron Carl and Katherina von Adelsheim; Castle Warsberg at Neckarsteinach; the house of Dr. Bernhard v. Limburger at Reutti; and the Ulm Museum.

<sup>315</sup> Alford 2011, Nicholas 1994, Stanley 2013.

<sup>316</sup> Stanley 2013, p. 27.

In 1945, an American soldier serving in the 87<sup>th</sup> Armoured Field Artillery Battalion, Joe Tom Meador, removed precious objects from the Quedlinburg Church in Germany, and shipped them home as 'his souvenirs'. For this act, he was later defined as 'the man who carried off one of the biggest art thefts of the century'.<sup>317</sup>

The treasure of the St. Servatius Church of Quedlinburg was composed by several objects, gifts from the Ottonian Emperors to the Church itself. During the Nazi regime, German officers turned the Church into a national holy shrine. Indeed, St. Servatius was established by Henry I of Saxony – the first German King – seen by the Nazis as the founder of the German power, therefore praised as a sort of guiding star. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death was celebrated in Quedlinburg by the Nazis on 2 July 1936. Henry I and his wife, Matilda, were supposedly buried in the Church. The celebration was organised by Heinrich Himmler, the Reichsführer-SS, who considered himself as the King's reincarnation. After the invasion of Poland, German officers moved the Church's treasure to the vault of a local savings-and-loan association (1 September 1939), and later to the Altenburg mine, located southwest of the Church (October 1943).<sup>318</sup>

During the Allied occupation of the area, starting on 18 April 1945, troops were quartered in St. Servatius. Suddenly, an unknown American soldier discovered the treasure in the Altenburg cave and, given the circumstances, troops were placed at the entrance of the mine with the task of guarding it. A few months later, in June 1945, an American soldier – Joe Meador – removed the most valuable pieces from the treasure. He packed the objects in small boxes and shipped the artefacts to his mother in the U.S.. As reported by Nicholas, there was a thoughtless attitude towards the protection of cultural property by the American soldiers placed as guards of the Quedlinburg treasure:

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<sup>317</sup> Honan 1990. Cf. also: Alford 1994, pp. 13-14; Lowenthal 1997, p. 148.

<sup>318</sup> Honan 1990; Honan 1997, p. 155; Nicholas 1994, pp. 355-356; Korte 1997, p. 150.

His [of Meador, ed.] fellow officers were perfectly aware of the theft, but, as one remarked much later, they had been in combat for nearly a year and nobody cared.<sup>319</sup>

Until late 1960s, the stolen objects had been located in Meador's family home and in their hardware store in Whitewright (Texas). The artefacts were later moved to Joe Meador's apartment in Dallas (Texas), where he exhibited them with the purpose of impressing friends. He never tried to sell any of the stolen objects. After his death (1980), the treasure was inherited by his brother, Jack Meador, and by his sister, Jane Meador Cook, who attempted to sell parts of it to several art dealers. When questioned about the provenance of the artefacts, they sustained that their brother found them 'in the gutter' at the end of the war, when he was still deployed in Germany.<sup>320</sup>

Just after the theft, in 1945, the Quedlinburg clergy reported the objects' disappearance to the American military authorities, who started their own investigation. They had to drop it in 1949, when Quedlinburg became part of East Germany, without reaching any consistent result. In 1980s, the police, alerted by some scholars and art dealers who recognised the objects as part of the Quedlinburg's stolen treasure, started its investigation and, a decade later, it was able to recover the majority of the artefacts, and to process their restitution (1992). Just before being shipped to Germany, the treasure was exhibited at the Dallas Museum of Art (1991).<sup>321</sup> A total of eleven objects were stolen by Meador in 1945. All the stolen artefacts have been recovered, apart from a rock crystal reliquary and a crucifix.<sup>322</sup>

Another notable example of Allied art theft in Germany is the case of the Hesse jewels, the property of Princess Margaret of Hesse, daughter of Emperor Frederick III and wife

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<sup>319</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 356.

<sup>320</sup> Honan 1990; Honan 1994; Honan 1997, p. 154; Nicholas 1994, p. 356; Korte 1997, pp. 150-151.

<sup>321</sup> Alford 1994, pp. 13-14; Flint 2013, pp. 2-3; Lowenthal 1997, p. 149. For more information about the exhibition of the Quedlinburg treasure at the Dallas Museum of Art, cf. its catalogue: Bromberg *et al.* (1991) *The Quedlinburg Treasury*, 16 February – 14 April 1991. Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art.

<sup>322</sup> Alford 1994, pp. 13-14; Flint 2013, pp. 2-3; Lowenthal 1997, p. 149. For a detailed account of the events concerning the objects' restitution, cf.: *United States v. Meador* 1998.

of Prince Frederick Charles of Hesse. The jewels, in wartime, were located in the Friedrichshof Castle in Kassel (also known as Kronberg Castle), which was requisitioned in April 1945 by the American 3<sup>rd</sup> army – they forced the owners to leave the building and they transformed it into an officers' club and rest house. During the occupation of the castle, a soldier accidentally discovered the Hesse family's jewels packed in a lead case inside a wooden box. He reported the discovery and turned the jewels over to Captain Kathleen B. Nash, the rest house's commander. She claimed she would return the objects over to the proper authorities, but, on the contrary, she took them with her on her journey home in the U.S.. The theft was discovered a few months later by Princess Sophie of Hesse, when she asked the American authorities to use some of the jewels for her wedding. Princess Sophie reported the fact to the Criminal Investigation Division of the army. Later questioned about the jewels' whereabouts, Captain Nash confessed, and she revealed that, afraid of the consequences of her illegal act, she left the jewels in a locker at a train station. Captain Nash, Colonel Jack W. Durant (Nash's boyfriend) and Capt. David F. Watson (the soldier who found the treasure, to whom it had been promised a portion of the sale profit) were later arrested. The jewels were recovered and returned to the Hesse family.<sup>323</sup>

During the investigation, it was discovered that Captain Nash did not limit her stealing to the Hesse jewels, but she looted several other valuables stored in the castle: books, medals, golden fans, watches, flatware, a precious Bible, and volumes of letters directed to Queen Victoria. She shipped all these precious objects home in the U.S., where the authorities later discovered them. The whole theft was estimated to be worth \$3 million – 'the greatest theft of modern times', as defined by the American authorities.<sup>324</sup>

After having provided a wide picture of the issue of Allied art theft in Germany, in the next section the attention will be focused on France, where examples of Allied illicit activities against cultural properties abound.

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<sup>323</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 354-355; Stanley 2013, p. 28. Cf. also: <https://tjaglcspublic.army.mil/the-hesse-jewels-courts-martial> (Accessed 21 October 2021).

<sup>324</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 355.

## France

The issue of troops' billeting in historical buildings and the subsequent stealing of cultural properties was not confined to Italy alone, as shown in chapter 2, and to Germany, but several instances refer to the occupied territories of France, too. Two major problems were encountered there by MFAA officers: negligent attitudes towards cultural property protection by higher military rankings, and the overly generous French hospitality.<sup>325</sup>

Taking into account the issue of the lack of concern around heritage safekeeping, Nicholas emphasises that the major worry for commanders preparing to land in Normandy was finding a suitable place for quartering troops while in French territory. In the preparatory phase, they did not care whether a site was historical and then protected or not. Indeed, after having consulted the *Lists of Protected Monuments* for France, commanders rejected them, asserting that there would be no place left for quartering troops. Only after being properly instructed by MFAA officers did they agree to respect the lists. They finally understood that the majority of the monuments inscribed in those lists were unsuitable for quartering, for being prehistoric sites or churches.<sup>326</sup>

The same carelessness from commanders deployed in the war field is reported again by Nicholas. She records that the situation became 'explosive' in the fall and winter of 1944 and during the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944 – January 1945), when more soldiers were deployed in the French theatre of war and more shelters were required. The need of a cold place for exhausted combat troops forced commanders to choose for their quartering a large number of châteaux in the countryside, not included in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. Despite the many directives issued by Allied governments in the cultural property protection field trying to contain the problem, and the several monuments officers deployed in France, much remained at stake.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 301-305.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.



The issue of soldiers' lack of education around the safekeeping of cultural heritage is clear in an event recorded by monuments officer Capt. James Rorimer (1905-1966) on a report compiled about the situation in France.<sup>328</sup> The grounds and the stables of Château de Grosbois (Boissy-Saint-Léger, Val-de-Marne) had been approved for requisition, with exclusion of the house property. In spite of this, Prince Godfrey Tour d'Argent, the château owner, opened the house to fifteen officers as gratitude for their contribution to the war. Soldiers accepted the offer without asking permission from their commanders, who alerted the MFAA. James Rorimer arrived at the château, and tried to convince the officers to leave the house, unsuccessfully. In his report, he mentions the discussion he had with one of them, Captain Beasley. From the passage the thoughtlessness and insubordination of many Allied officers are evident:

Captain Beasley was very unpleasant about 'historic buildings' when I explained to him the reason for my visit. ... When I explained the situation of the famous building and magnificent collections ... and that it might happen that the General would not want the Châteaux used by our forces in view of existing directives – which I placed in evidence, Captain Beasley told Captain Smyth to be sure to get my name and said that if the General ordered him to move out he would 'move out and then in'.<sup>329</sup>

The example concerning Château de Grosbois also presents another issue monuments officers encountered in France: the overly generous French hospitality. The owners of French châteaux wanted to provide Allied troops with a place for quartering to thank them for their efforts in contrasting the Nazis, in occupation of those areas until that time. Many of these French elite families were aware of the existence of the *Lists of Protected Monuments* and of other regulations on preventing troops' occupation of historical buildings. However, they did not care about the lists, neither about the regulations, nor about the recommendations made by MFAA officers, who could not do anything against French families' will. Other examples of this kind are reported by

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<sup>328</sup> The report is described in *Ibid.* For biographic details of Capt. Rorimer, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>329</sup> Rorimer, J. quoted in Nicholas 1994, pp. 302-303. An account of the events occurred at the Château de Grosbois is contained in Nicholas 2014, too. A detailed description of the actions undertaken by MFAA officer James Rorimer in the safeguarding of French Châteaux is included into: Rorimer 1950, pp. 95-107.

Nicholas. Firstly, Duc de Luynes, owner of the Château de Dampierre (Dampierre-en-Yvelines, Valle de Chevreuse), agreed to leave a group of soldiers quartered in his house despite the damage they had caused to the boiserie and the fires they had indiscriminately lighted inside the property. Notwithstanding, he 'still wanted to have "a group of senior officers or some exclusive Allied unit" in the house'.<sup>330</sup> The prestige derived from having Allied soldiers quartered in one's own château was again the reason behind Countess Gourgaud's agreement to support the occupation of her family estate:

[she, ed.] told Monuments officers that she would like to have 'a few rooms used by visiting officers as their contribution to the war effort. All the neighbors have troops, and she is anxious to have some too'.<sup>331</sup>

The same issue regarding the too generous estates owners' hospitality was frequent in Italy too, as it will be investigated in the next section of this chapter.

Despite monuments officers' recommendations and the distribution of the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, problems with troops' exploitation of historical sites and the subsequent destructive actions had been persistent almost throughout the entire period of Allied occupation of France. One of the most pertinent examples is recounted by Nicholas with reference to the town of Mont-Saint-Michel. Placed out-of-bounds to troops and inscribed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* (Fig. 23), the town was inspected a first time by monuments officer Maj. Robert Posey (1904-1977), who ascertained that 'off-limits' signs were indeed in place, but these had not been taken into consideration by soldiers.<sup>332</sup>

After a preliminary inspection, Posey observed that very little damage occurred to cultural properties in Mont-Saint-Michel, and that the situation could be easily contained.<sup>333</sup> Monuments officer James Rorimer, who inspected the town ten days

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<sup>330</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 304.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>332</sup> For biographic details of Maj. Posey, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291; Nicholas 2014.

later, was not of the same opinion. Just after having entered Mont-Saint-Michel, Rorimer understood immediately the dangerous situation to which monuments were exposed: 'the scene was one of almost indescribable bedlam'.<sup>334</sup> As he clearly synthesised in the following passage, the town suddenly became a sort of leisure park for troops billeted in the area: drunken soldiers were regular guests of bars and hotels – which opened up as soon as they could, impatient to make business – and they used to drive their jeeps at high speed through the stepped streets:

Each day ... more than a thousand soldiers came, drank as hard and as fast as they could, and feeling the effects, became boisterous beyond the power of local control.<sup>335</sup>

As a consequence, Rorimer forbid the sale of alcohol to soldiers, and banned cars and jeeps. He also secured Mont-Saint-Michel's Abbey and posted guards to prevent unwanted people from entering it.<sup>336</sup>

There are other numerous examples of Allied art theft and vandalism from the occupied territories of France. In her study, Nicholas investigates instances of Allied exploitation of historical buildings in the city of Paris and its hinterland. Many were the monuments occupied by Allied troops: an anti-aircraft unit was quartered in the Tuileries; the Jeu de Paume had been converted into a post office; and some units were in occupation of the Petit Palais. Moreover, at Fontainebleau hundreds of troops were quartered in the historical park – using the canals as testing grounds for practicing the Rhine crossings – and some officers were billeted inside the castle, refusing to move.<sup>337</sup>

The most striking example is the town of Versailles. There, a group of British soldiers were camped in the monumental gardens (Figs. 24 and 25). High ranking officials were

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<sup>334</sup> Rorimer 1950, p. 39.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>337</sup> Nicholas 1994, pp. 301-305; Nicholas 2014. The events that interested the Jeu de Paume, the Tuileries and the Petit Palais are reported also in: Rorimer 1950, pp. 60-64, 67, 94-95.

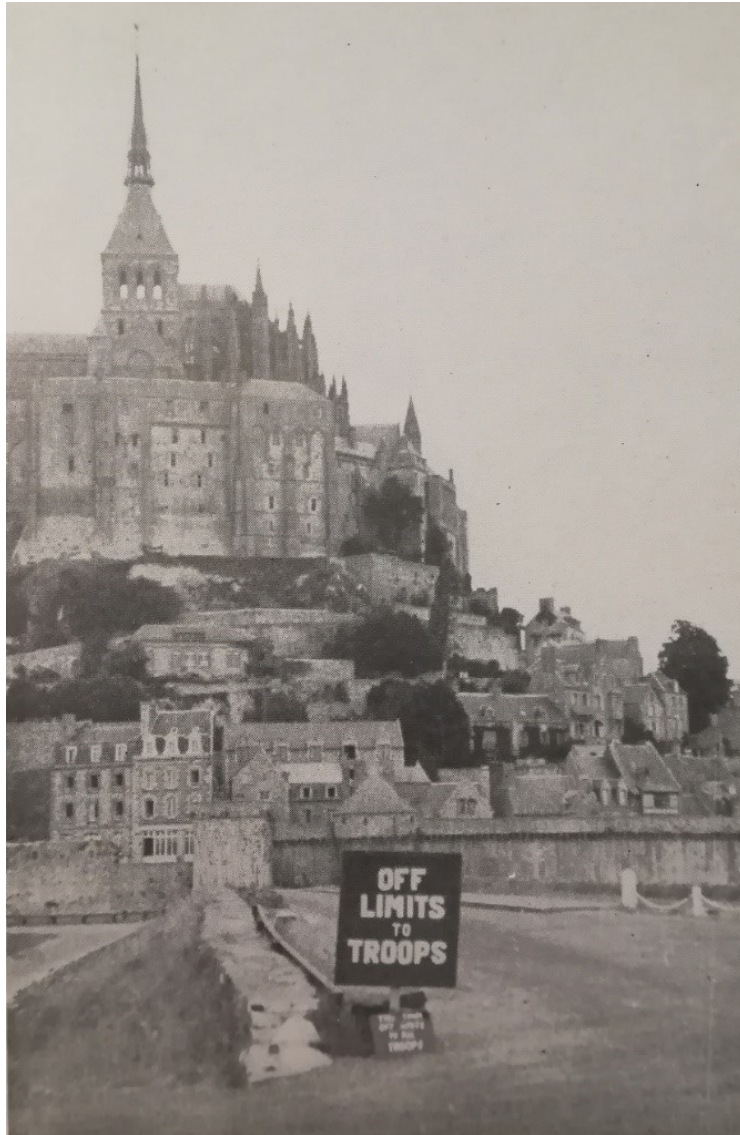
billeted in several houses around the historical town of Versailles, with the permission from the Supreme Headquarters, which did not consult monuments officers before taking this decision – ‘For their commanders they wanted nothing but the best’.<sup>338</sup> Even General Eisenhower was quartered in one of the town’s empty houses. The town Major, O.K. Todd, willing to provide the well-known General a convenient accommodation, asked to Jacques Jaujard, the director of the Musées Nationaux, for furniture from the Palace of Versailles and from the Mobilier National. Jaujard approved the request, thinking it was coming directly from General Eisenhower. Undoubtedly, Todd and Jaujard had not been informed about the existence of the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, which declared the Palace of Versailles and the collections of the Mobilier National as protected and ‘off-limits’. Rorimer soon became aware of the situation and he did his best in trying to confine it. Despite being of a low military rank, he was able to prevent the lending of the Palace of Versailles’ furniture for the Eisenhower’s office. However, he could not counteract against the will of the Mobilier National’s director, Georges Fontaine, in loaning the household properties to Eisenhower. At the end of the war the objects suddenly disappeared, and charges were brought to Fontaine for this removal.<sup>339</sup>

The next section of this chapter moves the attention to Italy, analysing several instances of Allied destructive and stealing activities against cultural properties, collected from official and unofficial reports compiled by MFAA officers in wartime.

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<sup>338</sup> Nicholas 1994, p. 301.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302. The events that interested the Palace and town of Versailles during the Allied military occupation are reported also in: Rorimer 1950, pp. 90-94.



*Figure 23 - 'Off-limits to troops' sign at the entrance of Mont-Saint-Michel (France). This sign, as well as the others placed all around the town, was completely ineffectual.*

*Picture taken by monuments officer James Rorimer (unidentified date). Source: Rorimer 1950, p. 25.*

*Figure 24 - Anglo-American trucks parked in the Versailles gardens (France), in front of the main Palace.*

*Picture taken by monuments officer James Rorimer (unidentified date). © Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. [copyright restriction]*

*Figure 25 - Anglo-American troops billeted in the Versailles gardens (France).*

*Picture taken by monuments officer James Rorimer (unidentified date). © Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. [copyright restriction]*

## Italy

This section examines, in brief outline, instances of Allied stealing and destructive actions against monumental buildings and their contents in Italy. For the enquiry conducted in this section, I have consulted reports and documents produced by the MFAA in wartime concerning its activities in Italy in the safeguarding of cultural assets. I have based my investigation on records preserved at NARA and at the BSR, and I have confined my attention exclusively to documents regarding the Italian area. Firstly, the archival repository consulted at NARA contains the records of the 'American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas', known as 'Roberts Commission' (M1944, RG 239). From the historical documents analysed, I was able to retrieve specific examples of the illicit crimes committed by Allied troops against the cultural heritage of occupied territories, including instances of stealing activities in Southern Italy and in the capital city of Rome. Secondly, the other archive group consulted is the John Bryan Ward-Perkins' archive deposited at the BSR in Rome (Ward-Perkins collection, War Damage Series). My time with this archival repository allowed me to study deeply the reports compiled by the MFAA on requisitioned monumental buildings in the occupied areas of Italy, and related alleged instances of theft and damage by Allied troops.

### *Records of the National Archives and Records Administration*

An investigation of records produced by the MFAA in wartime, preserved at NARA, suggests that the magnitude of art theft and vandalism by Allied troops in Italy was extensive. Closer examination of the mentioned papers reveals that instances of Allied stealing committed against the cultural heritage of Italian occupied territories were generated mainly from the billeting of troops in monumental buildings, especially in Southern and Central areas of the peninsula. For the purpose of this research project, exclusively the most peculiar examples cited in NARA documents are briefly analysed in this chapter.

First instances of this kind were reported from Sicily, where the American 7<sup>th</sup> army and the British 8<sup>th</sup> army landed on 10 July 1943.<sup>340</sup> More specifically, in Palermo troops requisitioned Palazzo Reale and they transformed it into the Military Police's headquarters, despite its three-stars ranking in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.<sup>341</sup> They forced the Superintendent for Monuments and his staff to vacate and move their offices to other rooms. The official rationale for this action was that there was no other proper space available for troops' quartering. The occupation included most of the first and second floors, even State Apartments, but it excluded King's and Queen's private apartments.<sup>342</sup> MFAA officer Lt. Perry B. Cott (1909-1998) inspected Palazzo Reale in February 1944.<sup>343</sup> The major difficulty he encountered at that time was convincing high-ranking officials not to use some of the State rooms as a gymnasium and not to transform the decorated Hall of Hercules into a volleyball pitch. He did not receive any reply to his objections. A further issue was caused by a fire that occurred inside the spaces occupied by troops, generated either by a short circuit of wires, or by the excessive heat emanating from an old chimney. This inconvenience, fortunately, did not result in serious consequences.<sup>344</sup>

Moving north, examples are reported from the regional areas of Apulia, Abruzzi, Molise and Umbria.<sup>345</sup> The castle Torre della Leonessa (Lucera, Foggia, Apulia) was broken into by Allied troops, who, without any apparently justifiable cause, dislodged and threw down blocks of masonry.<sup>346</sup> Destructive actions to monumental buildings in Apulia were again linked to the late arrival of monuments officers – the city of Foggia

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<sup>340</sup> *Atlante Storico* 2005, p. 509; Coccoli 2017, p. 55.

<sup>341</sup> *List of Monuments in Italy. Sicily*, Prepared by the American Defense – Harvard Group, MFAA Commission Archive, Box 1, Library of the American Academy in Rome (another copy of the same document is included also in Box 2); *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Sardinia and Sicily. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944), p. 17.

<sup>342</sup> AMG-66, pp. 57-58; Coccoli 2017, p. 57; Pollard 2020a, p. 206. Allied troops entered Palermo on 22 July 1943 and the requisition of Palazzo Reale started on 4 February 1944 (Coccoli 2017, pp. 55, 57).

<sup>343</sup> For biographic details of Lt. Perry Cott, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>344</sup> AMG-66, pp. 59-60; Coccoli 2017, p. 57; Pollard 2020a, p. 206.

<sup>345</sup> The Allied advance in this area started with the 8<sup>th</sup> army invasion of Calabria on 3 September 1943 (Coccoli 2017, p. 75).

<sup>346</sup> Torre della Leonessa had not been listed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.



had been freed by the Allies on 27 September 1943, but the first MFAA officer, John Bryan Ward-Perkins, arrived there only in January 1944 from Naples.<sup>347</sup>

Severe damage to thirteenth-century frescoes in the Cistercian convent of San Giovanni in Venere (Fossacesia, Chieti, Abruzzi), resulted from several months of occupation by Allied troops, although the site was inscribed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* and ranked with two stars.<sup>348</sup> They converted the church's crypt into a recreation room, even using the cloister's timber roof as fuel. Several stone walls and frescoes were fire-scarred. The site was inspected by monuments officer Maj. Norman T. Newton on April 1944, who recorded the damage inflicted by the occupying troops. At the moment of his visit, another unit was quartered in the convent, but this time this fortunately acted as a warrant for monument's protection from further damage.<sup>349</sup> Moreover, instances are accounted from Larino (Campobasso, Abruzzi), where fragments of columns and other remains of the archaeological site of Ara Fontana were dislodged, and some pieces stolen by troops and civilians.<sup>350</sup> At Larino, soldiers caused damage and disruption during their occupation of Archivio Notarile, too.<sup>351</sup> No further description about this improper act has been found in the NARA documents consulted. Noteworthy is that both the archaeological site of Ara Fontana and Archivio Notarile had not been mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, thus presumably soldiers felt free to exploit them.<sup>352</sup>

Finally, NARA records contain a letter by Conte Oddi-Baglioni, owner of Castello Montalera in Panicale (Perugia, Umbria), occupied by Canadian troops.<sup>353</sup> Soldiers systematically pillaged the entire content of the castle, including furniture and ornaments. They stole the silverware, Chinese and Japanese porcelains, damask

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<sup>347</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 82-83.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116; *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Abruzzi and Lazio* (1944).

<sup>349</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 116.

<sup>350</sup> *Commission* 1944, pp. 28-30; AMG-13, p. 55.

<sup>351</sup> AMG-13, p. 58. Monuments officer Norman T. Newton visited the area at the end of April 1944 (Coccoli 2017, p. 117).

<sup>352</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Abruzzi and Lazio* (1944).

<sup>353</sup> AMG-32, p. 46. Allied troops entered the city of Perugia on 20 June 1944 (Coccoli 2017, pp. 161, 165). The first monuments officers to visit the area just after its liberation were Major Norman T. Newton and Captain Roger Ellis (*Ibid.*, p. 165).

tapestries, seventeenth-century prints, bronze, and wooden statues. The list of stolen objects included also precious paintings by renowned artists as Guercino, Guido Reni and Carracci. Soldiers also removed all the Holy vessels from the castle's chapel, including a large silver reliquary containing relics of the Holy Cross, Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, the Apostles, and more than fifty Saints. With no apparent reason, the castle had not been included in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, despite the cultural value of its contents.<sup>354</sup>

Lazio region was not excluded from the deliberate troops' exploitation of monumental buildings. Striking examples includes the Etruscan Necropolis of Tarquinia, Villa Adriana in Tivoli, the town of Ostia, the renowned Abbazia di Montecassino, and the city of Rome. Firstly, frescoed paintings in the Etruscan Necropolis of Tarquinia were intentionally vandalised 'by small-arms fire', and some parts of them were slightly erased.<sup>355</sup> According to the report compiled on site by MFAA officers, the damage was caused during the first days of Allied occupation, when the fact that the Necropolis had been ranked with two stars on the *Lists of Protected Monuments* was unknown yet.<sup>356</sup> Soldiers also opened the Necropolis' tombstones and used some of the tombs as beds.<sup>357</sup> Secondly, Villa Adriana in Tivoli was occupied by a British Unit, confined to the less important parts of the archaeological site, 'where they could do little or no damage', despite its three-stars ranking in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. However, officers placed their tents in the excavated zone, and they drove vehicles around the area, causing the deterioration of precious masonry and pavements.<sup>358</sup> Thirdly, American troops occupying Castel Fusano in Ostia were reported to have removed and damaged furniture and works of art. Following these instances, the castle was later put

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<sup>354</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Le Marche, Toscana, Umbria* (1944).

<sup>355</sup> AMG-23, p. 21. In July 1944, Maj. Ward-Perkins and Capt. Basil Marriott surveyed the area, with the support of Dr. Catullo Mercurelli, director of Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia (*Ibid.*, p. 140).

<sup>356</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Abruzzi and Lazio* (1944).

<sup>357</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 140.

<sup>358</sup> AMG-24, p. 24; Coccoli 2017, p. 149; *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Abruzzi and Lazio* (1944). Monuments officers Maj. Norman T. Newton and Capt. Roger Ellis inspected the area on 9 and 10 June 1944 (Coccoli 2017, p. 135).

out-of-bounds to soldiers.<sup>359</sup> Notably, the castle had not been listed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.

Nevertheless, the most remarkable example was reported from the unfortunate Abbazia di Montecassino.<sup>360</sup> As accounted in a document compiled by monuments officer Capt. A. Sheldon Pennoyer (1888-1957), the Benedictine friars living in the Abbazia described the seven days of Allied troops' occupation as 'an infernal week'.<sup>361</sup> This definition was due to the fact that not only enlisted men, but also officers, improperly instructed around the care they had to pay for the heritage preserved there, acted as scores of pilferers. As clearly synthesised in Pennoyer's report, soldiers consciously behaved as souvenir-hunters:

Visiting troops would sometimes begin by asking for the *Museo* or the *Tesoro*, or for a *testina* as a souvenir – indication that word had spread among them of the presence of desirable keepsakes in the Abbey and that souvenir-hunting was a conscious purpose of the visitors [original emphasis].<sup>362</sup>

A detailed example of troops' improper actions against Abbazia's cultural treasures was reported in Pennoyer's document. More precisely, during the occupation of the building, New-Zealander troops intentionally stole a group of high-valued objects deposited in the cloister for their safekeeping from the nearby town of Cassino. Troops eventually returned part of the stolen goods, after having been properly instructed by their sergeant, pressed by Benedictine friars' requests. Despite this partial restitution, a large number of objects were counted as lost.<sup>363</sup> It must be noted that the Abbazia was inscribed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* and ranked with three stars – soldiers exploiting the historical building did not respect this status.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> AMG-24, pp. 21-22.

<sup>360</sup> AMG-23, pp. 18-19.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18. For biographic details of Capt. Pennoyer, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>363</sup> The report AMG-23 (1946, pp. 18-19) contains a list of the stolen objects.

<sup>364</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Abruzzi and Lazio* (1944).

Finally, also the capital city of Rome was affected by deliberate troops' exploitation of historical buildings.<sup>365</sup> Despite the placement of military guards to prevent soldiers from entering museums and galleries, and the placement of 'out-of-bounds' signs, Castello della Crescenza nevertheless lost art objects and household goods taken by American troops.<sup>366</sup> Unfortunately, no further description of this stealing act has been found in the NARA documents consulted. However, it is important to observe that the castle had not been listed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, paving the way to soldiers for occupying it.<sup>367</sup>

*Documents collected by John Bryan Ward-Perkins in wartime*<sup>368</sup>

The analysis presented in this section is based on an investigation of the papers belonging to the Ward-Perkins' archive, deposited at the BSR. A critical study of these documents suggests that the extent of Allied art theft and vandalism in Italy during the Second World War was considerable. References to these kinds of illicit actions are present almost throughout the entire archive group. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research project, I will present here the most striking examples. In brief outline, a number of specific instances are given in the reports compiled in 1946 in relation to the general situation of Italian museums and archives (*Final Report General*, 1946; *Final Report on Archives*, 1946), and in publications on the protection of historical buildings and their contents in war areas (*Field Protection of Objects of Art and Archives*, 1944). Pertinent examples come also from letters sent to Ward-Perkins by Italian civilians, who saw their properties exploited by Allied troops.

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<sup>365</sup> Allied troops entered Rome on 4 June 1944 (Coccoli 2017, pp. 131, 145). On the 5<sup>th</sup>, the first monuments officers arrived in the city: Capt. Perry Cott, Lt. Col. Thomas Brooke, Lt. Frederick Hartt, Maj. Ernest De Wald (*Ibid.*, pp. 145-146).

<sup>366</sup> AMG-23 1946, p. 50.

<sup>367</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Abruzzi and Lazio* (1944).

<sup>368</sup> The contents discussed in the present section are in course of publication in: Tulliach, A. (forthcoming) 'New Perspectives on Art Thefts in World War II: Instances of Allied Stealing Acts in Italian Museums from the Documents Collected by John Bryan Ward-Perkins', proceedings of the conference *Museums, War and Post-War. Protecting Heritage in Armed Conflicts*, Madrid, Spain, 10-11 October 2019. Madrid: Museo del Prado.

Firstly, *Final Report General* opens with a summary about the early phases of Italy's invasion, when no monuments officer was deployed with army forces in the field, which caused a lack of control with reference to troops' billeting in historical buildings, as already thoroughly discussed in chapter 2. The report mentions the significant problems resulting from indiscriminate military requisitions in Campania, where the first MFAA officer, Major Paul Gardner (1894-1972) arrived only on 19 October 1943, one month after the Allied landing in Salerno (9 September 1943).<sup>369</sup> Therefore, the Collier Commission of Enquiry was appointed to investigate allegations of damage caused by troops to properties of historical and educational importance in Southern Italy.<sup>370</sup> The Commission's outcomes are concisely presented in the *Final Report General*, where it is mentioned that proof of consistent misconduct by Allied troops had not been found, but it is clearly stated that there had been a considerable administrative laxity on the matter of indiscriminate troops' requisition of historical monuments.<sup>371</sup> Therefore, a number of specific recommendations were published by the Commission, to avoid further problems.<sup>372</sup> These propositions were later circulated through the 'Administrative Instruction n. 10', which, apart from establishing precise rules for buildings' protection and their use for military purposes, it defined army's duties with respect to cultural monuments' safekeeping in occupied territories.<sup>373</sup> These responsibilities are emphasised also in the publication *Field Protection of Objects of Art and Archives* (1944), where it is stated that the role of caring and salvaging art fell upon occupying forces.<sup>374</sup> As stated in the document, even disciplined troops tended to treat anything abandoned or damaged as their own, including artworks, especially in an enemy country. In occupied territories, they were tempted to destroy objects which symbolised the enemy, and to hunt for souvenirs.<sup>375</sup> In great danger

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<sup>369</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 2. For biographic details of Maj. Gardner, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>370</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 9; *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 3-5.

<sup>371</sup> A broader discussion on the outcomes of the Collier Commission will be presented in chapter 5.

<sup>372</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 3-5.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.* For an in-depth analysis of the contents of the 'Administrative Instruction N. 10' cf.: chapter 2.

<sup>374</sup> *Field Protection* 1944, p. 5.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 8.

were also books, manuscripts, archives and records, especially if the building housing them was occupied by Allied forces:

We may assume that they will not indulge in souvenir hunting if properly warned, but we cannot expect battle-weary soldiers to have much regard for old books and dusty papers, stored along the walls of a room, and to leave them on shelves and in showcases that could be used for the storage of equipment and food.<sup>376</sup>

In the event archival repositories were used by troops for their billeting, because other suitable premises had not been found, commanding officers were warned to pay special attention to the contents of these depositories, to prevent the destruction and removal of historic records.<sup>377</sup>

Recommendations for the protection of archives and their contents from damage and theft by occupying troops are published in the *Final Report on Archives*, which identifies as one of the MFAA's duties preventing archives' destruction or dispersal by the hand of occupying forces.<sup>378</sup> It again alludes to the previously mentioned 'Administrative Instruction n. 10', which at paragraph 11 secures archival collections' integrity by prohibiting their destruction and dispersal, and by requiring that sites housing archives be put out-of-bounds to troops.<sup>379</sup>

Furthermore, *Final Report General* and *Final Report on Archives* put forward a series of examples regarding damage and theft by Allied troops in requisitioned buildings. First of all, instances are reported from Naples, defined as 'the first testing-ground' for the implementation of the recommendations proposed by the Collier Commission.<sup>380</sup> Following the Commission's propositions, the occupied Museo Nazionale di Napoli was cleared of the dangerous inflammable medical devices deposited in its storage, close to the precious artefacts belonging to museum collections. At the same museum, it is

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<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> *Final Report on Archives* 1946, pp. 14-15.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>380</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 6.

reported that soldiers overturned a case containing lava samples from Pompeii, whose labels had been not attached. The result was a pile of mixed labels and lava that could never be sorted out. According to *Final Report General*, the most indiscriminate actions were against the cultural patrimony pertaining to Palazzo Reale di Napoli, subject to frequent depredations by troops quartered there. The report's compiler asserts that, arguably, the negative experience of Palazzo Reale was in some sense unique, and it was never repeated during the course of the war. It is also stressed, questionably, that the artworks destroyed, damaged, and removed from the Palace were of secondary quality, reparable and replaceable.<sup>381</sup>

Following the Allied troops' advance through the Italian peninsula, next in order is the capital city of Rome. There, according to the *Final Report General*, the requisition problem was kept under control by a very successful cooperation between the MFAA and the Real Estate Office.<sup>382</sup> Moreover, as highlighted by Nigel Pollard, there was more time at the disposal of military personnel for improving plans of city's occupation in light of the recommendation put forward by the Collier Commission of Enquiry on the military requisition of historic buildings.<sup>383</sup> Furthermore, as thoroughly discussed in chapter 2, at the time of the liberation of the city of Rome, the role and position of monuments officers within the army had been finally defined. Therefore, the primary importance of cultural property protection as a task common to every soldier deployed in the war field was clear, and monuments officers were finally able to enter towns immediately after their liberation. According to the *Final Report General*, in Rome very frequent were the requests for occupying monumental buildings, but these had always been contained by finding more proper billeting places – for example, avoided was the occupation of Palazzo della Farnesina by Canadian nurses, and of Palazzo Venezia as a Red Cross Enlisted Men's Club, but not as the Rome Area Command, as it will be described later.<sup>384</sup> Apart from the aforementioned motivations, another reason for the

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<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. also: Hammond 1980, pp. 94-95. A more in-depth analysis of Allied indiscriminate requisitions in the city of Naples will be presented in chapter 5.

<sup>382</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 10-11. Cf. also: Coccoli 2017, p. 149.

<sup>383</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 207.

<sup>384</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 10-11.

positive outcomes concerning the city of Rome was represented by the rapid northward advance, and the subsequent lack of need for places to quarter troops:

It is generally true to say that with the northward advance such occasions became progressively fewer, and the procedure established for dealing with them worked with increasing smoothness. Naples remained happily unique.<sup>385</sup>

Undoubtedly, this excerpt contains a contradiction, given the instances that the report's compiler puts forward in the following pages regarding the Tuscany region. The first example comes from the town of Poppiano (Florence), where at Villa and Castello Guicciardini had been deposited Uffizi's artworks for their safekeeping from bombing raids and Nazi spoliations. The report describes acts of vandalism on two small pictures by Giovanni Battista Naldini, representing the *Madonna Seduta in Gloria* and the *Carità*, intentionally slashed by a New-Zealander soldier billeted in the building (Fig. 43).<sup>386</sup> Later in the report, the city of Florence is cited too. There, issues concerned mainly villas around the city, exploited by troops, who damaged or removed their precious contents.<sup>387</sup> Chapter 6 will present more specific examples regarding the indiscriminate actions perpetrated by Allied troops against the cultural heritage of the city of Florence and its hinterland.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the assumption around the apparently good behaviour of Allied troops occupying Rome, reported in *Final Report General*, contradicted other MFAA reports – for examples, the one acknowledging the removal of works of art from Castello della Crescenza as described in the previous section of this chapter.<sup>388</sup> A valuable study around American troops' conduct in occupied Rome is the article by tourism scholar Carolyn Anderson.<sup>389</sup> There, the author thoroughly analyses the behaviour of soldiers in the city, acting as accidental tourists, from the liberation of Rome (June 1944) to the end of war in Europe (May 1945). Anderson's

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<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> Both Villa and Castello Guicciardini are not mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. The events that affected Villa and Castello Guicciardini during their military occupation will be extensively discussed in chapter 6.

<sup>387</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 13-14.

<sup>388</sup> AMG-23 1946, p. 50.

<sup>389</sup> Anderson 2019.



analysis demonstrates an ordinary misconduct towards cultural heritage. For instance, soldiers slept in dry fountains and on the Spanish steps, and they carved their names on the walls of the Colosseum.<sup>390</sup> Officers also requisitioned historical buildings – mainly palaces and villas – for establishing Allied administrative facilities.<sup>391</sup> Palazzo Margherita was transformed into the AMG headquarters, Palazzo Venezia housed the Rome Area Command, and Villa Torlonia was converted into the Allied High Command's headquarters.<sup>392</sup> Troops' units also occupied hotels and villas.<sup>393</sup>

By quoting the words of the historian George F. Botjer, Anderson characterises the military occupation of monumental sites in Rome as ordinary and justified by an apparent military necessity:

For the soldiers, requisitioning was a kind of sport; from their point of view, it was for the good of the unit, it seemed morally justified.<sup>394</sup>

In light of the aforementioned considerations, I can conclude that the *Final Report General* clearly made sweeping generalisations on Allied troops' conduct in Rome.

Finally, as far as libraries and archives are concerned, instances of troops' unlawful activities are reported in both documents *Final Report General* and *Final Report on Archives*. Again, an example comes from Naples, where several books belonging to the University Library, deposited for safekeeping in the town of Minturno (Latina), were removed by British officers and offered to a London dealer. Later, the same dealer advised the police, and the books were promptly returned to the University Library thanks to the involvement of the MFAA.<sup>395</sup> Focusing our attention again to Southern Italy, instances are reported from Bari's and Potenza's archives, where troops

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<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-33.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. In her work, Anderson also delineates some of the features characterising 'soldiers-as-tourists': tourism was a crucial aspect of occupying soldiers' experience; military authorities both encouraged and attempted to control soldiers' tourist and leisure activities; *Soldier's Guides* were circulated, outlining recommended and forbidden places and behaviours; and soldiers' misbehaviour was common (*Ibid.*, p. 27).

<sup>394</sup> Botjer, G.F. quoted in *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 14.

quartered in their buildings removed and destroyed several historical documents.<sup>396</sup> Finally, far north, a very important example comes from the town of Coriano di Romagna's archive (Rimini), where Allied troops, tired of seeing so many old papers unused, had cooperated with local inhabitants to build a road from the bulkiest and stoutest ones.<sup>397</sup>

A striking example of troops' misconduct towards cultural heritage, reported in papers belonging to the John Bryan Ward-Perkins' archive, is described in an exchange of letters between the MFAA officer and General Alessandro Da Porto, owner of Villa Da Porto (Trissino, Vicenza), designed by the eminent architect Andrea Palladio in the sixteenth century.<sup>398</sup> Despite being exempted from requisition, because it was inscribed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, the villa was occupied by Allied soldiers, who did 'considerable damage to property'.<sup>399</sup> In a letter, General Da Porto wrote directly to Ward-Perkins, asking him to take into account the villa's fate and to act for its derequisition.<sup>400</sup> At the very beginning of the letter, he seems to ascribe partial fault for the building's disgraceful state to the wrong name under which the villa had been inscribed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. Indeed, there it had been listed as 'Villa Trissino' from the original family owners, but, in the first half of the eighteenth century, it changed its designation into 'Villa Da Porto' from the current owners' name. He then wrote that on 25 April 1945 Maj. Basil Marriott (1902-1971) of the MFAA went to the villa and gave to General Da Porto a document stating that the building should have not been requisitioned by troops in any event.<sup>401</sup> In the weeks after Marriott's

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<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>398</sup> Monuments officer Capt. Deane Keller visited the city of Vicenza on 3 May 1945. Because of the extent of the area to be inspected in the Veneto region, monuments officers were able, in the first place, to surveyed exclusively major cities, leaving the inspection of the surrounding areas to a second time (Coccoli 2017, pp. 358-359, 364-365).

<sup>399</sup> *Letter from Brig. M. Carr, VP Ca Section, to Chief Liaison Officer, Venice, 24 June 1946*. In: Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box D-Documents. Cf. also: *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Le Tre Venezie* (1944).

<sup>400</sup> *Letter from General Alessandro Da Porto to Ward-Perkins, 1 July 1946*. In Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box D-Documents.

<sup>401</sup> For biographic details of Maj. Marriott, cf.: Appendix 6.

visit, several British officials asked for occupying the villa, but after seeing the MFAA document, they decided to not go further. Days after, a British Commanding General visited the villa and asked Da Porto to grant him and his troops permission to occupy the building, assuring him that nothing would be damaged or destroyed. Given these preliminary guarantees, General Da Porto agreed to the requisition. Unfortunately, the British Commanding General's promising words resulted in the opposite. During the period of the troops' occupation, the villa experienced several acts of damage, especially to furniture, tapestries, and flooring. Furthermore, soldiers found it very entertaining to practice their shooting skills against the statues of the villa's garden, precious artworks attributed to the sculptor Molinari.

In the letter's closing remarks, General Da Porto asked Ward-Perkins to act for the immediate building's derequisition.<sup>402</sup> Unfortunately, no other document regarding the villa has been found in the Ward-Perkins' archive at the BSR, neither the reply by Ward-Perkins to Da Porto. Only further research will shed light on Villa Da Porto's fate during and after the Allied requisition.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the topic of Allied art theft and vandalism during the Second World War by providing a series of examples concerning the occupied territories of Germany, France, and Italy, demonstrating the extensiveness of the phenomenon.

From the investigated instances, I am able to draw a number of conclusions. First of all, the examples have demonstrated that, for the majority, Allied art theft and damage involved historical buildings occupied by troops. As already discussed in chapter 2, troops' occupation of monumental buildings and the subsequent illicit appropriation and damage of their contents were the major problems encountered by monuments officers deployed in the war field. Secondly, as it is evident from the events analysed, the other issue faced by monuments officers was a widespread lack of education

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<sup>402</sup> *Letter from General Alessandro Da Porto to Ward-Perkins, 1 July 1946.* In Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box D-Documents.

around cultural property protection among troops. Works of art were undeniably considered merely as objects with an economic value, and soldiers were convinced that it was not their duty to protect artworks. Clear in the reported examples is that troops did not care about the existence of the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, neither about the placing of 'off-limits' signs to historical buildings, resulting in the exploitation of listed monuments. This careless attitude towards cultural property protection involved also high-ranking officials, who were confident that illegal activities against the heritage of occupied territories were not usually punished by the army. Moreover, as already investigated in chapter 2, the late deployment of monuments officers in the field provided space for troops for souvenir-hunting and destructive actions. Another problem encountered was the overly generous hospitality from civilians. Indeed, several instances concerning France and Italy have demonstrated that many family estates were occupied by Allied soldiers in accordance with the properties' owners, eager to provide a space for troops to thank them for their efforts in the war. Accommodating Allied troops in one's own property soon became very prestigious, too. Finally, despite the substantial measures adopted by Allied governments in preventing this kind of events by the hand of their own troops, the same governments attempted to cover them up, by diminishing the extent of the problem, as in the Collier Commission of Enquiry's report, and by declaring that artworks destroyed, damaged, and removed by soldiers were of secondary quality, such as at Palazzo Reale di Napoli (Italy).

Worth noting here is that the analysis regarding the German area illustrates how wide-ranging the crimes committed by the Allies against civilians were, including not only stealing activities, but also rape crimes. What the reported instances clearly delineate is that these illegal acts were perpetrated primarily as a symbolic punishment for Nazi atrocities. Such a ferocity from the hand of Allied soldiers has not been documented in other areas of Europe. Furthermore, this study has provided conclusive evidence supporting the assumption that Allied troops' art stealing activities in Germany have been considerable, contradicting claims by previous studies on the topic.<sup>403</sup> The analysed instances demonstrate that soldiers stole works of art primarily for two

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<sup>403</sup> Givens 2014.

reasons: profit or trade, and keepsakes. In addition, this study has argued that stealing activities in Germany were based on three peculiar characteristics: consciousness, extensiveness, and a positive attitude. Namely, these illegal acts were a daily occurrence, considered by soldiers as a routine and a common practice for men fighting in an enemy country.

In conclusion, this study provides supporting grounds to the theoretical analysis presented in chapter 2, regarding the measures taken by the Allies in contrasting alleged instances of troops' indiscriminate actions against the cultural heritage of occupied territories – measures which not always proved to be successful. Furthermore, this chapter serves as an introduction to the analysis conducted later regarding Naples and Florence. The purpose has been to provide comparative examples for the ones I will investigate in the following sections of this thesis. The study conducted here has been restricted only to instances of Allied art theft and damage in Germany, France and Italy I consider as the most peculiar, but cases of this kind abound. Therefore, there are limitations that offer opportunities for further research.

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## **SECTION 3 – CASE STUDIES**

## Chapter 5 – Mostra d'Oltremare, Naples (Italy)

This chapter examines the events that affected the exhibition *Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d'Oltremare* ('Triennial Exhibition of the Italian Overseas Lands', hereafter *Mostra d'Oltremare*) after the spread of the Second World War, specifically actions that concerned the exhibition's objects, resulting in movement and disappearance. The central focus of the chapter is a close analysis of alleged stealing and destructive actions by Allied troops occupying the exhibition grounds from October 1943 to April 1945.

The first section of this chapter investigates the issue of Allied troops' billeting in historical buildings in Naples and the surrounding areas after the liberation of the city in September 1943. What I am mainly concerned with here are examples of Allied requisitions of monumental buildings, transformed into army bases, hospitals, ammunition centres, etc., where instances of illicit appropriation and/or damage of cultural objects occurred. Examples of this kind are several: Museo Nazionale, Palazzo Reale, the University of Naples and its museums, the archaeological site of Pompeii, and Reggia di Capodimonte among the others. Amid the historical buildings exploited by Allied troops are the grounds of *Mostra d'Oltremare*, one of the case studies I am investigating in this research project. Thus, the first section serves as an introduction to the enquiry conducted later in this chapter.

The second section includes an in-depth analysis of *Mostra d'Oltremare*. The purpose is to examine critically the exposition's organisation, focusing in particular on activities at the exhibition grounds involving the objects on loan after the outbreak of the war. The section is introduced by a brief review of the overall history and structure of *Mostra d'Oltremare*. Moreover, it considers the theft of several objects on loan to the exposition when this was occupied by Allied troops, who transformed the exhibition grounds into an army medical centre. The study provides better insight into the causes of the stealing activities mentioned here, the subjects involved in these actions and how the MFAA reacted to these. Furthermore, the section analyses how these events were linked to the disappearance of objects on loan from Museo Civico di Bologna. An



investigation into this circumstance and its context is the main focus of the last section, which explores the theft of Museo Civico di Bologna's 24 artefacts loaned to Mostra d'Oltremare, and the restitution of one of them to Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna in 1990s.

To assess the extent of the issue of Allied troops' billeting in monumental buildings in Naples, it is critical to consult the MFAA officers' final reports on activities in the Campania region (AMG-180 1946) and the Italian peninsula more widely (AMG-182 1946). Another indispensable primary source on the matter is the diary written by Amedeo Maiuri (director of Museo Nazionale di Napoli and Superintendent for Antiquities of Campania) on the events that affected the museum and the archaeological heritage in Naples and the surrounding areas in wartime (*Taccuino Napoletano*, 1956). Other primary sources include the reports compiled by Bruno Molajoli (Superintendent for Monuments and Galleries of Campania) on the state of museums and monuments damaged by the passage of war in Campania (*Per i Monumenti d'Arte Danneggiati dalla Guerra nella Campania*, 1944; and *Musei ed Opere d'Arte di Napoli Attraverso la Guerra*, 1948), and the Collier Commission of Enquiry report on the exploitation of historical buildings in Naples and its hinterland (AMG-11 1946). Key secondary sources which inform estimates of the magnitude of troops' indiscriminate requisition of monumental buildings in the city of Naples include: Carlotta Coccoli's *Monumenti Violati* (2017), with her investigation into the activities of monuments officers in the Campania region; and Nigel Pollard's *Bombing Pompeii* (2020), especially in relation to his study of the military occupation of Museo Nazionale di Napoli.

To investigate the events that affected Mostra d'Oltremare in wartime and to assess whether the area was affected by military occupation, the most significant sources are two reports compiled by the MFAA: the first one (AMG-76 1946), dated December 1944, contains essential information about the situation of the exhibition grounds at that date and of the events that affected the area before the Allied occupation; the second one (AMG-180 1945), a general report about the overall Campania region compiled in November 1945, summarises the information provided in the previous document. The mentioned reports are both preserved at NARA. Finally, the research

around the events that involved Museo Civico di Bologna's objects on loan to Mostra d'Oltremare has been conducted by consulting the documents belonging to Archivio Storico del Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna (ASMCABo) and to NARA. These primary sources have been examined alongside two secondary sources published on this theme: Lionello Giorgio Boccia's *L'Armeria del Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna* (1991) and Massimo Medica's 'Lo Scudo del Capitano Francesco Bernardo' (1996).

Boccia provides some insights into the events that affected the lost objects.

Unfortunately, this information is brief and outdated, but it can be used as a guideline to the research on this topic. Medica refers more specifically to Captain Bernardo's shield and to its return to Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna. Little information is presented there about the objects' disappearance, and it is brief and outdated, too.

In conclusion, this chapter sets out to expand and refine knowledge about the theft and damage of artefacts at Mostra d'Oltremare by the hand of Allied troops, and the context in which these activities took place. It therefore constitutes a critical case study around the main topic of this research project: the broader subject of Allied troops' art theft and vandalism during the Second World War in Italy.

### **'Naples became one huge billeting problem'**

The overall objective of the present section is to broaden our understanding of the illicit actions undertaken by Allied troops in the city of Naples, resulting in the occupation of monumental buildings and archaeological sites, and in the damaging and stealing of cultural objects.

As thoroughly investigated in chapter 2, despite the efforts taken by British and American governments in the cultural property protection field – the creation of both the Roberts Commission and the MFAA, and the establishment of rules and regulations – after the Allied landing in the South of Italy (July 1943), issues deriving from troops' exploitation of historical buildings were considerable. Naples was not exempted. Indeed, it was one of the most affected cities in Italy as far as troops' indiscriminate acts against cultural properties were concerned. This was due to the ineffective distribution of lists, maps and recommendations on cultural property protection to

soldiers deployed in the field, and to the late arrival of monuments officers, days after the freeing by Allied troops – Naples had been left to its own fate for weeks.<sup>404</sup> Naples represented also one of the most damaged cities in Italy by bombing raids, which destroyed a great part of the town, for its being one of the main harbours in Southern Italy and one of the most central railway stations of the country. War did not spare many buildings from being irreparably injured.<sup>405</sup>

After the capitulation of Italy thanks to the war efforts played by the Allies in the Southern areas of the country (8 September 1943, Armistice of Cassibile), Naples became the primary provision and communication centre for the Anglo-American military units – the Italian Campaign's main headquarters. Thus, it soon experienced the 'invasion' of thousands of soldiers.<sup>406</sup> The lack of organisation in the cultural property protection field in this early phase caused the exponential raising of careless actions towards heritage by the hand of the Anglo-Americans, who transformed many monumental buildings into headquarters, hospitals, and billets, without considering their historical importance as monuments.<sup>407</sup> Monumental buildings were attractive billets for both their size and their prestige. Giving museums and other cultural sites a military use would have transformed them into military targets, too.<sup>408</sup> As stated by Nigel Pollard, the occupation of historic buildings in Naples was undertaken typically with claims of military necessity by billeting officers consciously ignoring the prohibition on the use of historic buildings when others were available.<sup>409</sup>

Since his arrival in the city of Naples in October 1943, Maj. Paul Gardner – MFAA Regional Commissioner for Campania – had to deal not only with issues deriving from

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<sup>404</sup> AMG-66 1946, p. 26; Picone 2011, p. 369; Pollard 2020a, p. 176, 209; Pollard 2021. The first monuments officer, Major Paul Gardner, arrived in Campania on 19 October 1943, one month after the Allied landing in Salerno (9 September) (AMG-180 1945, p. 2). The problem regarding the late arrival of monuments officers in the theatre of war has been thoroughly discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>405</sup> British Committee 1945, p. 32; Gargiulo 2018, p. 2; Picone 2011, p. 368. An in-depth analysis of the bombing raids which hit Naples in wartime and their consequences is included in: Borrelli 2005, pp. 15-22; Maiuri 1956.

<sup>406</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 97; Pollard 2020a, p. 181.

<sup>407</sup> AMG-56 1946, p. 25; AMG-66 1946, pp.39-42; Picone 2011, p. 369; Pollard 2020a, p. 180. Instead, on the occupation of private properties by Allied troops, cf.: Gargiulo 2018.

<sup>408</sup> Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021.

<sup>409</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 182.

damage caused to monuments by the passage of war, but also with problems caused by troops' exploitation of cultural properties.<sup>410</sup> In compiling the MFAA *Final Report for Campania*, Gardner gave a precise idea of the magnitude of the problem concerning the military occupation of monumental sites in Naples. He stated that, with the requisition of Museo Nazionale, Palazzo Reale, Museo di San Martino, Castel Nuovo, and Museo Duca di Martina at Villa Floridiana,

began the protracted and at times discouraging struggle to persuade our forces against playing into the hands of the Nazi-Fascist propaganda machine by thoughtless abuse of national monuments after their capture.<sup>411</sup>

Also Bruno Molajoli (1905-1985) – Superintendent for Monuments and Galleries of Campania – recognised that the major activity that monuments officers had to face from the very beginning of Allied occupation was to solve issues at museums and historical sites occupied by troops.<sup>412</sup>

There were several examples of indiscriminate requisition of monumental buildings in the city of Naples and its hinterland, with the subsequent negligent attitude by soldiers towards the artworks and artefacts located there: 'Naples became one huge billeting problem', as Gardner stated in the *Final Report for Campania*.<sup>413</sup> The most precious objects housed in those buildings had already been moved to refuges at the beginning of the war. In danger were immovable properties and objects of secondary value, still in place.<sup>414</sup> The adopted surveillance systems, the placing of 'off-limits' signs and the publication of the *Lists of Protected Monuments* resulted ineffectual against the improper billeting of soldiers in those buildings.<sup>415</sup> Paul Gardner had inadequate authority to persuade his superiors to leave the occupied areas.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> AMG-56 1946, p. 27; Coccoli 2017, p. 103; Picone 2011, p. 369.

<sup>411</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 2.

<sup>412</sup> Molajoli 1944, pp. 6-8.

<sup>413</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 2.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 104.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105; Pollard 2020a, pp. 182-183.

As briefly mentioned in chapter 4, the archaeological area of Pompeii, Palazzo Reale di Napoli, and Museo Nazionale were amongst the cultural sites affected by this kind of illicit actions. Firstly, the archaeological area of Pompeii experienced the damage to frescoes and sculptures by Allied soldiers visiting the area – they climbed over the walls and entered ruins usually after their closure to the public.<sup>417</sup> They also carved their names on walls.<sup>418</sup> To avoid further trouble, a joint American and British military police was established at the excavations to patrol them, especially during the closing hours.<sup>419</sup> The site had already suffered minor damage from bombing raids: although 156 bombs had fallen on the area, the destruction was limited to some ornamental details.<sup>420</sup> Thus, despite its three-stars ranking in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, the site suffered damage and destructive actions both from soldiers visiting the area and from air-raids.<sup>421</sup>

Secondly, Palazzo Reale di Napoli had been badly damaged both from direct hits and from spoliations by civilians prior to and during the occupation of the city.<sup>422</sup>

Moreover, the building was soon transformed into a military quarter for British, American and French troops, who indiscriminately destroyed and depredated its contents.<sup>423</sup> This occurred in spite of being ranked in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* with two stars.<sup>424</sup> The Royal chapel and the gardens were used by troops as a garage for their jeeps and lorries; the Royal theatre was converted into a cinema; and some apartments housed a private club for soldiers (the Royal Palace Welfare Club – Fig. 26).<sup>425</sup> Bruno Molajoli's *Report on the Present State of Monuments in Naples* listed in detail the damaging and destructive actions undertaken by soldiers in occupation of

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<sup>417</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 20, 68-69; *Commission* 1944, pp. 38-39; Pollard 2020a, p. 197.

<sup>418</sup> Anderson 2019, p. 33.

<sup>419</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 29; Pollard 2020a, p. 197.

<sup>420</sup> British Committee 1946, pp. 49-50, 78-79. For detailed information on the bombing of Pompeii, cf.: Maiuri 1956; Pollard 2020a; Pollard 2020b; Pollard 2020d.

<sup>421</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944).

<sup>422</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 16; British Committee 1946, p. 169; *Final Report General*, p. 6.

<sup>423</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 9; *Final Report General*, p. 6; Picone 2011, p. 375; Pollard 2020a, pp. 176-177. A detailed list of the troops in occupation of the Palace is included in AMG-66 1946, p. 47.

<sup>424</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944).

<sup>425</sup> Maiuri 1949; Picone 2011, p. 375.

the Palace, including the removal and destruction of furniture, inlaid woodworks, art objects, wall brocades and damasks, and paintings on canvas:

Large quantities of furniture, both old and modern, wearing apparel, furnishings, and mechanical and hygienic installations have been removed. Antique silk and damask tapestries were torn from the walls of about twenty rooms of the Reception Hall and Royal Apartments, and carried away. More than fifteen great canvases of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and several minor ones have been removed. Books from the Palatine Library, for the most part with valuable antique bindings, have been stolen or scattered. Beds, mattresses, and articles of furniture have been removed in great numbers.<sup>426</sup>

As demonstrated by this excerpt from Molajoli's report, the destructive actions undertaken by troops in occupation of the Palace had been considerable and protracted. To emphasise this situation as highly detrimental, Col. Edgar Erskine Hume, chief of AMG 5<sup>th</sup> army, stated that 'even the Germans did not do that', characterising the actions undertaken by Allied troops at Palazzo Reale as worse than the ones initiated by the Nazis in other parts of Europe as far as cultural heritage was concerned.<sup>427</sup> In the *Final Report General*, MFAA officers tried to contain the situation by underestimating the damage done by occupying troops:

The Royal Palace ... was taken over in part as a NAAFI/EFI Club for British troops. In the final event this was probably not an unmixed disaster inasmuch as the heavy task of weatherproofing the badly damaged building was undertaken at no cost to the overloaded Fine Arts budget; moreover the eventual occupants have treated the palace with consistent care and consideration ...<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Italy 1945, pp. 704-707. A copy of the same report, in Italian, is included in Molajoli 1948, pp. 117-121 (*Memorandum Riservato, Consegnato il 26 Maggio 1944 al Col. MICHOL Olds, del Servizio Informazioni degli U.S.A.*). This copy omits the attached *List of Monuments and Works of Art Damaged as a Result of Air Raids and of Occupation by Allied Troops*. The report is dated 16 May 1944. Molajoli 1948 (pp. 128-136) also includes a list of the works of art damaged, destroyed or stolen from cultural institutions in Naples as a result of bombing raids and of both Allied and Nazi requisitions (*Elenco degli Oggetti d'Arte Mobile, Distrutti, Danneggiati o Trafugati, negli Istituti d'Arte e nelle Chiese di Napoli*).

<sup>427</sup> Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021.

<sup>428</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 6.

Despite characterising the repairing works done to the damaged palace's roof as positive in light of the cost not weighing on the MFAA budget, they described the operations undertaken to transform the building into a soldiers' club as strikingly reckless, not taking into account the original palace's features:

... The process of transformation however was carried out in an extremely hasty manner, involving the needless destruction of several damaged but reparable features.<sup>429</sup>

Finally, Museo Nazionale di Napoli – at that time considered as 'the most important museum of classical antiquities in the world' – was transformed into a Base Depot for British Medical Corps, despite the pressing requests by Maj. Paul Gardner and by Amedeo Maiuri (1886-1963, museum director and Superintendent for Antiquities of Campania) not to proceed further.<sup>430</sup> Gardner, contacted by Maiuri, could do nothing against an order placed by an army High Commander, namely Brigadier Bruxner-Randall (1890-1986, commanding officer of the 57<sup>th</sup> areas).<sup>431</sup> Thus, the museum remained in the hands of British soldiers from December 1943 to June 1944, in spite of the Collier Commission's recommendation that the museum be derequisitioned – dated January 1944 – and despite being ranked with three stars in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.<sup>432</sup> Among the medical devices stored in the museum rooms, there was a large amount of flammable equipment, which could have irreparably damaged the building and its contents if activated, especially the numerous pieces of sculptures and frescoes which were in direct contact with it. Moreover, plans to install a field kitchen in a courtyard increased the risk of fire.<sup>433</sup> It should be noted that

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<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.* The same positive characterisation of troops' requisition in light of the repairing works done to the damaged roof is included into: AMG-180 1945, p. 9.

<sup>430</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 105; Gargiulo 2018, p. 23; Maiuri 1956, pp. 133-134, 136-140; Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021. On the military occupation of Museo Nazionale di Napoli, cf.: Pollard 2020a, pp. 171-220; Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021. On the events that interested the museum in wartime, cf.: Maiuri 1956. The quote 'the most important museum of classical antiquities in the world' comes from *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944).

<sup>431</sup> Gargiulo 2018, p. 24; Maiuri 1956, p. 138.

<sup>432</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944); Maiuri 1956, p. 140; Coccoli 2017, pp. 104-107; Pollard 2020a, p. 189; Pollard 2021. The Collier Commission of Enquiry's role and outcomes will be thoroughly scrutinised later in the present chapter.

<sup>433</sup> *Final Report General*, p. 6; *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707; Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021.

around 50% to 75% of the museum's archaeological collections were still in place at the time of the British occupation.<sup>434</sup>

Sir Leonard Woolley showed interest in the fate of Museo Nazionale, too.<sup>435</sup> He compiled a report, dated 7 December 1943, regarding his inspection of the museum with Maiuri and Gardner. He expressed his worries about the fate of the archaeological objects still in place in the galleries, such as the sculptures and the Pompeian frescoes. He then asked Brigadier Bruxner-Randall to leave the site. Bruxner-Randall did not agree to the request, providing several reasons: the occupation of the museum was a matter of urgent military necessity, because no other place had been found suitable for the storage of 1,000 tons of medical equipment essential to the care of sick and wounded soldiers; the presence of a military guard over the stores constituted a protection rather than a danger for museum collections; the museum galleries had been in filthy condition and they had been cleaned by soldiers, which thus would be much better looked after by them; the building was at greater risk of theft and damage by Italians than by British troops in occupation, because of the presence of some civil government offices on the building's first and second floors.<sup>436</sup> Brigadier Bruxner-Randall even gave occupying soldiers his trust that they would not damage objects of cultural value, by ensuring that,

The RAMC [Royal Army Medical Corps, ed.] unit consists of intelligent and well behaved men, accustomed to being responsible for valuable material, who would certainly not do wanton damage.<sup>437</sup>

After Woolley's inspection of the occupied building, he agreed that Italians could constitute the only danger. He too noted that in Naples there was no other building which would have suited the purpose of being a storage for a large amount of medical supplies, seeing therefore its occupation as an urgent military necessity.<sup>438</sup> In light of

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<sup>434</sup> Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021.

<sup>435</sup> For the role and duties of Sir Leonard Woolley, cf.: chapter 2.

<sup>436</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 89-91. Museo Nazionale housed the offices of the Genio Civile (a State office supervising public infrastructure projects).

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>438</sup> Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021.



these considerations, Woolley did not proceed further with his request of British troops leaving the building.<sup>439</sup>

As highlighted by Pollard, Woolley acknowledged that the matter of the occupation of Museo Nazionale was a delicate balance between the genuine military need to address the logistical issue relating to treatment of Allied wounded, and local and international sensibility regarding cultural property.<sup>440</sup> Pollard characterises the occupation both as a failure and as a success, taking into account two different points of view. On the one hand, the occupation constituted a failure of Allied cultural property protection – an example of what Eisenhower described as ‘military convenience masquerading a military necessity’.<sup>441</sup> On the other hand, he argues that in some respects the occupation can be viewed as a success for military cultural property protection, especially with regards to the fortunate mediating circumstances under which it occurred: the decision not to allow cooking in the museum but in an adjacent house; the concession only to some guards to remain overnight (soldiers in occupation were allowed to sleep exclusively in the aforementioned adjacent house); the presence of a military fire-fighting detachment incorporated to the stores unit and working with Italian fire-watchers (therefore, if a fire broke out, it could be suppressed relatively quickly before causing damage to museum collections); the permission given to museum staff to check the state of the collections remaining onsite.<sup>442</sup> Those mitigating circumstances under which the occupation occurred were the primary reason why the resulting damage to museum collections and to the historical building was minimal.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 89-91.

<sup>440</sup> Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021.

<sup>441</sup> Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021. Cf. also: Commission 1944, p. 57.

<sup>442</sup> Pollard 2020c; Pollard 2021. Cf. also: Maiuri 1956, p. 138.

<sup>443</sup> Pollard 2021.

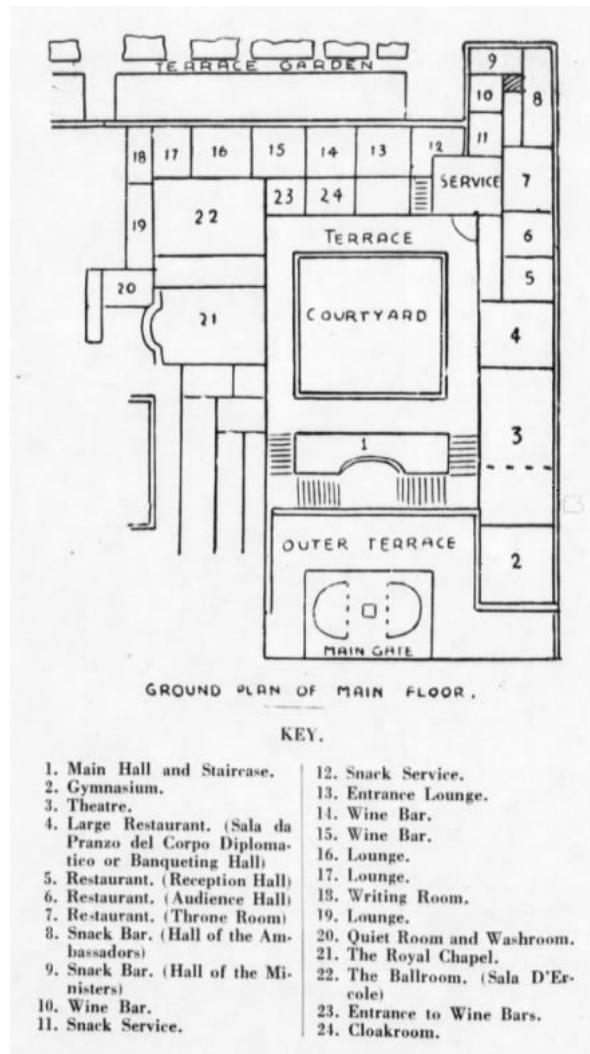


Figure 26 – Palazzo Reale di Napoli, ground plan of the main floor, showing the room conversion into an Army club.

Source: Croft-Murray 1944, p. 4.

Other historical sites located in the Campania region occupied by Allied troops and listed in Molajoli's *Report on the Present State of Monuments in Naples* are: Museo Duca di Martina at Villa Floridiana; Reale Accademia di Belle Arti; Castel Nuovo; Reggia di Caserta; Real Bosco di Capodimonte.<sup>444</sup> Museo Duca di Martina had been extensively exploited during the Allied presence in Naples. From October to December 1943, it was transformed into an army base, firstly British then American. From December 1943 to May 1944, it was converted into a military hospital (the 103<sup>rd</sup> Station Hospital) and, from May to October 1944, into an hospital for psycho-neurotic cases (the 51<sup>st</sup> Station Hospital). The change of use of the museum building was not

<sup>444</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707.

over yet: a Baggage Depot from October to November 1944; the 279<sup>th</sup> Company Military Police's base from January to March 1945; and a billeting site for the staff of the previously mentioned 51<sup>st</sup> Station Hospital from April to August 1945.<sup>445</sup>

The recurrent conversions of the museum into a base and an hospital brought considerable change to the building's architectural structure (Fig. 44). During the two years of occupation, many paintings had been removed from the museum deposits and were missing. Furthermore, several boxes containing ceramics and porcelains were ordered open by some commanders. During their unpacking, many valuable pieces had been broken by the inexperienced hands of soldiers.<sup>446</sup> Probably, troops felt free to occupy the building and to exploit its contents because this had been incorrectly omitted in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.<sup>447</sup> The same is possibly true also for the Reale Accademia di Belle Arti, not listed and thus transformed into a military hospital, leading to the damage and destruction of classical casts, of studio equipment, and of bibliographical material. Pictures kept in the premises were thrown from the windows.<sup>448</sup> Likewise, Castel Nuovo, this time ranked with two stars in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, was occupied by Air Force units, with the conversion of rooms into kitchens and dormitories. Some paintings on canvas were used by soldiers for target practice.<sup>449</sup> Moreover, troops were camped at the Real Bosco di Capodimonte, causing the constant cutting down of trees for lumber.<sup>450</sup>

Reggia di Caserta was requisitioned by General D. Eisenhower and his staff, transformed into the Allied Force Headquarters controlling the whole Mediterranean theatre of military operations.<sup>451</sup> This happened despite its three-stars ranking in the

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<sup>445</sup> Molajoli 1948, pp. 62-63.

<sup>446</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707, 725. An in-depth analysis of the damage occurred to Museo Duca di Martina is reported in Molajoli 1948, pp. 62-64.

<sup>447</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944).

<sup>448</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707, 725.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 726. A detailed list of the troops in occupation of the Palace is included in AMG-66 1946, p. 47.

<sup>450</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707, 724. The Real Bosco di Capodimonte is not mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. Exclusively Reggia di Capodimonte is mentioned and ranked with two stars (*Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania*, 1944).

<sup>451</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 9; Hammond 1980, p. 94; Pollard 2020a, p. 190.

*Lists of Protected Monuments* and despite Molajoli's requests not to proceed further.<sup>452</sup> During the occupation of the building, a great quantity of antique furniture, carpets and paintings had been removed. The building's architectural structure had been modified due to the construction of partitions, kitchen installations, and other various services. In his report, Molajoli stated that 'it is still impossible to give an approximate estimate of the damage, which appear extremely high'.<sup>453</sup> Especially in danger were the over 500 paintings and 20,000 books moved there from Naples' galleries and libraries for safekeeping at the outbreak of the war.<sup>454</sup> The example of Reggia di Caserta is strikingly similar to the events that involved the town of Versailles and its Palace (France) with the establishment of Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters, as already investigated in chapter 4.

In another report by Molajoli on damage caused by Allied troops and directed to the MFAA, he referred to the situation at the aforementioned sites, specifying that for none of those buildings had the occupation been authorised officially with a regular declaration of requisition. Nevertheless, those monumental sites had been occupied and damage had been done. Soldiers forced entry into premises and apartments, taking away the material housed there with or without a written order – in both cases without any specification of the object removed, thus preventing any further identification of it.<sup>455</sup>

Things started to change at higher military levels when Allied soldiers' unlawful activities towards heritage began to have a negative propagandist impact.<sup>456</sup> This state

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<sup>452</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944); Molajoli 1948, pp. 109-110 (*Nota Inviata al Governo Militare Alleato, per la Requisizione della Reggia di Caserta*, dated 14 December 1943); Molajoli 1948, pp. 111-114 (*Memorandum Inviato alla Commissione Militare Alleata d'Inchiesta sui Danni Provocati dalle Truppe Alleate nei Musei ed Edifici Monumentali di Napoli*, dated 7 January 1944).

<sup>453</sup> The quote is reported in *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707.

<sup>454</sup> AMG-66 1946, p. 43; *Commission* 1944, pp. 9-11, 38-39; *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707; Pollard 2020a, p. 202. The report AMG-66 1946 (p. 43) contains a list of the art objects moved to the Reggia di Caserta for safekeeping. A detailed account of the events occurred at Reggia di Caserta is included in *American Commission* 1946, pp. 63-64.

<sup>455</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 106-107.

<sup>456</sup> Cocoli 2017, p. 105.

of apprehension was intensified by a report compiled by Woolley, in December 1943, on the shameful condition of monuments in Naples, especially due to troops' dishonourable acts.<sup>457</sup> As a result, a commission of enquiry was appointed to investigate allegations of indiscriminate actions against monumental buildings and their contents in the occupied city of Naples: the 'Collier Commission', from the name of its chairman, Major-General A.L. Collier.<sup>458</sup> More precisely, the commission had three specific aims: enquiring and determining the responsibility of Allied forces in the damage to properties of historical and educational importance in Italy – destruction different from war or combat damage; assessing the extent of that devastation; and recommending steps to prevent such recurrence in the future.<sup>459</sup> The investigation was based on the reading of documents, the call of witnesses, and site inspections.<sup>460</sup> The first meeting of the commission was dated 28<sup>th</sup> December 1943, and the last one 21<sup>st</sup> January 1944.<sup>461</sup>

The final report deriving from the works of the commission had been divided into four parts: *Loss and damage attributable to Allied forces in Campania* (Part I); *Recommendations* (Part II); *The problem in other parts of occupied Italy, including Sicily* (Part III); *The record of evidence* (Appendix A), including statements from witnesses, such as Superintendents, officers, and MFAA representatives.<sup>462</sup> The first part of the report is opened by a relevant statement considering the extent of the issue:

It became evident to the Commission almost immediately that the task of investigating allegations against Allied forces in Campania alone, especially in and around Naples, was of considerable magnitude.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 4.

<sup>458</sup> Other members of the commission were: Colonel Harold B. Bullis (Claims Service, U.S. Army), Lieutenant Colonel J. McQueston (British Claims Commission), Major Theodore Sizer (MFAA), Captain R. Farrell (British Claims Commission), Captain A. Wynn Jones (AMG-11 1946, p. 9).

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10; Pollard 2020a, p. 194.

<sup>460</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 36.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10, Pollard 2020a, p. 194.

<sup>462</sup> *Report by the Allied Commission of Enquiry Appointed to Investigate Damage Alleged to Have Been Caused to Real and Personal Property of Historical and Educational Importance in Italy*, in AMG-11 1946.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

The proportion of the problem is clear also when studying the following pages, reporting an evaluation of the situation in Campania. The monumental sites listed in the report as subjected to damage amount to fourteen, a very high number if we consider that these were located exclusively in the city of Naples and the close areas.<sup>464</sup> Among them are listed Palazzo Reale di Napoli, Reggia di Caserta, and the University of Naples with its departmental collections. More specifically, the commission reported that Allied troops in occupation of Palazzo Reale were responsible for the damage and loss of 1,200 square metres of silk brocade, approximately 48 oil paintings, fifteen clocks, seven candlesticks, twenty ornaments, 110 pieces between chairs, tables and desks – all those objects had been considered of low cultural value by the report's compilers.<sup>465</sup> At Reggia di Caserta, British troops took away eleven small pictures, several objects of art from the Royal Apartments, tables and chairs.<sup>466</sup> At the University of Naples, American troops of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division had been billeted close to several scientific departments, and later ransacked them.<sup>467</sup> They damaged and removed scientific instruments, specimens, bottles, books, and papers. The departments involved were: physiology and istology, mineralogy, zoology, comparative anatomy, anthropology, and astronomy.<sup>468</sup> Finally, Part I of the report is closed by a series of comments on the above records of evidence. The most pertinent observation is that the instructions published by Allied governments in relation to cultural property protection in occupied territories did not reach the

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<sup>464</sup> The damaged sites include: Museo Nazionale di Napoli, Palazzo Reale di Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale at Palazzo Reale di Napoli, Castel Nuovo, University of Naples and its collections, Museo Nazionale di San Martino, Museo Duca di Martina at Villa Floridiana, Reale Accademia di Belle Arti, Reale Istituto di Arte Industriale, Reggia di Capodimonte, Piazza del Plebiscito, Villa Nazionale, Reggia di Caserta, the archaeological site of Pompeii (*Ibid.*, pp. 12-20).

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19; Pollard 2020a, p. 177.

<sup>467</sup> Pugliano 2011, p. 389. A detailed list of the troops in occupation of the palace is included in AMG-66 1946, p. 47. The occupation and ransacking of the University's collections took place despite the University being ranked with one star in the *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania* (1944).

<sup>468</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 16. For a detailed analysis of the illicit events that characterised the Allied military occupation of the University of Naples, cf.: Borrelli 2005, pp. 28-31, 112-114.

commanders deployed in Naples until December 1943/January 1944, therefore several months after the arriving of troops in the city.<sup>469</sup>

Despite the intense work of investigation done, the Collier Commission was not able to provide concrete proof on individual charges of stealing, neither of misconduct.<sup>470</sup> The commission could not collect sufficient evidence against individual army units for the damage and loss of cultural objects listed in the commission's report, for several reasons: the vagueness of witnesses; the units in occupied buildings changed from time to time; the damage was sometimes caused by casual troops coming from the outside.<sup>471</sup> As mentioned above, Part I of the commission's report includes an assessment of loss and damage in the Campania region. It is reported there that the outcome of the commission's enquiry was less than it expected to find. Apart from the University and Palazzo Reale, the damage occurred was considered of minor importance and caused especially by souvenir hunters, therefore not different from the usual tourist vandalism. This kind of vandalism was aggravated by the ruined state of most of the buildings at that time, by the great freedom of movement enjoyed by troops, and by the total absence of custodians in said buildings. Exclusively in few circumstances, the commission collected evidence of a more serious lack of discipline from occupying troops, who broke into and damaged also premises and rooms placed out-of-bounds.<sup>472</sup> The report is closed by a remarkable statement, regarding the importance of the objects damaged or removed, considered of secondary value. The commission stated that no 'historical monument or object of art of first importance had been damaged or lost by the action of Allied troops', especially because the most valuable ones had been transferred to refuges prior to the war.<sup>473</sup>

Proofs collected by the Collier Commission were so inconclusive that the compiler of the *Lists of Protected Monuments* for the regions of Apulia, Calabria, Campania and Lucania asserted that the reports of damage had been overstated:

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<sup>469</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 22.

<sup>470</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 4-5.

<sup>471</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 23-24.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-28.

The results of the commission's investigations show that these reports of damage have been exaggerated, but at the same time established that a certain amount of damage has been done by thoughtlessness or carelessness, and even by a few wilfully destructive individuals.<sup>474</sup>

Undeniably, the commission was able to prove exclusively that there was a considerable administrative laxity on the matter of cultural property protection by occupying troops. This brought to the transmission of a series of specific recommendations to avoid further trouble (transcribed in Part II of the commission's report).<sup>475</sup> The recommendations included: an emphasis on the responsibility that soldiers of all ranks had in relation to the protection of cultural heritage in occupied territories of Italy; the widest distributions possible of lists and maps of classified buildings; the deployment of MFAA officers with fighting troops on their arrival in a new area; the closure of monumental sites until an adequate protection system could be arranged; the avoidance of partial occupation of buildings and of mixed billeting; the revision of the booklet *The Soldier's Guide to Italy* with the inclusion of passages regarding cultural property protection; and the necessity of a broad distribution to Allied forces of orders and instructions on the matter.<sup>476</sup>

As emphasised by Pollard, despite the limits of the Collier Commission, this was extremely influential in establishing effective policies and procedures for the protection of historic buildings in territories occupied by the Allies.<sup>477</sup> More precisely, as thoroughly investigated in chapter 2, the outcomes derived from the enquiries of the Collier Commission brought to the issue of a letter by General Alexander to all commanders based in Italy, on the protection of cultural properties in Italy (Fig. 10).<sup>478</sup> Immediately following the letter, there was the emission of the 'ADM Instruction n. 10'

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<sup>474</sup> *Miscellaneous Material* 1945, p. i.

<sup>475</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 4-5; Pollard 2020a, p. 172. The complete list of recommendations deriving from the enquiries of the Collier Commission is copied into Appendix 3.

<sup>476</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 25-28; *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 44-45. Aims and features of *Soldier's Guides* booklets have been thoroughly investigated in chapter 2.

<sup>477</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 172.

<sup>478</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 107; *Italy* 1945, p. 4; *Miscellaneous Material* 1945, p. i.



on the 'Preservation of Property of Historical and Educational Importance in Italy', which regulated the occupation, for military purposes, of historical buildings (Appendix 1).<sup>479</sup> Henceforth, the responsibilities by occupying troops in respect of cultural heritage were finally defined, and the role of the MFAA in relation to the army had been outlined.<sup>480</sup>

Following the emanation of these regulations, monuments officers were able to secure their implementation starting with the city of Naples: Museo Nazionale was cleared of inflammable medical devices stored there, and the discipline among soldiers visiting the archaeological area of Pompeii was improved by patrolling units. The problem remained at Palazzo Reale, previously converted into a Welfare Club.<sup>481</sup> The compiler of the MFAA *Final Report General* reported that, there, issues derived not from buildings' occupants, who had treated the contents with considerable care, but from the process of transformation into a club, which was carried out in 'an extremely hasty manner', causing the 'needless destruction of several damaged but reparable features'.<sup>482</sup> Bruno Molajoli recorded in detail the works conducted for adapting the Palace to the use as a club. He asserted that,

in the course of work still in progress to adapt a large part of the Palace as a club for the British Army, kitchens have been built in the monumental courtyard (architecture of Domenico Fontane, 1602); dividing walls have been put up on the great staircase of honor and in several monumental rooms; numerous general works of restoration have been carried out in the reception rooms without taking at all into account their historical and artistic character. Among other things, a valuable frescoed ceiling by Francesco De Mura (18<sup>th</sup> century) in the hall of Queen Maria Cristina has been completely destroyed. All this without mention of the lasting alteration or destruction of ornamental and decorative features (cornices, chandeliers, doors, etc.).<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 107; *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 4-5; *Italy* 1945, pp. 5-9.

<sup>480</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 4-5.

<sup>481</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 201.

<sup>482</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 6.

<sup>483</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 704-707.

Despite Molajoli's examination around the considerable damage occurred to the structure of the building and to pre-existing frescoes, the compiler of the *Final Report General* emphasised that the damaged works of art were of secondary quality and that the construction activities conducted were essential in view of the new intended use of the building:

At least it can be said that the experience of the Royal Palace at Naples was never repeated in the course of the Italian campaign, and it should be stressed that the damage was to works of relatively secondary quality. The experience was worth the price.<sup>484</sup>

Of a totally different view was Molajoli, who stated that the works conducted had been 'carried out without any respect for its architectural character', especially in relation to the destruction of the De Mura's painting, which had been irreparably plastered and whitewashed. He then went on by emphasising that he had in vain addressed insistent requests to the Allied military authorities to obtain a guarantee that the damage would be limited.<sup>485</sup>

The next section of this chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the incidents that occurred at one of the sites occupied by Allied troops in Naples, Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds.

### **Mostra d'Oltremare**

This section studies the events that affected Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds during the Allied occupation, when they were transformed into a military medical centre. The study is divided into two sections. The first one aims at briefly analysing the distinctive features of Mostra d'Oltremare. The second one provides an in-depth study of the incidents that involved the exhibition grounds after the spread of the Second World War and, more specifically, during the Allied military occupation. The

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<sup>484</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 6.

<sup>485</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 723-724. Another note by Molajoli on the damage occurred at Palazzo Reale is included in: Molajoli 1948, pp. 115-116 (*Nota Inviata al Governo Militare Alleato, sui Danneggiamenti del Palazzo Reale di Napoli*, dated 25 March 1944).

purpose is to investigate the role that Allied troops had in damaging and stealing objects loaned to the exposition and stored there in wartime.

Mostra d'Oltremare was one of the several temporary exhibitions organised by the Fascist regime with propagandist purposes. It was inaugurated in Naples in 1940, a few years after the invasion of Ethiopia (1936). Its aims were to display the reborn Italian imperial power, to celebrate the Italian achievements in the colonies, and to create a greater knowledge of the colonial lands for the Italian people.<sup>486</sup> The main propagandist themes dictated by the regime for that exposition were: the celebration of 'Romanness'; the Fascist Italian colonial conquest; and the regime's architectural endeavours in the colonies, especially in the African ones (Ethiopia, Libya, Eritrea, and Somalia).<sup>487</sup> These distinctive features had been properly summarised in a guide compiled for Allied troops visiting the area of the exhibition when this was serving as a military hospital, after the liberation of Naples:

The exposition by exalting the past glory, by bearing witness to the recent power and conquests, by exhibiting and by illustrating the revived imperial power in its manifold aspects, aimed to be not only an act of conscious pride, but also and above all a center for orientation for the Italians of Mussolini, who have resumed the step of the Roman legions.<sup>488</sup>

Clearly, the exhibition was a propagandist tool to instil in the masses the idea of the greatness of the Italian Empire conquered by the Fascist leader, Benito Mussolini. According to the Fascist ideology, territories abroad were not perceived as simple 'colonies', but as 'overseas lands' ('terre d'oltremare'), as the title of the exposition suggests. They were conceived as a sort of 'motherland's branch', having a direct link to Italy.<sup>489</sup> Thus, they were placed on the same level as the Italian mainland territories,

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<sup>486</sup> Arena 2011, p. 268; Arena 2015, pp. 313-319; Assante, Costantini 1940; Cormack 2017; Negro 1940a; Negro 1940b; Pretelli 2004, p. 187.

<sup>487</sup> Arena 2012, p. 10; Arena 2015, pp. 321-322; Assante, Costantini 1940; Negro 1940b.

<sup>488</sup> MTOUSA 1945, p. 5.

<sup>489</sup> Ente Mostra 1940a, pp. 3-4.

and they worked as the motherland's projections in the field of urbanisation, technology, and transport.

Mostra d'Oltremare was organised in the Fuorigrotta district of Naples, properly improved and restyled for that occasion.<sup>490</sup> The official poster of the exposition illustrated a foot of an ancient Roman stepping down on the African soil (Fig. 27), recalling the parallelism between the ancient Roman Empire and the modern Fascist Empire, one of the main propagandist topics of the Fascist cultural propaganda.<sup>491</sup> Naples was chosen by the regime as the location of this exposition because it was considered as a bridge to the Mediterranean Sea and, symbolically, the starting point for the conquest of territories abroad.<sup>492</sup> The exposition opened on 9 May 1940 and the planned closing date was set for 15 October, but it had to close on 15 June, because of Italy's entrance to the war on 10 June.<sup>493</sup> A large amount of objects were loaned to the exposition, and these came from museums and private collections located all over Italy, as well as from North Africa, Albania and Rhodes.<sup>494</sup>

Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds were formed by various pavilions, hosting the several sub-expositions in which the exhibition was divided (Fig. 28). The exhibition was composed of three sections: historical, geographical, of production and manufacture. Each of the thematic expositions was in turn divided into several sectors, forming various sub-expositions, each of them developing a different aspect of the overall theme.<sup>495</sup> Firstly, the historical section was conceived as a sort of summary of what Italian people had contributed to civilisation across the world, investigating Italy's role as a powerful imperial country from the ancient Roman age, through the Maritime Republics, up to the Italian pioneers and explorers like Columbus and Vespucci.<sup>496</sup> Secondly, the geographical section of the exposition was centred on the description of

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<sup>490</sup> Chianese 1994, p. 347.

<sup>491</sup> Cormack 2017.

<sup>492</sup> Arena 2015, p. 313; Chianese 1994, pp. 345-346; Ente Mostra 1940a, p. 187.

<sup>493</sup> Ente Mostra 1940a, p. 187; MTOUSA 194, p.: 6.

<sup>494</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 28.

<sup>495</sup> Arena 2011, pp. 272-273; Arena 2015, pp. 320-324; MTOUSA 1945, pp. 6-8.

<sup>496</sup> Pretelli 2004, p. 187.

the Italian colonies, through the setup of an installation for each of the Italian overseas territories.<sup>497</sup> The purpose of this section was to display the richness of the conquered territories, responding to the preconception of the Italian people that their colonies were lands lacking in natural and cultural values.<sup>498</sup> Thirdly, the last section, dedicated to the production and labour in the colonies, investigated the topic of the Italian geniality abroad.<sup>499</sup> The aim was to analyse the colonies' economy, and to demonstrate Italy's primary role in the process of modernisation of its territories abroad, through a recurrent comparison between the pre-existing situation and the colonial one.<sup>500</sup> Finally, it is important to note that Mostra d'Oltremare presented a *Race exhibition* too, glorifying the Fascist idea that the Italian race had been central in the civilisation of conquered lands and in modern society's construction.<sup>501</sup>

In conclusion, I quote the invitation made by the exhibition's organising committee to visit the exposition, reported in the visitors' guidebook:

An invitation ... to visit this huge exhibition about the *Italian Race's will of expansion*, suitable to the Mussolini's era, is more than ever justified. An invite to the Italians, with the hope that from this visit they will feel the pride to be a constituent part of *the Race that for thousands of years has always been strongly and regularly busy in building a civilised society and in radiating it everywhere around the world*: an invite to the World, with the hope that from this uniform and complete synthesis, it will understand *the greatness and power of Fascist Italy* [emphasis added].<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Cormack 2017.

<sup>498</sup> Arena 2011, p. 269; Arena 2012, p. 11.

<sup>499</sup> Pretelli 2004, p. 189.

<sup>500</sup> Arena 2011, pp. 270, 277; Arena 2012, p. 12.

<sup>501</sup> Arena 2012, p. 76.

<sup>502</sup> Author's translation of: 'Un invito ... a visitare questa grandissima rassegna della *volontà di espansione della Stirpe italiana*, degna dell'epoca di Mussolini, è più che giustificato. Invito agli Italiani, perché da questa visita sentano sempre più l'orgoglio di appartenere *a quella Stirpe che nei millenni si è sempre sentita duramente e assiduamente impegnata nel costruire civiltà e irradiarla per ogni terra*: invito al Mondo perché da questa sintesi unitaria e totalitaria apprenda *la grandezza e la potenza dell'Italia Fascista*' (Ente Mostra 1940a, p. 18 – emphasis added).

Undoubtedly, this quote represents a comprehensive summary of the exhibition's aims, also including some of the Fascist main propagandist themes: a celebration of the Fascist Italian colonial conquest, of the strength of the Fascist imperial power, and of the significance of the Italian race in the construction of modern society.



Figure 27 - The official poster of Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples), showing a foot of an ancient Roman stepping down on the African soil, recalling the parallelism between the ancient Roman Empire and the modern Fascist Empire.

Source: Pretelli 2014, p. 16.



Figure 28 - The map of Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples), which was formed by various pavilions, hosting several sub-exhibitions.

© Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome (Archivio Storico, pos. 9B 'Mostre fuori Galleria', B.1, fascicolo 6 'Collaborazione a Mostra Triennale delle Terre d'Oltremare a Napoli - 1940').



### *Wartime events*

Five days after Italy had entered the war, Mostra d'Oltremare was closed 'in considerable disorder', and the various sections rapidly evacuated to implement the protection systems for the objects on loan (15 June 1940).<sup>503</sup> Artworks and artefacts belonged to private and public institutions located all around Italy and in several different foreign countries, thus only some of the lenders had the chance to recover the objects. The majority were transferred to refuges.<sup>504</sup> On 15 June 1940, the Internal Affairs Minister, Guido Buffarini Guidi, ordered the removal of the exposed artefacts, the consignment of the historical archival documents to the Superintendent at Archivio di Stato di Napoli, and the delivery of the antiques, medieval and modern objects to the Superintendents of Antiquities and of Medieval and Modern Art.<sup>505</sup> The Superintendents and the exhibition's organising committee chose several places for the evacuation of the works of art: the exposition's premises; Villa Montesano in San Paolo Belsito, Naples (for the archival documents); Abbazia di Loreto in Mercogliano, Avellino (Fig. 29); Abbazia di SS. Trinità in Cava dei Tirreni, Salerno; Convento di S. Maria a Parete in Liveri di Nola, Naples; Museo e Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli; and Museo Coloniale, Rome (for the paintings and some relics).<sup>506</sup> A certain number of objects stored in the mentioned places were later transferred to Abbazia di Montecassino (Frosinone) and then, eventually, to the Vatican.<sup>507</sup> Among the works of art involved in this removal, there were 53 objects from the Maritime Republics pavilion (previously in Mercogliano), and 37 from the Oriental pavilion (previously at

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<sup>503</sup> British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82. Cf. also: Arena 2012, p. 96; Maiuri 1956, pp. 17-18; MTOUSA 1945, p. 6.

<sup>504</sup> Prisco 2018, p. 63.

<sup>505</sup> Arena 2012, p. 96.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95; British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82. A list of the objects stored in the mentioned refuges is contained in AMG-76 194, pp. 10-13. According to Bruno Molajoli, Mostra d'Oltremare's artworks moved to refuges were a total of 1,384 (Molajoli 1948, p. 31).

<sup>507</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 11; Maiuri 1956, pp. 90-92, 104, 114-115. A detailed account of the events regarding the Montecassino transfer is included in Molajoli 1948, pp. 35-38.



Cava dei Tirreni).<sup>508</sup> They were stored in the Abbazia di Montecassino with other works of art from several galleries of Campania.<sup>509</sup>



*Figure 29 - Deposit of artworks from Naples at Abbazia di Loreto, Mercogliano (Avellino), where many of the artworks loaned to Mostra d'Oltremare were transferred to for safekeeping reasons at Italy's entrance to the war.*

*Picture taken between 1943 and 1946 by monuments officer John Bryan Ward-Perkins. © British School at Rome, Library and Archive Digital Collections (BSR Photographic Archive, Ward-Perkins Collection, wpwar-0074).*

On January 1942, Nazi troops occupied the area of the exposition, converting some pavilions into arms' depots.<sup>510</sup> The German occupation lasted more than a year – the troops freed the area between the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1943, following the Allied advance. While leaving the occupied zone, the Nazis burned the majority of the buildings used during the seizure, causing the total destruction of the Rome and the Maritime Republics pavilions, the area of the ticket offices and of the entrance.<sup>511</sup> In addition to this, the exhibition grounds were damaged, during the war, by several

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<sup>508</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 11.

<sup>509</sup> The events related to the Montecassino transfer will be discussed thoroughly in the next section of this chapter. On the safeguarding systems implemented for Neapolitan museums and cultural institutions, cf. the in-depth analysis of Borrelli (2005, pp. 10-14) and Molajoli (1948, pp. 11-31).

<sup>510</sup> Arena 2012, p. 96.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

bombing raids, especially the ones of the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1943, which hit directly the Fuorigrotta district and the area of the exposition.<sup>512</sup>

During their withdrawal, Germans set on fire Villa Montesano too, causing the entire destruction of the historical documents' repositories belonging to Mostra d'Oltremare, along with the ones of Archivio di Stato di Napoli, and Museo Filangieri's artworks.<sup>513</sup> Moreover, retreating German troops burned the buildings of Archivio di Stato itself, of the Brancaccio's and Reale Istituto's libraries, and of the University of Naples.<sup>514</sup> These acts took place under Hitler's direct order 'to reduce the city to dust and ashes', as a revenge for Italy's betrayal with the signing of the Armistice of Cassibile with the Allies (8 September 1943).<sup>515</sup> Just after the freeing of the area from the Nazis, Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds suffered some stealing attempts by the local population, too. These were contained by the newly arrived Allied troops.<sup>516</sup>

The American 5<sup>th</sup> army occupied the area of the exposition from 6 October 1943 to April 1945, transforming part of the exhibition grounds into a billeting area and part into a medical centre, namely the 21<sup>st</sup> General Hospital.<sup>517</sup> The exposition organising committee decided to give the Anglo-Americans use of the buildings, but only if those would have signed a regular record of delivery, to protect the works of art stored there.<sup>518</sup> This never happened, and the Allies seized the area without agreeing to any delivery record. The intention was to provide a comfortable place for quartering troops

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<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97; Pollard 2019a, pp. 672-673. Among Museo Filangieri's artworks destroyed there were paintings by Veronese, Van Dyck, Brueghel, Van Eyck, Pollaiuolo and Botticelli (AMG-180 1945, p. 19). A detailed list of the destroyed archival documents on loan to Mostra d'Oltremare is attached to *Final Report on Archives – Part II: Outline Survey of the State of Italian Archives at the Close of the War* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box F-Documents, British School at Rome. A copy of the same report is preserved also in: MFAA Commission Archive, Box 1, Library of the American Academy in Rome).

<sup>514</sup> AMG-162 1946, pp. 23-25; Arena 2012, p. 1; British Committee 1946, p. 83; Pugliano 2011, pp. 389-391.

<sup>515</sup> Borrelli 2005, p. 69. Cf. also: *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 69-70, 87; Pugliano 2011, p. 391. For a detailed analysis of the destructive actions undertaken by retreating German troops in Naples, cf.: Borrelli 2005, pp. 25-27, 66-78, 87-95.

<sup>516</sup> Arena 2012, pp. 98-99.

<sup>517</sup> AMG-76 1946; Arena 2012, p. 98; MTOUSA 1945, p. 5; Prisco 2018, p. 64.

<sup>518</sup> Arena 2012, p. 98.

awaiting their evacuation from the MTO (Mediterranean Theatre of Operations), together with other billeting places arranged in the city of Naples: Hotel Turistico (for 100 officers of field grade and nurses), Caserma (for 2,000 enlisted men), a school (for 500 junior officers), and spa of Terme d'Agnano (for 800 officers of company grade).<sup>519</sup> A guide directed to troops quartered in the exhibition's area was published to illustrate the history of the exhibition grounds and the environs, 'which enjoy the reputation of being one of the foremost historic localities in all the world'.<sup>520</sup>

Figures from 30 to 34 constitute pertinent visual documentations regarding the conversion of the area into a billeting site and a military hospital. The complete transformation of the exhibition grounds, resulting in an obliteration of the area's primary purposes, is clear especially in figure 30, showing the map of the 21<sup>st</sup> General Hospital. Moreover, while analysing the pictures, what immediately stands out is the coexistence between artworks and daily hospital's and soldiers' activities. For instance, the ones represented in figures 32 and 34 are wall paintings with a low cultural value, produced in contemporary times as decorative elements supporting the exhibition design (figure 34 shows a room of the Rodi building with a painting representing two Greek ships approaching land). Despite the modest value of those paintings, it is important to note the high level of appropriation of spaces made by troops in occupation, regardless of the objects still located there – valuable or not.

The next section of this chapter will thoroughly investigate the issues deriving from Allied troops' exploitation of Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds, and it will provide a brief overview of the most peculiar illicit activities that involved the site during both the Allied and the Nazi occupation.

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<sup>519</sup> MTOUSA 1945, p. 8.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.







*Figure 31 - Tents of the Medical section area at the so-called 'Libya Court', part of the 21<sup>st</sup> General Hospital at Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples).*

© Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine (VC013-i013202).



*Figure 32 - A patient receiving a long leg plaster cast at the 21<sup>st</sup> General Hospital, Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples).*

© Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine (VC013-i013200).



*Figure 33 - Soldiers outside the officers' mess at the Rodi building, part of Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds (Naples).*

© Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine (VC013-i013208).



*Figure 34 - Interior view of the officers' mess at the Rodi building, Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples).*

© Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine (VC013-i013210).



## *Art theft*

This section investigates instances of art theft at Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds by both Allied and Nazi troops, examining therefore the events that affected the objects on loan to the exposition after the spread of the war.

Allied troops seized the area of Mostra d'Oltremare from October 1943 to April 1945. As briefly described in the previous section, the exposition organising committee would have liked the Allies to sign a regular record of delivery of the movable and immovable cultural properties, before the occupation. Nevertheless, they never signed any record, nor any inventory of the objects preserved in the premises and in the pavilions.<sup>521</sup> They assured the exhibition organising committee not to damage the buildings and the objects, but unfortunately this did not happen. As the historian Giovanni Arena reports in his paper, during the Allied seizure, troops deliberately opened the exposition's refuges and illicitly took many of the artefacts safekept there:

The pavilions were completely cleaned out, ... the premises housing the historical objects of the various exhibitions were opened without authorisation, ... and from them was removed 'a large amount of material'.<sup>522</sup>

It must be noted that Mostra d'Oltremare had not been mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, thus providing troops the right to exploit it.<sup>523</sup> Moreover, the thefts occurred at the exhibition grounds had been not investigated by the Collier Commission of Enquiry, making transparent a sort of indifference by Allied governments in relation to the fate of Mostra d'Oltremare's missing objects. Both constitute examples of the large administrative laxity on the matter of cultural property protection by Allied institutions, which has been already largely investigated in chapter 2.

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<sup>521</sup> Arena 2012, pp. 98-99.

<sup>522</sup> Author's translation of: 'I padiglioni vennero spoliati di materiali di ogni genere, ... furono aperti senza autorizzazione i magazzini contenenti i materiali storici relativi alle varie mostre, ... e da cui fu sottratto "moltissimo materiale"' (*Ibid.*, p. 99).

<sup>523</sup> Cf. for example the *Lists of Protected Monuments – Apulia, Calabria, Campania, Lucania* inserted into the report *Miscellaneous Material, 1943-1945* (1945).

In December 1944, the MFAA compiled a report about the condition of Mostra d'Oltremare at that time.<sup>524</sup> In this document, they recorded a large number of losses, without giving openly the fault to anyone, but simply addressing that this could have been 'military or civilian'.<sup>525</sup> Nevertheless, a more detailed enquiry on the matter still had to be done, as clearly stated in the report:

the record of this Exhibition and of the disposal of its contents is one high confusion and the present report is necessarily of a provisional character.<sup>526</sup>

The exposition's area was later thoroughly inspected by monuments officers between May 1944 and June 1945. Their investigations were proved difficult by the resistance of the troops still in occupation of the area: 'The unit occupying has put numerous difficulties in the way of inspection'.<sup>527</sup> This hostility had been interpreted by monuments officers as an involvement in the illegal actions that occurred at the exhibition grounds:

Military occupants ... put every obstacle in the way of routine inspection and therefore, whether directly culpable or not, appear to have incurred unnecessary responsibility.<sup>528</sup>

Apart from the resistance of the occupying troops, monuments officers found it difficult to have a general picture of the situation for several other reasons: a complete absence of detailed records of the contents of large parts of the exposition; the late arrival or non-arrival of scheduled objects, thus partially or faulty inventoried; and the incorrectness of the inventories regarding the transfer of objects into refuges.<sup>529</sup>

During their inspections of the occupied areas, MFAA officers had only the opportunity to ascertain that stealing and destructive actions occurred there, to compile lists of

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<sup>524</sup> AMG-76 1946.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>527</sup> AMG-143 1946, p. 37. The final reports regarding Mostra d'Oltremare were compiled by monuments officers Ernest T. De Wald and John Bryan Ward-Perkins, and they are included in AMG-162 (1946, pp. 8-25). A very brief inspection of the area was made by Maj. Paul Gardner in December 1943, but this visit 'revealed a small number only of the missing exhibits' (AMG-76 1946, p. 9).

<sup>528</sup> AMG-162 1946, p. 18.

<sup>529</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 9.



objects still remaining at the exhibition grounds and to implement their safekeeping, to compare these with the incomplete lists compiled before the exposition's opening, and to provide records of the missing material.<sup>530</sup> Maj. Paul Gardner was the monuments officer heading these activities, aided by Prof. Sergio Ortolani (1896-1949), Director of Galleries at Naples.<sup>531</sup>

Besides the mentioned illicit actions committed by Allied troops against cultural properties at Mostra d'Oltremare, several other stealing and destructive acts were made at the exhibition grounds of objects safekept there and at the buildings chosen by the exposition's organising committee as refuges. The MFAA report AMG-76 describes a stealing act that took place at the exhibition that involved Museo Archeologico di Cagliari.<sup>532</sup> It is reported that sixteen crates containing museum objects were found, open and empty, by monuments officers, without any trace of the important bronze objects from the Sardinian 'nuraghi', which had been stored there. The theft has been defined by monuments officers as 'the most serious individual recorded losses'.<sup>533</sup> The MFAA could not provide any further information about who committed this theft, nor about the possible objects' location.<sup>534</sup> Neither was I able to gather more detailed information, after having contacted curators at Museo

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<sup>530</sup> AMG-13, pp. 33-34; AMG-23, pp. 13-14, 122; AMG-65, p. 156; AMG-143; AMG-162. As an example, consider the lists of missing objects from Mostra d'Oltremare's Albanian exposition contained in the reports AMG-143 (1946, pp. 37-40) and AMG-162 (1946, p. 18). The report AMG-76 1946 includes a preliminary inventory of Mostra d'Oltremare's objects, divided into: expositions removed to organised deposits of works of art, or to public collections; expositions already returned to their owners; expositions still remaining within the exhibition grounds; sources within Italy from which expositions were drawn and not yet returned; expositions loaned from outside Italy, including Sardinia. About the objects still remaining at the exhibition grounds, in the *Final Report General* (1946, p. 32) is recorded that 'all surviving items have been inventoried and are in safe hands'. Finally, all lists gathered by monuments officers in relation to objects loaned at Mostra d'Oltremare and later recovered or not are entirely secured in the archives of the British School at Rome (Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Inventory of Art Deposits, British School at Rome).

<sup>531</sup> AMG-23, p. 122.

<sup>532</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 9.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>534</sup> In the report AMG-162 (1946, pp. 23-25), compiled in June 1945, Ward-Perkins records that the missing crates consisted for the majority of casts and reproductions and of some minor objects, therefore 'the loss is less serious than was at first feared'. Thus, there is a discrepancy between what was reported in the documents AMG-76 1946 and AMG-162.

Archeologico di Cagliari. I approached them in January 2018 asking whether they had knowledge about the stolen objects. I received a reply from Dr. Roberto Concas, museum director, stating that at the museum they were not aware of the events that affected the objects on loan at Mostra d'Oltremare.

Moreover, the report AMG-76 contains a list of museums and cultural institutions that had loaned artefacts, artworks and historical documents to Mostra d'Oltremare, not yet returned by December 1944 (figure at Appendix 5).<sup>535</sup> The list, even if 'certainly incomplete', cites almost 90 museums, libraries, archives and private collections located all around Italy.<sup>536</sup> I contacted some of those cultural institutions asking them if they were aware of what happened to their objects on loan to Mostra d'Oltremare in wartime. I received important feedback from some of them.<sup>537</sup> Among these, Musei Civici di Reggio Emilia, which had loaned to the exposition seventeen objects, only received one of them back. The remaining sixteen artefacts are still lost, and they all come from the ancient Ethiopia.<sup>538</sup> In the museum's archival documents, it is reported that these objects, during the war, had been stored at the exhibition's premises.<sup>539</sup> The same documents declare that the artefacts were stolen by Allied troops, during their occupation of the exhibition grounds.<sup>540</sup>

Other institutions mentioned in the AMG-76's list that suffered losses and/or destruction of objects loaned to the exhibition are: Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Collezione Querini-Stampalia in Venice, and Museo Stibbert in Florence. Firstly, Archivio di Stato di Firenze definitely lost a historical document (Giovanni da Carignano, *Carta Nautica*) in the burning of Villa Montesano by the Germans, an event already investigated in the previous section of this chapter.<sup>541</sup> Secondly, Collezione

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<sup>535</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 6.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>537</sup> A table summarising the findings from my research on the AMG-76 report's list is attached to Appendix 5.

<sup>538</sup> Archivio Storico del Comune di Reggio Emilia, Titolo 13, Rubrica 7, Filza 5, Busta 500bis, prot. 21972.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, prot. 1049.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, prot. 1049 and 821.

<sup>541</sup> Personal email from Dr. Carla Zarrilli (director of Archivio di Stato di Firenze), 4 January 2018. She refers to the following archival document: Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Protocolli Generali, n. 723, 1944.

Querini-Stampalia had loaned to Mostra d'Oltremare five artworks. Only four of these were later returned to the museum. The lost painting is still missing, and it is the *Visita dell'Estraordinario alla Fortezza di Santa Maura* by Speridione Zerbini.<sup>542</sup> Finally, Museo Stibbert loaned to the exposition six historical weapons. One of them was stolen and it is still missing: a sword from the Republic of Venice.<sup>543</sup>

The list also mentioned museums which experienced damage to the loaned objects, such as Museo delle Civiltà (Rome) and GNAM (Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna, Rome). Damage to objects from Museo delle Civiltà included two broken rare statues from Congo and the total destruction of a vase from China.<sup>544</sup> GNAM reported breaks to three paintings, which had been previously stored in the Mercoglian deposit.<sup>545</sup> In all the mentioned cases, I was not able to collect more detailed information about the subjects involved in the illicit actions. The archival documents did not reveal this information, nor did the museum curators respond to any enquiries on the matter.

Finally, the list included institutions which later saw their artworks returned. It is the case of Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi (Piacenza), which had loaned seven artworks, returned in September 1947.<sup>546</sup> As a further example, Galleria Nazionale di Parma had loaned three paintings, restored in 1949, and Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, whose documents returned to the library between 1946 and 1947.<sup>547</sup> Also Museo Correr in Venice had loaned a large amount of objects, documents, historical weapons and artworks to Mostra d'Oltremare, returned in the post-war period. Only

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<sup>542</sup> Personal exchange of emails with Dr. Cristina Celegon (supervisor of the Querini-Stampalia's Library), 2-8 January 2018. She refers to a note dated 18 November 1946.

<sup>543</sup> Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324, 21 maggio 1948.

<sup>544</sup> Personal email from Dr. Filippo Maria Gambari (director of Museo delle Civiltà) 28 December 2017. He refers to an unspecified note within the archival documents regarding the 1952's exhibition *Mostra d'Oltremare e del Lavoro Italiano nel Mondo*.

<sup>545</sup> Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna di Roma, Archivio Storico, pos. 9B 'Mostre fuori Galleria', B.1, fascicolo 6 'Collaborazione a Mostra Triennale delle Terre d'Oltremare a Napoli – 1940', prott. 478 and 1513.

<sup>546</sup> Personal email from Dr. Costanza Alberici (assistant curator at Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi), 13 December 2017. She refers to unspecified archival documents dated 1940-1947.

<sup>547</sup> For Galleria Nazionale di Parma, cf. personal email from Dr. Marina Gerra (librarian), 28 June 2018. She refers to uninventoried archival documents regarding Mostra d'Oltremare, dated 1940-1949. For Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, cf.: Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Archivio Storico, 'Anno 1946. Napoli – Mostra delle Terre Italiane d'Oltremare', prot. 1283, pos. A.11c and prot. 1128, pos. S1.

one historical document had been definitely lost: a codex with dispatches from Captain General Francesco Morosini (seventeenth century), destroyed in the burning of Archivio di Stato di Napoli.<sup>548</sup>

With the purpose of providing a complete analysis of the events that affected the objects on loan to Mostra d'Oltremare in wartime, it is significant to describe a stealing act that happened by the hand of Nazi troops. As briefly mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the exhibition organising committee chose Abbazia di Montecassino for the safekeeping of some of the loaned works of art. Here, Mostra d'Oltremare's artefacts were stored together with objects from several galleries of Campania.<sup>549</sup> All the works of art had been stored in 187 crates and, between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 1943, they were transferred to the Abbazia.<sup>550</sup> As recorded in MFAA reports, these objects were relocated by the Hermann Göring Division between 15<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 1943 to their headquarters near Spoleto (Villa Marignoli at Colleferretto), with the alleged purpose 'to protect the treasures from the Anglo-American barbarians'.<sup>551</sup> Between December 1943 and January 1944, after several months of negotiations, the objects were handed over to the Italian authorities, who transferred them to the Vatican.<sup>552</sup> After this removal, the Italian government and the

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<sup>548</sup> Personal email from Dr. Andrea Bellieni (Museo Correr), 4 January 2018. He refers to a series of unspecified documents regarding Mostra d'Oltremare, preserved in the museum's archive.

<sup>549</sup> AMG-24 1946, pp. 164-166; Maiuri 1956, p. 145.

<sup>550</sup> AMG-24 1946, pp. 164-166; AMG-180 1945, p. 18; British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82; Pollard 2019a, p. 673. The removal involved 187 crates: 31 crates of paintings and 'minor arts' from Mostra d'Oltremare; 138 crates of bronzes and minor art objects from Museo Nazionale di Napoli; fifteen crates from Museo di S. Martino in Naples; three crates from Reggia di Capodimonte (AMG-24 1946, pp. 164-166; British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82).

<sup>551</sup> Albareda 1945, pp. 31-32; AMG-24 1946, pp. 164-166; Gentile and Bianchini 2014, p. 49; *Letter from Ward-Perkins to Richardson, 16 September 1977* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box B-Documents, British School at Rome); Maiuri 1956, p. 145; Pollard 2019a, pp. 673, 678; *Report on the German Kunstschutz (MFA&A Branch) in Italy between 1943 and 1945* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box E-Documents, British School at Rome). The quote is reported in AMG-76 1946, p. 4, in AMG-180 1945, p. 18, and in British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82. For a detailed examination of the events relating to the Hermann Göring's theft, cf.: Gentile and Bianchini 2014.

<sup>552</sup> Albareda 1945, pp. 31-32; AMG-24 1946, pp. 164-166; AMG-76 1946, p. 4; AMG-180 1945, p. 18; British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82; *Letter from Ward-Perkins to Richardson, 16 September 1977* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box B-Documents, British School at Rome); Maiuri 1956, p. 146; Pollard 2019a, p. 673; *Report on the German Kunstschutz (MFA&A Branch) in Italy between 1943*

MFAA inventoried the objects, discovering that several works of art and fifteen entire crates were missing – they had been stolen by the Germans, who moved them from Spoleto to Berlin and then to Karinhall ‘for presentation to Göring as a birthday offering from “his Division”’.<sup>553</sup> Nevertheless, Göring refused the official presentation because he was nervous about such a large-scale theft, and about the possible negative reaction from Adolf Hitler: ‘it seems he thought so renowned a catch a bit too hot to handle thus openly’.<sup>554</sup> The works of art were then destined for Munich, to be handed over to the Fuhrer Collection in Linz. However, this transfer never occurred, and the objects were moved to the Alt Aussee mine in Austria, along with Göring’s most valuable possessions.<sup>555</sup> The MFAA report AMG-76 contains a list of the missing objects.<sup>556</sup> Among them, some artefacts and artworks from the Uffizi (21 watercolours by Jacopo Ligozzi), from Palazzo Ducale in Venice (*Neptune Offering Gifts to Venice* by Tiepolo), and from Museo Nazionale di Firenze (suit of armour of Emperor Charles V).<sup>557</sup> Only in May 1945, the MFAA recovered the missing objects at the Alt Aussee salt

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and 1945 (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box E-Documents, British School at Rome). A partial list of the crates handed over to the Vatican by the Germans is contained in the document *Casse Consegnate dal Comando Germanico Provenienti da Montecassino e da Altre Località*, MFAA Inv. No. 70 (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box E-Documents, British School at Rome).

<sup>553</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 19. Cf. also: AMG-24 1946, pp. 164-166; AMG-76 1946, p. 4; AMG-180 1945, pp. 18-19; British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82; *Letter from Ernest De Wald to Ward Perkins, 20 October 1945* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box B-Documents, British School at Rome); Maiuri 1956, p. 147; Pollard 2019a, p. 678; Pollard 2021; *Promemoria Circa le Restituzioni di Opere d’Arte all’Italia, 8 gennaio 1947* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box D-Documents, British School at Rome).

<sup>554</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 19. Cf. also: Gentile and Bianchini, pp. 83-84; Pollard 2021.

<sup>555</sup> British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82; Gentile and Bianchini, pp. 83-84, 89-92; *Letter from Ernest De Wald to Ward Perkins, 20 October 1945* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box B-Documents, British School at Rome); Pollard 2021; *Promemoria Circa le Restituzioni di Opere d’Arte all’Italia, 8 gennaio 1947* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box D-Documents, British School at Rome).

<sup>556</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 9.

<sup>557</sup> Gentile and Bianchini 2014, pp. 147-149; *Letter from Ernest De Wald to Ward Perkins, 20 October 1945* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box B-Documents, British School at Rome). A complete list of the crates deposited in the Vatican and of the missing ones is contained also in the report AMG-24 (1946, pp. 164-166).

mine (Fig. 35) and transferred them to the Munich Central Collecting Point, before processing their restitution to the rightful owners.<sup>558</sup>

The next section of this chapter moves the attention towards a stealing activity perpetrated by Allied troops against the objects on loan to Mostra d'Oltremare from Museo Civico di Bologna: a group of Turkish weapons and Captain Bernardo's shield. This constitutes a sort of sub-case study of the main one regarding the events that affected the exhibition's objects during the Allied occupation of Mostra d'Oltremare.

*Figure 35 - An Allied soldier carrying a painting by the Italian Master Bernardino Luini, stolen by the Hermann Göring's division in Montecassino and recovered in the Alt Aussee mine, Austria, 1945.*

*The picture was taken by monuments officer Thomas Carr Howe in 1945. © Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. [copyright restriction]*

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<sup>558</sup> AMG-180 1945, p. 19; British Committee 1946, pp. 80-82; Gentile and Bianchini 2014, pp. 91-92; *Letter from Ernest De Wald to Ward Perkins, 20 October 1945* (in Ward-Perkins Collection, War Damage Series, Box B-Documents, British School at Rome); Maiuri 1956, p. 147; Pollard 2019a, p. 678; Pollard 2021. A list of the objects recovered at Alt Aussee is transcribed into: Gentile and Bianchini 2014, pp. 153-154. The Munich Central Collecting Point was one of the two main art repositories used by the MFAA for storing recovered artworks and artefacts, before processing their restitution – the other ones were located in Wiesbaden, Marburg and Offenbach. The Munich Collecting Point housed more than a million of works of art, and the Wiesbaden Collecting Point contained around 700,000 objects (Alford 1994, p. 1297-1301/3552).

### *Disappearances from Museo Civico di Bologna*

This section focuses on a sub-case study strictly dependent on the analysis of Allied art theft at Mostra d'Oltremare previously conducted: an investigation into the stolen objects of the Armoury collection of Museo Civico di Bologna loaned to the exposition – Captain Francesco Bernardo's shield (Fig. 36), and a group of 23 Turkish weapons from the collection of General Luigi Ferdinando Marsili.<sup>559</sup> The main purpose is to investigate what happened to these objects over a specific period of time: from the requests of a loan made by the exhibition's organising committee (1938), through their disappearance (1943-1945), to the subsequent requests for information made by the director of Museo Civico di Bologna (1945-1952). The study is closed by a passage that seeks to integrate the available information about the return of Captain Bernardo's shield to Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna in 1996. Due to the scarce published literature on these topics, this analysis is going to address a gap in the research.

According to the documents consulted at Archivio Storico del Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna (hereafter, ASMCABo), which covered the period from 1938 to 1952, the requests for the loan of objects to Mostra d'Oltremare for the Maritime Republics pavilion were initiated by the organising committee on 6 December 1938.<sup>560</sup> After several exchange letters between Pericle Ducati (1880-1944) – the director of Museo Civico – and Vincenzo Tecchio (1895-1953) – Government General Commissioner for the exhibition – concerning the objects which could better represent the exhibition's purposes, the organising committee decided to request the following

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<sup>559</sup> Captain Bernardo's shield is an oval targe, made of iron and gold, dating to the second half of the sixteenth century (Medica 1996). More difficult is the identification of the 23 Turkish weapons in the large Marsili's collection of arms preserved at the former Museo Civico di Bologna. The problem derives mainly from the lack of precise information in the archival documents about their loan to Mostra d'Oltremare. In those documents, there is no mention to objects' inventory numbers, and their description in the archival document 'ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f63/Museo Civico, 23 febbraio 1940' is too vague (Fig. 37). The only definite information is that these are mainly Oriental weapons, gathered by General Luigi Ferdinando Marsili during his military campaigns in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the eighteenth century (Boccia 1991).

<sup>560</sup> ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f62/Museo Civico, 'Mostra Triennale d'Oltremare 1939'. No other document regarding Mostra d'Oltremare has been found after the year 1952.

artefacts for loan: Captain Francesco Bernardo's shield and 23 Turkish weapons.<sup>561</sup> The decision about which weapons to offer on loan was accorded to Ducati, who chose the artefacts in February 1940 (Fig. 37).<sup>562</sup> From the letters sent to Ducati from Tecchio, it seems clear that the organising committee's requests were extremely vague about the specific objects it wanted to borrow from Museo Civico – an approach to the exhibitions' organisation completely different from the present time. This, undoubtedly, can be related to the fact that expositions organised by the Fascist regime were very large, with a high number of artworks on loan. Therefore, undeniably, exhibitions' organising committees did not have a precise idea about the objects they wanted, following the assumption 'more objects on loan, better the exhibition is'. The same imprecise approach, concerning the requests of loans for the Maritime Republics pavilion, was followed by Tecchio with regards to Museo Stibbert in Florence. In that case, too, first requests were made in December 1938, and they were unspecific about the demanded objects, as clearly demonstrated by this excerpt:

There's proof to be a large amount of material in your institution which illustrates the activity of our Maritime Republics in the Mediterranean. I will be grateful if you would like to make available the mentioned material to this Exhibition.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f62/Museo Civico, 14 gennaio 1939.

<sup>562</sup> The document 'ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f63/Museo Civico, 23 febbraio 1940' lists the weapons sent to Mostra d'Oltremare (Fig. 37).

<sup>563</sup> Author's translation of: 'Risultandoci che siete in possesso di materiale atto a documentare l'attività svolta dalle nostre Repubbliche Marinare nel Mediterraneo, vi sarò molto grato se vorrete mantenere a disposizione di questa Mostra il suddetto materiale' (Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n.324, 18 dicembre 1938).





*Figure 36 - Captain Bernardo's shield (Museo Civico di Bologna) in a photo taken before its loan to Mostra d'Oltremare, 1940.*

© Archivio Storico del Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna (ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f67/Museo Civico).

ELENCO CON ASSICURAZIONE		
materiale da inviare alla Mostra Biennale d'Oltremare - in Napoli		
Vetrina I - sala VIII -		
1 - Jatacam con relativa fodera -	L	1000
2 - Martello -	"	1000
3 - Porta giavellotto con 3 giavellotti -	"	5000
4 - Mura ocimittana con fodero -	"	2000
5 - Sciabola con manico adornato d'etere con relativo fodero -	"	2000
6 - Due fucili - (il 3° e il 5°) -	"	2000
Vetrina a muro D -		
8 - Bipeune -	"	2000
9 - Scudo centrale d'omini -	"	1000
10 - Sei turchetti con frecce -	"	3000
11 - Scudo d'felle -	"	1000
12 - Mucchio -	"	500
13 - Due tamburi -	"	1000
14 - Due scuri -	"	1000
Vetrina isolata -		
15 - Scudo ageminate del cap. veneto - F. Bernar	L	40.000
Totale assicurazione L		62.500
23/2/1940 =		

Figure 37 - The list of objects given on loan to Mostra d'Oltremare from Museo Civico di Bologna. It lists fifteen entries, comprising 23 Turkish weapons and Captain Bernardo's shield

© Archivio Storico del Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna (ASMCABO, Archivio Atti Diversi, f63/Museo Civico, 23 febbraio 1940).

After the outbreak of the war, curators of Museo Civico did not receive any information from the exhibition's organising committee about the fate of the loaned objects. The first documents reporting notifications on the artefacts are dated 1945. Mario Zuffa, acting director of Museo Civico after the death of Ducati (October 1944), sent several letters to Francesco Maglietta Esq. (the Liquidation Commissioner for Mostra d'Oltremare), to Bruno Molajoli (Superintendent for Galleries of Campania), and to the General Direction for Antiquities and Fine Arts at the Ministry of Public Instruction, asking for information about the exact location of the objects to finally recover them.<sup>564</sup> Zuffa received a reply from the exhibition's organising committee in September 1945. With this letter, Maglietta sent to Zuffa a copy of the document he had received from Molajoli, dated 12 July 1945, where it had been reported that the loaned objects were situated in the exposition's on-site refuges seized by the Allies:

... the weapons and the shield loaned from Museo Civico di Bologna were located in the premises of the exhibition when the area had been occupied by Allied troops (October 1943). Only when the area will be freed from the occupying troops, we will be able to give more precise information.<sup>565</sup>

From the archival documents consulted, the feeling Zuffa had on the uncertainty that surrounded the fate of the shield and the weapons is transparent. In a letter, he precisely wrote that he was worried about their destiny, knowing the tough times suffered by the city of Naples in wartime:

... given the several events suffered by the art objects in the Naples area, we are extremely worried about their fate.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>564</sup> Tulliach 2016, p. 250.

<sup>565</sup> Author's translation of: '... le armi e lo scudo ricevuti in prestito a suo tempo dal Museo di Bologna si trovavano nei magazzini della mostra al momento in cui la zona fu occupata dalle truppe alleate (Ottobre 1943). Solo all'atto del rilascio della zona da parte delle truppe occupanti potremo esservi precisi' (ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f65/Museo Civico, p77).

<sup>566</sup> Author's translation of: '... considerate le molteplici vicende subite dalle opere d'arte del territorio napoletano, si nutre in questi ambienti qualche apprensione circa la loro sorte' (ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f65/Museo Civico, p77).

Moreover, Zuffa was disturbed about how the former director, Pericle Ducati, treated the issue, giving the largest part of the responsibility for the situation to his lack of concern in recovering the artefacts in wartime:

with an interest from the former Museum direction, the objects could have been easily recovered during the first three years of war.<sup>567</sup>

Undoubtedly, Zuffa disapproved the majority of the actions conducted at the museum by Ducati. He had political views completely opposed to Ducati's ideas, and this contrast between different political standings was very strong at the end of the war – Ducati was deeply involved with the Fascist regime, and the ideas connected to this political faction had influenced his entire life and a large part of his publications and museological choices.<sup>568</sup>

Returning to the documents regarding the shield and the weapons, finally in 1948, the direction of Museo Civico di Bologna obtained more precise information. Luciano Laurenzi (1902-1966), appointed as the new director in February 1947, received a letter from Maglietta, where he precisely declared that after the freeing of Naples by Allied troops (April 1945), the artefacts were not present at the refuges where they had been transferred in wartime.<sup>569</sup> This document represents a fundamental piece of evidence concerning the events that affected Museo Civico's loaned objects.

These incidents are not recorded in the report compiled by the MFAA about the situation at the exhibition grounds in December 1944, thoroughly investigated in the previous section of this chapter.<sup>570</sup> In the aforementioned list of the known objects lost from Mostra d'Oltremare during the German and Allied occupation (included in the

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<sup>567</sup> Author's translation of: '... con un minimo interessamento da parte delle precedenti direzioni del Museo, avrebbero potuto essere agevolmente ritirati nel corso dei primi tre anni di guerra' (ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f66/Museo Civico, p20).

<sup>568</sup> Tulliach 2016, pp. 247-250. Cf also: Tulliach, A. (forthcoming), "'Il Museo è un Mezzo Possente di Educazione Artistico-Storica". Pericle Ducati and the Museum's Social Role', in *Musei in Europa negli Anni tra le Due Guerre. La Conferenza di Madrid del 1934*, conference proceedings, Turin, Italy, 26-27 February 2018.

<sup>569</sup> ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f67/Museo Civico, p29.

<sup>570</sup> AMG-76 1946.

report AMG-76) there is no indication of Museo Civico's artefacts. Nevertheless, Maj. Ward-Perkins, the compiler of the document, wrote that,

certain aspects of this report and in particular the list of missing items are necessarily very incomplete.<sup>571</sup>

The same understanding was reported again in the MFAA *Final Report General* for Italy, where it was emphasised that exclusively the most valuable objects from Mostra d'Oltremare had been found, and that a lot of work still had to be done with reference to the material still missing.<sup>572</sup>

In the aforementioned AMG-76 report, Ward-Perkins recorded the results of a search made on the objects still remaining within the exhibition grounds made on 29 June 1944, recognising the accuracy of the list compiled at that time:

All three are convinced that these represent the sum-total of exhibits still remaining within the exhibition-grounds.<sup>573</sup>

In the list, Museo Civico's artefacts are not cited. From this, I assume that at that date the objects had been already stolen. That constitutes another fundamental document on the fate of Museo Civico's artefacts during their loan to Mostra d'Oltremare. By collating findings from the examined historical documents, I can conclude that Museo Civico's objects disappeared between October 1943 and 29 June 1944, during Allied troops' occupation of the exhibition grounds.<sup>574</sup>

No other relevant document regarding the exhibition have been found at Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna's archive. Exclusively in 1951 there was an exchange of letters between Laurenzi and Mostra d'Oltremare's organising committee. On 9 December 1951, Laurenzi received a note from prof. Luigi Tocchetti, member of the organising

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<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>572</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 32. A similar passage is reported in British Committee (1946, pp. 80-82): 'The fate of many of the exhibits, including much of the ethnographic material, will probably never been known. However, after months of checking most of the antiquities and works of art have been accounted for'.

<sup>573</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 6. The inspection was made by Dr. L. Penta, Prof. S. Ortolani, and Capt. Pennoyer of the MFAA. Prof. S. Ortolani was Director of Galleries in Naples and Inspector of Galleries in Salerno.

<sup>574</sup> Cf.: ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f65/Museo Civico, p77; and Archivio Atti Diversi, f67/Museo Civico, p29.



committee of the exposition *Mostra d'Oltremare e del Lavoro Italiano nel Mondo* (Naples, 15 May – 15 September 1952), asking for the loan of some objects.<sup>575</sup> Laurenzi replied to this letter stating that he would have waited to give an answer to this request until he had received information about what the organising committee meant to do to refund Museo Civico for the loss of the objects.<sup>576</sup> After conducting research into the archival documents for the years 1951 and 1952, no letters have been found regarding the loan of objects to this new exhibition, nor about any kind of refund proposal made by the organising committee.

In the 1980s, Gualberto Ricci Curbastro (1932-2013), an Italian weapons scholar and collector, recognised Captain Bernardo's shield in a Paris dealer's catalogue.<sup>577</sup> When the collector's daughter, Evelina Ricci Curbastro, asked for information with the alleged intention to buy the shield, the Paris dealer had already sent the object to an unspecified English dealer.<sup>578</sup> Again, Evelina tried to buy the shield, this time in Great Britain, but she discovered that this had been sold to an American collector, unknown at that time. The collector was, in reality, the well-known businessman Ronald Lauder, who bought the object in 1982.<sup>579</sup>

Gualberto Ricci Curbastro lost track of the shield until 1995 when he received the information that this was about to be donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York by Lauder himself. Therefore, Ricci Curbastro notified the Italian Carabinieri TPC Unit and Antonio Paolucci, the Italian Minister for Cultural Heritage at that time, who, through the Italian Consulate General in New York and the 'Interministerial

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<sup>575</sup> ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f66/Museo Civico, p193. The exhibition *Mostra d'Oltremare e del Lavoro Italiano nel Mondo* ('Exhibition of the Overseas Lands and of the Italian Labour in the World') was inaugurated in 1952. It recalled many of the themes of the previous *Mostra d'Oltremare*, such as the promotion of colonies' economies, this time investigated without the Fascist colonialist propaganda's view.

<sup>576</sup> ASMCABo, Archivio Atti Diversi, f71/Museo Civico, p8.

<sup>577</sup> This and all the following information, unless otherwise specified, derive from the webpage: Ricci Curbastro Franciacorta, 'Dott. Gualberto Ricci Curbastro'.

<sup>578</sup> Boccia (1991, p. 23) reports that the shield was located in a 'well-known English private collection' (author's translation from: 'una nota collezione privata inglese'), unfortunately without specifying the name of the collector.

<sup>579</sup> Bondioli-Osio 1996, p. 62.

Commission for the Italian Art Treasures lost during the Second World War', returned the shield to Bologna in October 1996. This is now on display at Museo Civico Medievale in the room nr. 18, housing a portion of the museum's armoury collection (Fig. 38). Just before its transfer to this room, the museum organised the exhibition *Incontri & Arrivi. Lo scudo del Capitano Francesco Bernardo* ('Encounters and Arrivals. Captain Francesco Bernardo's Shield'), to reveal the recovered object.<sup>580</sup> The opening of the exposition is dated 16 October 1996, marking the official restitution of the shield to the museum.<sup>581</sup>



Figure 38 - Detail of a display case at Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna (room 18), with Captain Bernardo's shield on the right.

Picture taken by the author in November 2017. © The Author. Reproduction courtesy of Musei Civici d'Arte Antica di Bologna – Museo Civico Medievale.

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<sup>580</sup> Musei Civici d'Arte Antica, 'Archivio Mostre 1986-1999'. The shield has now the inv. n. 400 (Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna).

<sup>581</sup> Bondioli-Osio 1996, p. 62.

## Conclusion

The analysis conducted in this chapter, limited to the city of Naples, has shown the extensiveness of the issue concerning the exploitation of historical buildings by the hand of Allied troops during the Second World War. Although the problem was significant especially in an early phase, it unfortunately never disappeared during the entire course of the Allied presence in Naples, as outlined especially by the study of the incidents occurred at Palazzo Reale and at Mostra d'Oltremare.

The case study of Mostra d'Oltremare contributes towards a better understanding of the actions perpetrated by troops in occupation of a historical site. This case study has argued that the issue of troops' exploitation of monumental buildings was the result of an administrative laxity on the matter of cultural property protection. Indeed, the exhibition's area had not been inscribed in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, giving therefore to commanders the right of occupying it. Moreover, the objects on loan to the exposition had not been properly inventoried prior to the war, making difficult, if not impossible, their identification by MFAA officers among the works of art still in place at the exhibition grounds, or among the ones stolen or damaged. Furthermore, monuments officers' inspection of the area was proved difficult by the resistance of troops, which thus demonstrated their indifference for the role covered by MFAA officers and, more significantly, their disregard for the fundamental need of preserving cultural assets in war zones.

A certain carelessness in approach to cultural property protection, this time by Allied governments, has been described by the outcomes of the Collier Commission of Enquiry. On the one hand, the will of Allies to investigate further troops' involvement in damaging and stealing acts towards heritage in Southern Italy can be considered a step forward in governments' recognition of the importance of heritage protection in time of conflict. On the other hand, the inconclusive outcomes derived from the enquiry have shown the discrepancy between the commission and the MFAA in the evaluation of the extensiveness of troops' unlawful actions towards cultural assets in the city of Naples. Thus, this indicates an opposition of reasoning within the Allies themselves on the matter of cultural property protection – a curious balance between Allied governments and the MFAA in assessing the consequences of troops' actions.



Significant in that sense is also the treatment given by the Collier Commission to the fate of Mostra d'Oltremare, not properly investigated, making transparent governments' indifference for such a protracted military exploitation of a cultural site. In light of these considerations, I can conclude that the Commission of Enquiry was appointed for silencing enemy's propagandist allegations of Allied troops acting as scores of pilferers in occupied Southern Italy. As Coccoli suggests, the Commission's appointment had a 'notable symbolic value'.<sup>582</sup>

Finally, as mentioned in this chapter, Allied governments' reports emphasised that the experience of the city of Naples was never repeated in the course of the Italian campaign. It should be stressed that this is true only if considering the proportion of the problem. Examples regarding Allied troops' exploitation of monumental buildings are recurrent also with the Allies' north advance in the country, even if less extensively. The next chapter will demonstrate that by analysing the situation in the city of Florence, focusing on the case study of Museo Stibbert.

The findings discussed in this chapter have provided conclusive evidence for the main research topic of this project, regarding the involvement of Allied troops in damaging and stealing activities towards cultural heritage in occupied Italy.

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<sup>582</sup> Author's translation of 'notevole valenza simbolica' (Coccoli 2017, p. 105).

## Chapter 6 – Museo Stibbert, Florence (Italy)

This chapter presents an overview of the events that affected historical buildings in Tuscany, and in Florence in particular, as far as their requisition by the Allies is concerned. The central focus of the chapter is an investigation on the issue of villas' military occupation, with a detailed examination of the requisitioning of Villa Stibbert and its museum, one of the main case studies of this research project. In wartime, it was occupied by British troops, who ransacked its contents, composed mainly of arms, armouries, paintings, and valuable handicrafts.<sup>583</sup>

Firstly, the study will begin by briefly outlining the events that affected Florentine cultural heritage in World War II. The first section aims at introducing the examination conducted later with reference to the military occupation of historical buildings in the city of Florence. I will confine the discussion exclusively to an overview of the topic, because a detailed analysis of the events that involved Florence in wartime is beyond the scope of the research project. The following section sets out to expand the understanding of troops' requisition of villas in Florence and the surrounding areas – an issue which MFAA officers had to be frequently confronted with. Apart from their importance from an artistic and historic point of view, many of these villas had been chosen by Italian authorities as refuges for the valuable and vast heritage of Tuscan museums and churches. Thus, military occupation represented a danger for the safety of these art treasures, too. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the events that affected Museo Stibbert during its occupation by British troops. At that juncture, museum collections had been subjected to major stealing and damaging activities.

To evaluate whether Museo Stibbert had been occupied in wartime by Allied troops and the consequences of the requisition, primary sources are the museum's archival records referring to that period (Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi). In particular, the analysis has been centred around the inventory compiled by Alfredo Lensi, museum

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<sup>583</sup> In the text, I use 'Villa Stibbert' and 'Museo Stibbert' interchangeably, for being the villa the container of museum collections. Moreover, because Museo Stibbert is a house-museum, the villa is an integral part of the museum.

director, in December 1944 (*Elenco delle Cose Mancanti dopo il 15 Settembre 1944 quando il Battaglione di Fanti Inglesi Lasciò Liberi i Locali del Museo*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324). The document includes an in-depth description of the activities and the behaviour of the troops in occupation, and it incorporates a long list of objects that disappeared during that period. The case study concerning Museo Stibbert is introduced by a brief analysis of the events that affected Florentine cultural heritage in wartime, and of the villas' requisition in the city and its hinterland. The enquiry has been mainly based on the examination of primary and secondary sources. The main primary source is a book by Lt. Frederick Hartt, the MFAA Regional Commissioner for Tuscany. In 1949, he published his memoir of the wartime activities conducted in Florence in the preservation of historical monuments and their contents from destruction, damage, and illicit appropriation (*Florentine Art under Fire*, 1949). In the book, he often refers to the efforts played by monuments officers in preventing the military requisition of villas in and around Florence, focusing the attention especially on the ones chosen, prior to the war, as artworks' refuges. Other primary sources fundamental for the enquiry on the topic are the reports compiled in wartime by MFAA officers (AMG-56 1946, AMG-153 1946, AMG-177 1946) and the documents produced by Giovanni Poggi, Superintendent for Monuments and Galleries for Provinces of Florence, Pistoia and Arezzo (Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi). All the mentioned reports contain detailed information on the villas occupied by Allied troops in wartime, and on the activities conducted by monuments officers in Florence in the preservation of artistic heritage. Finally, the chapter's main secondary source is the book by Carlotta Coccoli (*Monumenti Violati*, 2017), who focuses an entire section on the actions undertaken by MFAA officers in Tuscany in repairing damaged buildings and in preventing the illicit appropriation of works of art. The information included there have been examined in conjunction with the ones reported by Ilaria Dagnini Brey in her account of events (*The Venus Fixers*, 2009).

To conclude, this chapter will contribute towards a better understanding of the issue of military occupation of monumental sites in Tuscany and, in particular, in the city of Florence. It aims at demonstrating that this problem was a constant during the entire

Allied campaign in Italy and, thus, it was not confined exclusively to the country's Southern areas, as argued by some primary and secondary sources.<sup>584</sup>

### **Florentine artworks in war**

The central focus of this section is an investigation around the issue of troops' exploitation of historical buildings in the city of Florence, which involved in particular villas in and around the city. It is introduced by a brief report of the situation regarding Florentine cultural heritage in wartime.

Tuscany had an unfortunate fate during World War II. After the liberation of Rome in June 1944, Allies pushed their advance northward through Tuscany, before reaching the Gothic Line on the Apennine Mountains.<sup>585</sup> Because the German army was still erecting fortifications over the Gothic Line at that time, they undertook strenuous battles with Allies in the Southern area of the region to gain time. Thus, almost every town in that area suffered enormous consequences in terms of heritage destruction and damage. Fortunately, the irreparable losses were few. However, as rightly described by monuments officer Lt. Frederick Hartt, compiler of the MFAA *Final Report on Tuscany*, 'Tuscany is one region of Italy where almost any loss is a significant one'.<sup>586</sup>

The countryside represented the temporary house of more than 600 paintings from Tuscan churches and museums (Pitti, Uffizi, Bargello, Accademia and San Marco among the others). Here, 26 villas and castles had been chosen in 1942 as refuges of works of art, which now stood dangerously in the middle of ground combat for their environs being the theatre of energy-consuming battles. In Hartt's words, these were

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<sup>584</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 6; Pollard 2020a.

<sup>585</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 175; Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 110-111.

<sup>586</sup> AMG-177 1946, p. 6. Cf. also: British Committee 1946, p. 98; Coccoli 2017, p. 175; Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 110-111. Between 4 and 20 July 1944, Anglo-Americans took the cities of Siena (on the 4<sup>th</sup>), Arezzo (on the 16<sup>th</sup>) and Livorno (on the 20<sup>th</sup>), before reaching Florence, freed on 11<sup>th</sup> August (AMG-177, p. 6; Coccoli 2017, p. 176; Dagnini Brey 2009, pp. 110-111).

located 'in one of the hottest sections of the front, rocked by artillery and small arms fire'.<sup>587</sup>

Art refuges were divided into four main groups, reflecting the geographical areas where they were located: Montespertoli, Incisa, Poppi, and Mugello. For example, among the Montespertoli group, Castello di Montegufoni hosted pictures mainly from the Uffizi, such as Botticelli's *Primavera*, Cimabue's *Madonna* and Giotto's *Madonna d'Ognissanti* (Fig. 39).<sup>588</sup> As soon as the battle ended, Allied troops, through order of Lt. General Sir Oliver Leese (1894-1978), commanding 8<sup>th</sup> army, arranged a systematic guarding of every refuge in the Tuscan countryside, and monuments officers – guided by Hartt, in charge of the MFAA for the AMG Region VIII – started thorough checks of the deposits, aided by personnel of the Italian Central Direction of Fine Arts.<sup>589</sup> After the examination of inventories, Hartt noted that very extensive were the German thefts, described both as direct orders of high commanders, and as arbitrary actions initiated by single soldiers:

In certain cases, these were official, and undertaken by order of higher commands, *ostensibly to protect the works from being taken by the Allies*. In other cases the thefts were apparently private. Only once was any sort of receipt given, and many times the thefts were accompanied by threats of force and even by actual gunfire [emphasis added].<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 23. Cf. also: Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 112; AMG-24 1946, pp 167-168; Pollard 2019a, p. 675. For a detailed account of the events that interested Florentine museums' refuges, cf.: Hartt 1949, pp. 21-49; Fasola 1945b. On the transfer of works of art to those deposits, cf.: Fasola 1945a; Fasola 1945b.

<sup>588</sup> AMG-24 1946, pp. 167-168; Hartt 1949, p. 26. A complete list of villas and castles used as art refuges is included in: Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi, Serie VIII Protezione Antiaerea e Danni di Guerra, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 154/4-1, 1943 *Gennaio 27. Riunione a Firenze alla Presenza di S.E. Bottai etc.*, and 1944 *Giugno 23. Lettera al Cons. Wolf*. Detailed lists of the objects transferred to villas for safekeeping are included into: *Ibid.*, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 156.

<sup>589</sup> AMG-24 1946, pp. 167-168; AMG-25 1946, pp. 6-11; AMG-35 1946, p. 10; AMG-177 1946, p. 8; British Committee 1946, p. 101; Fasola 1945a, p. 145; Hartt 1949, p. 7. Lt. Frederick Hartt was the Region VIII's Regional Commissioner. However, because the work that the MFAA had to face in Tuscany was considerable, to Hartt was delegated the sole responsibility for the Eastern provinces (Florence, Siena, Arezzo). Capt. Deane Keller, instead, was responsible for the Western provinces (Grosseto, Pisa, Livorno) (Hartt 1949, p. 69).

<sup>590</sup> AMG-56 1946, pp. 110-113.

Again, as already thoroughly investigated in chapter 3, the alibi for German looting was to save art from the Anglo-American 'barbarians'.

In the *Eleventh Monthly Report*, dated 13 October 1944, monuments officer Maj. De Wald provided a preliminary inventory of the numbers of works of art involved in the German thefts: 198 paintings from Poppi and 291 from Montagnana; 58 crates of sculptures from Poggio a Caiano and 26 from Dicomano; everything (mostly pictures) from Oliveto.<sup>591</sup> A more detailed record of the amount of artworks looted by the Germans was reported by Hartt in his wartime memoir of the events that involved Florentine cultural heritage: 529 paintings, 162 works of sculpture and minor arts, six large cartoon drawings, 38 pieces of Renaissance textiles, for a total of 735 objects.<sup>592</sup> He then concluded that,

even in a city as rich in works of art as Florence, this represented a staggering proportion ... It is fair to estimate that about one-fourth of the most important objects from the museums of Florence disappeared in German hands between July 2 and August 23, 1944.<sup>593</sup>

As German illicit activities do not constitute the primary focus of this research project, but only a convergent situation, I will not proceed further with a detailed description of the theft. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that Florentine museums' works of art had been later recovered by monuments officers in Tyrol (North of Italy) and returned to the city on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1945 (Fig. 14), as already briefly mentioned in chapter 3.

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<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

<sup>592</sup> Hartt 1949, pp. 110-111.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111. Detailed information on the German theft of Florentine museums' artworks are included in: Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi, Serie VIII Protezione Antiaerea e Danni di Guerra, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 154/4. Cf. also: Fasola 1945a; Fasola 1945b; Graziani and Brovadan 2011; Pollard 2019a, pp. 678-679.



Figure 39 - Giotto's *Madonna d'Ognissanti* among other paintings stored at the art refuge of Castello di Montegufoni (Tuscany).

© British School at Rome, Library and Archive Digital Collections (BSR Photographic Archive, Ward-Perkins Collection, wpwar-0329).

As far as Florence was concerned, Anglo-American forces tried to mitigate battlefield consequences to its precious heritage – the richest in Italy after Rome – by gradually surrounding the city and, thus, without directly assaulting it, and by limiting systematic bombing exclusively to railway lines and centres of communications.<sup>594</sup> Moreover, only a minor number of soldiers – just the ones sufficient to make the city safe and to provide population with some basic needs (food, water, medicine) – was allowed to enter Florence immediately after the liberation.<sup>595</sup>

MFAA officers attached to the 8<sup>th</sup> army approaching the city – Capt. Roger Ellis (1910-1998), Maj. Norman T. Newton and Lt. Frederick Hartt – were convinced that Florence would be spared due to its artistic primary importance, as it had already happened in Rome and Siena. Therefore, before entering the city, they were exclusively preoccupied with preventing the quartering of troops in historical buildings, and by preparing a detailed list of monuments that would not be occupied in any

<sup>594</sup> AMG-177, pp. 6-7; British Committee 1946, p. 98; Coccoli 2017, p. 176; Pollard 2019a, p. 675.

<sup>595</sup> AMG-177, p. 7; British Committee 1946, p. 98; Coccoli 2017, p. 176; Hartt 1949, p. 51.

circumstance.<sup>596</sup> To be noted is that the *Lists of Protected Monuments* related to Florence mentioned exclusively the most remarkable monuments, because the entire city was considered as a work of art in itself:

The whole city of Florence must rank as a work of art of the first importance. Only the most outstanding monuments are noted. No requisitions should be made without reference to the MFA&A officers of A.C.C. [Allied Control Commission, ed.].<sup>597</sup>

Thus, monuments officers felt obligated to expand this list, especially having in mind the events occurred in Southern Italy as far as the indiscriminate exploitation of historical buildings by troops was concerned. This was a circumstance that had to be avoided especially in a city like Florence, full of artistic treasures. Soldiers had to preserve those for their artistic significance, but also because damaging, or even worse destroying, such a world-famous past inheritance would have constituted a fertile ground for enemy propaganda. The list had to be reported to the Town Major of the occupying military unit (the engineering personnel of 71 Garrison), who had asked for MFAA's aid in finding buildings suitable for being requisitioned by troops – he did not want to contravene the directives provided by Allied governments on the matter.<sup>598</sup> This constitutes a symptom of the change of attitude that a large part of military personnel finally had in the cultural property protection field. This new recognition of the importance of monuments and their contents had been motivated especially by the awareness-raising campaigns conducted by MFAA officers, as described in chapter 2.

‘The destruction of Florence seemed the end of all civilization’, Hartt remarked in his book.<sup>599</sup> Indeed, despite the precautions taken by Allied governments, and in spite of the declaration of Florence as ‘città aperta’ (‘open city’), the city suffered heavily from

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<sup>596</sup> Coccoli 2017, pp. 176, 186; Hartt 1949, p. 22. For biographic details of Capt. Ellis, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>597</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Le Marche, Toscana, Umbria* 1944, p. 19. Cf. also: Coccoli 2017, p. 190.

<sup>598</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 22.

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.



wartime operations. On the night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1944, German troops blew up all city's bridges on the river Arno to stop the Allied advance.<sup>600</sup> Among the destroyed bridges was Ponte Santa Trinita, 'perhaps the most beautiful bridge in Italy'.<sup>601</sup> It was destroyed almost in its entirety by German mines – remaining intact were only two pillars and the abutments (Fig. 40). The sculptures decorating the bridge had been hit and fragments had been scattered in the river – these were later recovered, restored and the bridge reconstructed.<sup>602</sup>

Ponte Vecchio had been fortunately spared, although at the expense of all the historical buildings located in the streets reaching the bridge both on the North and South Banks of the river (via Por Santa Maria, via Guicciardini, via de' Bardi and Borgo San Jacopo – Fig. 41).<sup>603</sup> The entire medieval section of the city was destroyed, as remarkably described by Giovanni Poggi (1880-1961), Superintendent for Monuments and Galleries of Provinces of Florence, Pistoia, and Arezzo:

... in the steel feeble light of the early morning I saw the massacre of my Florence. The ruins of Oltrarno were there at a few paces. That marvellous panorama which for generations had been admired by the whole world showed a tremendous gash in a tragic foreground along the Arno around Ponte Vecchio, and the dust and smoke were still rising from the rubble.<sup>604</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> Being declared a 'città aperta' ('open city') meant that that particular town was formally immune from military action (Pollard 2020a, p. 10). In World War II, cities with a significant importance from artistic and historical points of view had been declared 'open' by the Germans, on request of towns' councils. Florence had been named 'open city' on 12 May 1944. Nevertheless, the Germans did not follow procedures and later destroyed all the bridges – apart from Ponte Vecchio – and the medieval area close to the river Arno (AMG-143 1946, pp. 253-259). On the declaration of Florence as 'città aperta', cf.: Dalla Costa 1945; Fasola 1945a, p. 143; Pollard 2020a, pp. 161-165. Documents regarding the regulation of Florence as 'città aperta' are included in: Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi, Serie VIII Protezione Antiaerea e Danni di Guerra, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 154/4-5, and Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 154/4-1, *Firenze Città Aperta*. For a detailed account of the events that interested the city of Florence on the night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1944, cf.: Hartt 1949, pp. 51-68; Paoletti 1991, pp. 46-69.

<sup>601</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 52. Cf. also: Coccoli 2017, p. 176.

<sup>602</sup> AMG-177 1946, p. 24; Coccoli 2017, p. 189; Hartt 1949, pp. 81-82. In the days following the Allied liberation of Florence, the bridge was temporary substituted with a Bailey bridge (Fig. 40) (Hartt 1949, p. 34).

<sup>603</sup> AMG-177, p. 7; British Committee 1946, pp. 16-21; Coccoli 2017, p. 191.

<sup>604</sup> Poggi, G. quoted in Hartt 1949, pp. 62-63. On the destruction of the medieval portion of the city of Florence, cf.: Coccoli 2017, pp. 176, 190-191; Hartt 1949, pp. 51-68.

In the MFAA *Final Report on Tuscany* it was emphasised that the order to destroy all the streets leading to the bridge on both sides of the river Arno was given by Adolf Hitler himself.<sup>605</sup> Allied governments saw no logical reason for the Nazis to destroy this area of the city, because Ponte Vecchio was useless for being too narrow for tanks and lorries:

On the North bank the heart of the old city round the Ponte Vecchio, with all its association, is gone. ... The destruction is of a thoroughness out of all proportion to the military results achieved. ... the Ponte Vecchio, with its narrow footway between the old shops, was of no military value to us, seeing that no lorry could use it, and there the systematic destruction of its approaches had no practical object. ... On the South side of the Arno the whole of the Via de' Guicciardini, from the Pitti Palace to the river, has gone; ... the whole of the famous view looking up the river to the Ponte Vecchio, with the mediaeval houses reflected in the water, is lost forever.<sup>606</sup>

The emotions caused in MFAA officers by such brutal fury over Florentine monuments was summarised by Hartt in his book:

The wonderful city, the birthplace and nucleus of the Renaissance, lay a victim of the conflict we had felt sure would pass it by. Yet not until my own entrance into Florence on August 13 did I begin to realize the full extent of the tragedy.<sup>607</sup>

There, again, it is emphasised the fact that monuments officers thought that Florence would have been spared by the Germans for its artistic importance and for being an 'open city'. Nevertheless, if this would have happened, some of its historical buildings would have suffered consequences in any case from the passage of Allied soldiers. Consider for example the villas and castles investigated in the next section of this chapter.

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<sup>605</sup> AMG-177, p. 7; Hartt 1949, p. 66.

<sup>606</sup> British Committee 1946, pp. 16-21.

<sup>607</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 37.



*Figure 40 - Picture of the Bailey bridge built by the Allies on the ruins of Ponte Santa Trinita (Florence), destroyed by the Germans on the night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1944.*

*Source: Paoletti 1991, p. 82.*



*Figure 41 - The destruction at Via Por Santa Maria (Florence) on the morning of 4 August 1944. On the night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of August the city of Florence experienced the total obliteration of its entire Medieval section by the hand of German troops.*

*Source: Paoletti 1991, p. 64.*

### *Villas' requisitions*

Monuments officers in Tuscany had been mainly occupied with assessing war damage to monuments, starting first-repairs activities, and checking the state of Florentine museums' artworks in refuges located in the Tuscan countryside.<sup>608</sup> Nevertheless, as mentioned in MFAA reports, they had also to deal with the problem of troops' occupation of villas.<sup>609</sup> As an example, I report here the pertinent words of Lt. Hartt giving account of the work he was asked to do while being the MFAA Regional Commissioner for Tuscany:

I am responsible not only for Florence but for all of Tuscany ... the job is that of first aid repair to damaged monuments, chiefly construction of roofs to keep the rain out, the removal of rubble and the recovery of architectural and sculptural fragments from damaged churches, and the reinforcing of threatening walls. This work is done by the Superintendencies, of which I direct no less than five, but it is authorized and facilitated by AMG. I have to decide what is to be repaired, and how far the repairs are to go, comb out everything unnecessary from the estimates, ferry them safely through the AMG Engineering and Finance officers, intervene in a thousand petty cases of difficulty between the Superintendents and the military, in the matter of transport, materials, permission, etc., not to speak of having to pass on the requisition of any monumental buildings on our list for the accommodation of troops, offices, etc.<sup>610</sup>

As described in this passage, monuments officers in Tuscany had to face demanding works not only with respect to the reconstruction of damaged monuments, but also – and I must emphasise, again – to the unlawful occupation of historical buildings by troops. This took place despite the precautions taken by Allied governments and by

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<sup>608</sup> AMG-65 1946, pp. 5, 110-112; AMG-177; Coccoli 2017; Dagnini Brey 2009; *Final Report General* 1946.

<sup>609</sup> British Committee 1945, pp. 50-51; *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 13-14.

<sup>610</sup> *Letter From 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Fred Hartt* 1946, p. 3. The letter is dated 24 November 1944 and it is directed to Prof. Walter W. S. Cook, Chairman of the Institute of Fine Arts at the New York University. For a thorough investigation on the aid that monuments officers gave to Italian authorities in the reconstruction and repair of damaged monuments in Italy, and on the role played by the whole AMG in this field, cf.: Coccoli 2017.

the MFAA, thoroughly described in chapter 2. Thus, the problem faced before in Naples had not been solved properly. This time it interested especially villas and castles in Florence and its hinterland.

The demanding situation regarding troops' occupation of monumental buildings was emphasised by Hartt also in his book. In a passage, he reported that in the MFAA's office established in Florence he frequently received requests from villas' proprietors to declare 'off-limits' their houses and to transfer occupying troops to other places. However, the situation in relation to more immediately pressing issues, like the ones of repairing damaged monuments and of salvaging works of art, did not give Hartt the opportunity to investigate further the situation of villas' military occupation. He reported exclusively that 'only few requisitioning mistakes were made' – without going into detail – and that he was able to prevent troops' occupation of Palazzo Pitti, 'three times in danger of being taken over by the army'.<sup>611</sup>

A preliminary report compiled in September 1944 by monuments officer Capt. Roderick Enthoven (1900-1985) mentioned the situation with regards to the Allied requisition of villas in the Florence's environs.<sup>612</sup> Among the private houses inspected by Enthoven, Villa Acton/Capponi, mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* with zero stars, was temporarily occupied by U.S. 133 Infantry Brigade 34 Division, which apparently did not cause any damage to the deposit of valuable books and manuscripts from the close Villa Landau-Finaly.<sup>613</sup> This last one, otherwise, had been requisitioned by the U.S. 133 Infantry Brigade I Battalion, despite its one-star ranking in the *Lists*.<sup>614</sup> It had been occupied previously by German troops, who sacked its contents. Another country-house checked by Enthoven was Villa Turri Salviati – not listed – occupied by both the U.S. 133 Infantry Brigade 34 Division and by some civilians. The villa constituted the refuge for pictures from the Uffizi and Pitti. Enthoven

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<sup>611</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 72.

<sup>612</sup> AMG-56 1946, pp. 122-123. For biographic details of Capt. Enthoven, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>613</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Le Marche, Toscana, Umbria* 1944, p. 23.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*

mentioned that troops and civilians had access to the pictures, but he did not report any theft or damage.<sup>615</sup>

To the MFAA *Ninth Monthly Report*, with reference to May 1945, were attached two notes by Ugo Perini, Villa Landau-Finaly's administrator. The reports were dated 20 September 1944 and 21 May 1945. They included a detailed account of the events that interested the villa under both the Germans and the Anglo-Americans. The first ones occupied its grounds from 19 July to 4 August 1944. During this period, they ransacked its contents, stealing all the works of art they could find and transferring them on two lorries supposedly directed to France. During the German occupation, the villa's inhabitants were not allowed to enter it – Perini reported that men had to stay hidden in order not to be deported to concentration camps. On 1 September 1944, Anglo-Americans – first British troops, later American – occupied the villa, stealing what Germans had left behind, allegedly as souvenirs (books, small statues and paintings, ornaments, carpets, private belongings, etc.).<sup>616</sup>

The villas inspected firstly by Capt. Enthoven were later checked by monuments officer Capt. Cecil Pinsent (1884-1963) on 29 September 1944.<sup>617</sup> In his report, he mentioned that all the military occupiers had been evacuated or were about to. Only at Villa Acton/Capponi some minor objects appeared missing. Uffizi's and Pitti's paintings at Villa Turri Salviati seemed to be in good condition and none were missing. On 21 October 1944, he compiled another report on the state of other inspected villas: Villa La Torre a Cona, Villa di Mondeggi, Villa Antinori, Villa Torrigiani, Villa Canevaro, and Villa I Tattoli. It was reported that no damage to these villas' contents had occurred, apart from some antique furniture and pictures damaged by the occupiers at Villa I

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<sup>615</sup> AMG-56 1946, pp. 122-123. Other documents regarding the events that affected Villa Turri Salviati in wartime as far as military requisitions were concerned are included in: Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi, Serie VIII Protezione Antiaerea e Danni di Guerra, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 155/28.

<sup>616</sup> AMG-153 1946, pp. 38-43.

<sup>617</sup> AMG-56 1946, pp. 123-131. For biographic details of Capt. Pinsent, cf.: Appendix 6.

Tattoli, and some stolen at Villa Torrigiani. At Villa Antinori and Villa Canevaro occurred exclusively the stealing of some personal objects.<sup>618</sup>

All the aforementioned villas had not been included in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. These were later put out-of-bounds to troops. Nevertheless, Capt. Pinsent stated that,

the posting of Off Limits does not mean that this office would excuse occupation by officers in all cases. Such proposals would be considered case by case. Off Limits does not mean exclusion of occupation by troops.<sup>619</sup>

Thus, monuments officers did not exclude the possibility for troops to be lodged in monumental sites – when another accommodation in the area was unavailable – although this had to be approved by them, on the basis of the artistic and historical importance of the building and its contents. Allied soldiers did not consistently follow this procedure and they occupied indiscriminately historical sites, as was the case of Museo Stibbert, which will be investigated in the next section of this chapter.

Another example of troops' requisition of villas in the Tuscan countryside was represented by Villa and Castello Guicciardini in Poppiano (Montespertoli, Florence). In the castle's main tower, Allied soldiers had established an observation post, thus directing artillery fire in that area.<sup>620</sup>

Apart from the importance of these buildings from an artistic-historical point of view, they had been chosen in 1942 as refuges for 217 works of art. The majority of the artworks came from the exhibition *Mostra del Cinquecento Toscano* (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, April-October 1940) – at the outbreak of the war these were not returned to their owners, thus remaining in Florence.<sup>621</sup> In Poppiano, soldiers came into contact

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<sup>618</sup> AMG-65 1946, pp. 93-102. A complete report on the inspections done to villas in and around Florence was compiled on 3 December 1944 by monuments officer Lt. Col. Ernest De Wald (AMG-67, pp. 8-23). No further information was provided by De Wald, apart from the ones already mentioned in this chapter.

<sup>619</sup> AMG-65 1946, p. 64. Cf. also: AMG-56 1946, pp. 123-131; AMG-65 1946, pp. 93-102.

<sup>620</sup> AMG-31 1946, p. 6; Hartt 1949, p. 33.

<sup>621</sup> AMG-27 1946, p. 5; AMG-31 1946, p. 5; AMG-67, pp. 29-30.

with the deposited artworks, damaging the Pontormo's *Visitazione* at Villa Guicciardini and Giovanni Battista Naldini's *Madonna Seduta in Gloria* and *Carità* at Castello Guicciardini.<sup>622</sup>

Pontormo's painting had been thrown down on the floor, and New Zealander soldiers had walked on it 'rubbing the plaster into the surface and removing considerable areas of paintings' (Fig. 42).<sup>623</sup> It also was damaged by the impact of the villa ceiling collapsing due to the consequences of German artillery fire. Another painting damaged by the direct shell fire was Rosso Fiorentino's *Deposizione*.<sup>624</sup> Both paintings were later transferred by Hartt, aided by several Italian workmen, to an undamaged portion of the villa.<sup>625</sup> Pontormo's painting was characterised by Hartt as being 'in frightful condition' to the point that 'parts of it were unrecognizable'.<sup>626</sup> Apart from the artillery fire, the villa was damaged by retreating German troops, who had sacked its rooms a few days before the arriving of the Allies. Fortunately, Germans did not steal or damage any of the works of art preserved there.<sup>627</sup>

On the other hand, Naldini's two pictures, preserved at Castello Guicciardini, had been sliced diagonally with a knife by a New Zealander soldier (Fig. 43), as already briefly mentioned in chapter 4.<sup>628</sup> In Hartt's account of wartime events, he described these two paintings as 'unimportant', thus not giving much value to the damage occurred.<sup>629</sup> Furthermore, in a report, the Uffizi's official, Cesare Fasola, also noticed that some of the pictures stored at Villa Guicciardini had been used by New Zealander troops as

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<sup>622</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 13-14; Hartt 1949, pp. 32-33; Fasola 1945b, p. 60.

<sup>623</sup> AMG-31 1946, p. 5. Cf. also: AMG-67, pp. 29-30; British Committee 1945, pp. 50-51; Hartt 1949, p. 32; Pollard 2019a, p. 676.

<sup>624</sup> AMG-25 1946, pp. 6-11; AMG-31 1946, p. 5; AMG-67, pp. 29-30; British Committee 1945, pp. 50-51; Hartt 1949, p. 32; Fasola 1945b, p. 60.

<sup>625</sup> AMG-25 1946, pp. 6-11; Hartt 1949, p. 33.

<sup>626</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 32.

<sup>627</sup> AMG-25 1946, pp. 6-11. A letter from Guicciardini to the Superintendent Giovanni Poggi on the requisition of Villa Guicciardini by German troops is included in: Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi, Serie VIII Protezione Antiaerea e Danni di Guerra, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 156/37.

<sup>628</sup> AMG-31 1946, p. 5; AMG-67, pp. 29-30; British Committee 1945, pp. 50-51.

<sup>629</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 33.



camp beds.<sup>630</sup> No other reference to this regrettable fact has been found in the consulted historical records.

Despite the importance from the artistic and historical point of view, both Villa and Castello Guicciardini had not been mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. Thus, troops did not see any obstacle to their occupation. This is certainly a failure from the point of view of monuments officers' efforts in preventing this kind of situations. However, it must be remarked that most of the lists had been compiled considering the 'Harvard Lists' and the 'Frick Maps', which had been based exclusively on baedekers (specifically the volumes of *Guida d'Italia* published by the Touring Club Italiano, the German *Baedeker* and the French *Guides Blues*) at disposal prior to MFAA officers' deployment in the war field.<sup>631</sup> Therefore, only the most remarkable monumental sites had been mentioned in the *Lists*. For example, as already investigated in chapter 5, also Mostra d'Oltremare had not been listed. Monuments officers were aware of the limits posed by 'Harvard Lists', 'Frick Maps', and *Lists of Protected Monuments*, as documented by a letter sent from Mason Hammond of the MFAA to David E. Finley of the Roberts Commission, advising that the documentation provided to ground troops,

should not be prepared simply from guidebooks but checked by people who have been there, as I find the guide-book descriptions wholly inadequate in forming true judgement on the importance of a building – not every bit of mediaeval work in a church wall makes it an inestimable treasure and local enthusiasm often exalts secondary things to primary.<sup>632</sup>

Furthermore, during the compiling of the *Lists*, the fact that both the Villa and the Castello had been chosen as artworks' refuges was unknown. Indeed, MFAA personnel got to know the location of many of the repositories exclusively in the days approaching the liberation, when these were overrun by Allied ground troops, or when the anti-Fascist Partito d'Azione (Action Party)'s radio communicated to the Allies the

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<sup>630</sup> AMG-27 1946, p. 5; Pollard 2019a, p. 676.

<sup>631</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 34; Pollard 2020a, pp. 129-130.

<sup>632</sup> Hammond, M. quoted in Pollard 2020a, p. 140.

geographical coordinates of art refuges to prevent their bombardment and to facilitate their protection after the liberation.<sup>633</sup> In an early phase, Italian museum curators and officials maintained secrecy over deposits' location to enhance security.<sup>634</sup> Moreover, at Allies' entrance in Rome, the lists of repositories belonging to the Ministry of Public Instruction had been transferred to the North. When the Allies were able to reach this area, the lists resulted outdated, because in many cases artworks had been transferred from a place to another in due course.<sup>635</sup> This unfavourable situation was described by the MFAA in the *Final Report General* as follows:

The collection and circulation of information regarding these deposits was one of the major tasks of the Subcommittee during the last year of hostilities. The information alleged to have been passed through neutral channels by the North Italian Committee of National Liberation unfortunately never reached the Subcommittee, so that a good deal of the information available proved in the event to be out of date. However thanks to the efforts of the partisans and of the MFAA officers in the field, there was no single recorded instance in North Italy of damage to a deposit by Allied troops.<sup>636</sup>

The aforementioned circumstances constitute the reasons why the Villa and the Castello had not been listed prior to the war. They were placed 'off-limits' to troops, and guards were put to secure them only after the liberation. Indeed, exclusively subsequent to the damaging activities occurred in Poppiano, Hartt arranged for military guards to be placed at liberated refuges, under the order of Lt. Gen. Leese, as already briefly mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>637</sup> Hartt was strongly preoccupied by the attitude of troops when facing such precious artworks as the ones

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<sup>633</sup> Fasola 1945a, p. 145; Pollard 2019a, p.671.

<sup>634</sup> Pollard 2019a, p. 671. For a detailed analysis of the consequences in maintaining secrecy over art refuges, cf.: Pollard 2019a.

<sup>635</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 13, 29; Hartt 1949, p. 22, 39; Pollard 2019a, p. 675.

<sup>636</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 29.

<sup>637</sup> Hartt 1949, pp. 33-34.

stored in Tuscan countryside's deposits. He was convinced that the employment of military guards would have had a deterrent effect for troops.<sup>638</sup>

During monuments officers' activities in Italy, there occurred other instances of artworks' deposits occupied indiscriminately by troops, because the fact that those were art refuges was at that time unknown. For example, Castel Del Monte (near Bari, Apulia), chosen as repository of objects of art from museums and churches located in the entire region of Apulia, was requisitioned in 1943 by both a RAF and an U.S. army Air Force detachment.<sup>639</sup> Artworks were at risk of theft and fire (for field ovens constructed in the courtyard, close to the rooms housing the deposited objects). Fortunately, none of these events occurred. Monuments officers learned about this deposit only after the liberation, as happened with most Florentine museums' repositories. I am able to conclude that this was a constant occurrence during MFAA's activities in Italy as far as preserving artworks' refuges was concerned. All this took place in spite of the instructions included in the 'ADM Instruction n. 10', which regulated the treatment of refuges as follows: when an art deposit was found, it had to be regarded as a listed monument, thus its military exploitation had to be avoided in any circumstance.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>639</sup> Pollard 2019a, p. 672.

<sup>640</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 5-9. Cf. also: Appendix 1.



Figure 42 - Pontormo's *Visitation* safekept at Villa Guicciardini (Poppiano, Montespertoli, Florence). The painting was damaged by New Zealander soldiers billeted in the villa.

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Figure 43 - Two paintings slashed at by New Zealander troops at the Uffizi's deposit in Poppiano, Florence. The paintings are both by Giovanni Battista Naldini, *Madonna Seduta in Gloria* and *La Carità*.

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Another villa chosen in peacetime as a deposit of Florentine museums' works of art – Villa di Montegufoni, not mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* – was occupied by Allied troops, in this case by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Mahratta Light Infantry, 8<sup>th</sup> Indian Division.<sup>641</sup> Nevertheless, different from what occurred at Poppiano, there soldiers had great care of the deposited artworks. In his account of wartime events, Hartt recognised the fostering attitude of Indian soldiers:

the traditional discipline of the Indians insured that no damage was done to the collections by Allied troops.<sup>642</sup>

The safekeeping of works of art was enabled also by the promptness of Maj. Gen. Russell, the divisional commander, who placed guards at the refuge as soon as Allied troops arrived in the area. The same happened at the art deposit of Villa La Torre a Cona – not listed – occupied by a Battalion of the Irish Light Horse. There, damage to deposited artworks – among them, the Medici tomb's statues by Michelangelo – had been prevented by the Battalion commander, Maj. Welch. He posted off-limits the rooms housing works of art, and he took full guard responsibility of them. Moreover, monuments officers arranged for the construction of walls blocking the entrance to the rooms containing artworks.<sup>643</sup>

Also Villa Reale di Poggio a Caiano – a refuge for Florentine museums' statues, for the majority looted by the Germans – was occupied by Allied troops (the 54<sup>th</sup> South African Field Dressing Station), despite the 'off-limits' sign and its two-stars ranking in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.<sup>644</sup> The villa was transformed into a military hospital, for providing emergency surgical treatment to casualties coming directly from the battlefield. The commanding officer, Major Morton, told Hartt – called by the villa's

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<sup>641</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 25.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 40-42, 46.

<sup>644</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Le Marche, Toscana, Umbria* 1944, p. 30. Documents regarding the Allied military occupation of Villa Reale di Poggio a Caiano are included in: Gallerie degli Uffizi, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie Fiorentine, Archivio Giovanni Poggi, Serie VIII Protezione Antiaerea e Danni di Guerra, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n.155/27, n. 158/16-3; and Sottoserie Danni di Guerra e Ricostruzione n. 158/16-3, 159/22. A detailed list of works of art transferred to Villa Reale di Poggio a Caiano for safekeeping is included in: *Ibid.*, Sottoserie Protezione Antiaerea n. 155/27, *R. Villa di Poggio a Caiano. Elenco delle Opere d'Arte delle RR. Gallerie di Firenze in Deposito in Detta Villa per il Periodo Bellico*.

custodian to investigate on the requisition – that in the area around Poggio a Caiano the villa was the only one suitable for hosting all the activities related to a military hospital. Hartt recognised that the requisition was done exclusively for military necessity and, thus, he agreed to it – ‘there could be of course no question but that the dressing station be permitted to use the building’.<sup>645</sup> On the other hand, Major Morton understood the importance of the villa and its contents from an artistic point of view and he gave strict orders to his men, who did not make any damage nor stolen anything.<sup>646</sup> Peculiar is the juxtaposition between hospital activities and the artistic resemble of the villa, as described by Hartt:

During the period in which his [of Major Morton, ed.] unit was there ... a hundred and ninety-nine severe battle casualties were treated – before the frescoes of Pontormo, Andrea Del Sarto, and Alessandro Allori.<sup>647</sup>

This became almost a common scenario during Allied troops’ military occupation of historic buildings when converted into military hospitals, as we have already appreciated in Mostra d’Oltremare’s pictures taken during its requisition (Figs. from 31 to 34).<sup>648</sup>

In spite of the care provided by soldiers in these villas, the previously investigated case of Villa and Castello Guicciardini was not unique. Villa Stibbert in Florence had also been occupied by Allied troops after the liberation of the city and many objects were damaged. There, however, the implications were slightly different, because the villa had been ranked with two stars in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.<sup>649</sup> This constitutes the topic of the following section of this chapter.

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<sup>645</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 102.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>648</sup> Other refuges for Florentine museums’ artworks occupied by Allied troops in wartime were Villa Medici at Cafaggiolo and Castello di Barberino (Mugello). In both places, troops did not commit any illicit action against the deposited works of art (*Ibid.*, pp. 107-109).

<sup>649</sup> *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Le Marche, Toscana, Umbria* 1944, p. 23.

## Museo Stibbert

The present section aims at analysing one of the main case studies of this research project: the requisition of Museo Stibbert (Florence) by Allied troops in 1944, and the subsequent damaging and stealing activities of its contents.

Museo Stibbert is a historic house-museum, founded in the second half of the nineteenth century by Frederick Stibbert (1838-1906) in his family's Florentine home.<sup>650</sup> He dedicated his entire life to creating a rich and diversified collection of valuable artisanship products, spanning from arms and costumes' history, through still life paintings, to every form of artistic craftsmanship (carpets, furniture, majolica, glasses, etc.). Museo Stibbert's collection today is composed of more than 16,000 inventory numbers, including both single objects and complex sets, for an approximate total amount of 30,000 objects.<sup>651</sup>

In 1908, two years after Frederick Stibbert's death, the house-museum in its entirety was entrusted to the city of Florence. In his will, Stibbert expressed the bequest of leaving it to the British government or, in case of its rejection, to the city of Florence. After pressing requests by Florentine authorities, the British government declined, and Stibbert's private house and its contents were consigned to the city of Florence. Stibbert also provided some strict regulations to the entrustment: the house-museum must be opened to the public, it must be supported by a foundation, collections could not be sold, and museum rooms must follow the intended use originally envisaged by Stibbert.<sup>652</sup> The direction was assigned to Alfredo Lensi (1871-1952) – architect and head of Ufficio Belle Arti of the city of Florence – who covered the position until his death.<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>650</sup> Clearkin and Di Marco 2009, p. 43.

<sup>651</sup> Di Marco 2008, p. 106.

<sup>652</sup> Boccia 1986, pp. 138-139; Clearkin and Di Marco 2009, p. 43; Di Marco 2008, pp. 127-128.

<sup>653</sup> Boccia 1986, p. 139. For biographic details on Alfredo Lensi, cf.: <https://siusa.archivi.beniculturali.it/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?TipoPag=prodpersona&Chiave=80470> (Accessed 28 April 2021).

At the time of Frederick Stibbert's passing, the house-museum was composed of more than 60 rooms, including both collections and private spaces.<sup>654</sup> Museo Stibbert is now divided into 50 rooms, housing: European, Islamic and Japanese armouries; ancient and modern paintings; furnishings; textiles; china; ceramics; bronzes. Museum rooms had been organised by Stibbert according to his taste, and little has changed in their arrangement since then, becoming 'a rare example of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century's eclectic home combined with a cabinet of curiosities'.<sup>655</sup>

### *Art theft*

Villa Stibbert was not exempted from the requisition by Anglo-American troops, as was the case for several historical houses located in the Tuscan countryside, as already investigated in the previous section of this chapter.

Museo Stibbert experienced the occupation of two different British military divisions – the first one from 25 to 31 August 1944; the second one from 1 to 15 September of the same year despite villa's two-stars ranking in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.<sup>656</sup> This was not the only official document certifying the historical importance of the building. Indeed, in a list of Tuscan museums and cultural institutions directed to Dr. William B. Dinsmoor of the Frick Art Reference Library (New York), who was working in producing the so-called 'Frick Maps', Villa Stibbert was ranked with one star. This also included a brief description of its contents:

important collection of armor of every epoch and country; Renaissance and Baroque paintings; tapestries; minor arts.<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> Di Marco 2008, p. 106.

<sup>655</sup> Clearkin and Di Marco 2009, p. 43.

<sup>656</sup> *Corrispondenza dal n. 359 al n. 367*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324; *Elenco delle Cose Mancanti Dopo il 15 Settembre 1944 Quando il Battaglione di Fanti Inglesi Lasciò Liberi i Locali del Museo*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324; *Lists of Protected Monuments Italy. Regions of Le Marche, Toscana, Umbria* 1944, p. 23.

<sup>657</sup> *Italy* 1945, p. 258. The same rating was given to Villa Stibbert in the *List of Monuments, Central Italy. Region of Tuscany*, prepared by the American Defense – Harvard Group, Committee on the Protection of Monuments (*Italy* 1945, pp. 816-822). The purpose of the 'Frick Maps' has already been described in chapter 2.



The Superintendent Giovanni Poggi, informed by Alfredo Lensi, museum director, notified the MFAA of the unlawful requisition of Villa Stibbert. Thus, monuments officers provided the museum with 'off-limits' signs, emphasising that it could not be occupied nor used for military purposes. These were placed at the museum gates by monuments officer Capt. Edward Croft-Murray (1907-1980) just after the departure of the first British division in occupation. Despite that, as already mentioned before, another division requisitioned the building the day after.<sup>658</sup> This was a recurrent event during the Italian campaign. For example, also the occupation of Museo Nazionale in Naples was not lifted even after the MFAA's opposition and the Collier Commission's recommendations of de-requisitioning it (cf. chapter 5).<sup>659</sup>

In his letters to Poggi (5 September 1944) and to Gaetano Pieraccini, Florence's Mayor (6 September 1944), Alfredo Lensi reported a preliminary evaluation of the damage to Museo Stibbert's collections. After the first phase of occupation, he ascertained that several display cases had been forced open, and some Indian and Persian jewels had been stolen. Moreover, during the second phase, the content of other display cases had been removed: a chessboard along with its ivory pieces; silver plates; Japan arms; gold and silver jewelled ornamentation for a Chinese bride.<sup>660</sup>

Another preliminary account of the damage to museum collections was provided in the already mentioned report on villas in the Florentine environs, compiled by Capt. Enthoven on 13 September 1944. He mentioned Villa Stibbert as temporarily occupied by an Infantry Brigade Headquarters. He notified that troops used antique chairs for the officer's mess, ruining their cover. Damage to various museum objects and minor stealing activities were reported, too. Capt. Enthoven visited the villa on 29 September 1944, but he could only verify that the occupiers had gone. He could not check the contents of the building because it was closed at that time.<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> *Corrispondenza dal n. 359 al n. 367*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324. For biographic details of Capt. Croft-Murray, cf.: Appendix 6.

<sup>659</sup> Pollard 2019a, p. 672.

<sup>660</sup> *Corrispondenza dal n. 359 al n. 367*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324.

<sup>661</sup> AMG-56 1946, pp. 123-131.

When the requisition ended, Alfredo Lensi was able to compile a detailed inventory of the losses occurred to museum collections (11 December 1944). The inventory reported a total of 149 objects, fifteen of which were later noted as 'found' and four as destroyed by 'atmospheric agents'.<sup>662</sup> Thus, a considerable number of objects disappeared during the Allied occupation of the building: a total of 130. The inventory also included a brief account of the events occurred. There, Lensi described the behaviour of the soldiers in occupation. I report here the entire passage for its primary importance to understand the magnitude of damage that troops in occupation of a historical building could do:

As it can be easily deduced, the stay in museum rooms of hundreds of soldiers, who slept, eat, cleaned, and shaved there, had caused other damages, and of every kind. They wandered everywhere, they wanted to look at everything, they laid their weapons, machine guns, hoes, shovels, mess tins, without taking care of the place. They had fun in trying armours, helmets, and suits of armour, detached from the walls; they removed furniture and display cases to lay mattresses and blankets at their ease. They opened dozens of boxes, so that several objects, small things, cannot be found, and they can be considered lost despite the meticulous searches. On the last days of military occupation, some infantry units who were practicing in a farm close to the Park, hit the decorative artefacts located around the lake: two marble statues and a terracotta Galatea had been broken, two lions, some pots, some vases had been more or less hit by the bursts.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> *Elenco delle Cose Mancanti Dopo il 15 Settembre 1944 Quando il Battaglione di Fanti Inglesi Lasciò Liberi i Locali del Museo*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324.

<sup>663</sup> Author's own translation from the Italian: 'Come è facile intuire il soggiorno nelle sale del Museo di alcune centinaia di soldati che vi hanno dormito, vi hanno mangiato, vi si sono lavati e sbarbati ha causato altri guasti, e di ogni sorta. Hanno girato per tutto, hanno voluto vedere tutto, hanno posato le loro armi, le mitragliatrici, le zappe, i badili, le gamelle senza badare a dove. Si sono divertiti a provarsi i pezzi d'armature, elmi e corazze, staccati dalle pareti; hanno rimosso mobili e vetrine per distendere a tutt'agio le materasse e le coperte. Hanno aperto decine di casse, per modo che molti oggetti, cose minute, non si ritrovano e possono ritenersi addirittura perduti, nonostante le più minuziose ricerche. Negli ultimi giorni dell'occupazione militare alcuni reparti di fanteria che si esercitavano al tiro a segno in un podere confinante col Parco, colpirono i manufatti esornativi posti intorno al laghetto: due statue di marmo, una Galatea di terracotta furono spezzate, due leoni, alcuni orci, alcuni vasi, più o meno colpiti dalle scariche' (*Ibid.*).

As described by Lensi, apart from the already mentioned stealing activities that interested museum collections, soldiers also damaged objects in and outside the museum. They used statues and vases in the museum gardens for target practice, and they tried on ancient armours, detaching them from the walls where they were located. Moreover, they arranged museum rooms according to their comfort, by moving display cases and furniture to better lay out their camp beds. They touched every object and opened boxes, moved by curiosity. Soldiers did not understand the value of museum objects, a symptom of a manifested lack of knowledge in the cultural property protection field. Thus, this relevant passage has demonstrated once again the careless attitude of some Anglo-American troops in their approach to museum contents and to the buildings housing them.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that the problem with troops' requisition of historical monuments involved Florence and the surrounding areas, despite the precautions taken with the use of patrolling units, the placing of 'off-limits' signs, and the updating and distribution of the *Lists of Protected Monuments*. In Florence, the inadequate implementation of cultural property protection initiatives was generally influenced by the large amount of work that MFAA officers had to undertake after the liberation. They had been mainly concerned with the high proportion of first-aid repair works to damaged monuments, with inspecting artworks in countryside's refuges, and with the demanding task of recovering works of art looted by the Nazis. Thus, requisition problems took second place. This is another indication of the administrative laxity on the matter of cultural property protection, which characterised the whole Allied Italian campaign. Indeed, in Florence, MFAA officers deployed in the field were few if compared to the large amount of work they had to deal with. With a wider employment of monuments officers in the area, the problem of troops' military occupation of historical buildings, undoubtedly, would have sensibly diminished.

The administrative laxity on the matter of villas' requisitions in Florence and its hinterland is demonstrated also by the lack of documentation regarding the military occupation of Museo Stibbert. During my time at NARA and at Museo Stibbert's

Archive, I could gather only few documents regarding its exploitation: the already mentioned report by Capt. Enthoven (AMG-56 1946), and a couple of documents produced by the director Alfredo Lensi (*Corrispondenza dal n. 359 al n. 367*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324; *Elenco delle Cose Mancanti dopo il 15 Settembre 1944 quando il Battaglione di Fanti Inglesi Lasciò Liberi i Locali del Museo*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324). No document on Museo Stibbert is included in Archivio Poggi at Gallerie degli Uffizi, and in the documents deposited at the BSR and at the AAR. Relevant is also the absence of mention to the extent of unlawful activities conducted by troops at the museum in the MFAA *Final Report General*. There, only the events occurred at Villa and Castello Guicciardini are registered:

In all the stiff fighting for Florence the contents of only one deposit were damaged (Poppiano, Villa Guicciardini, where a shell-hit and subsequent carelessness by troops damaged Pontormo's *Visitation*) and only one instance of misconduct by Allied troops was recorded (Poppiano, Castello Guicciardini, the slitting, allegedly by Maiori troops, of two small pictures by Naldini).<sup>664</sup>

To be noted is that the above excerpt only mentions art refuges and not villas in general. Thus, Museo Stibbert was not probably considered in MFAA reports because priority was given to art deposits. This constitutes another symptom for the inadequacy of resources at disposal to the MFAA for contrasting billeting problems in Florence and the surrounding areas. The lack of documentation regarding Museo Stibbert is striking if compared to the large amount of MFAA reports mentioning the military occupation of Mostra d'Oltremare, analysed in chapter 5.

Despite the administrative laxity, it must be emphasised that requisitioning events in Florence were fewer than in Naples and Southern Italy in general. This is a symptom that the awareness-raising campaigns organised by MFAA officers for troops deployed in the war field (cf. chapter 2) were beginning to bear fruit. As some of the instances mentioned in this chapter have demonstrated, several commanders aided monuments officers in enforcing cultural property protection regulations – a supporting role they did not have in Campania, where many had been the obstacles for the MFAA, like the

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<sup>664</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, p. 14.

non-recognition of monuments officers' roles. Nevertheless, the problem in Florence and the surrounding areas still existed: many villas had been unlawfully occupied by troops regardless of 'off-limits' signs, such as at Museo Stibbert. Many of the requisitioned villas had not been mentioned in the *Lists of Protected Monuments* paving the way for illicit activities, as at Villa and Castello Guicciardini.

Finally, I noticed that an uncommon feature characterised Museo Stibbert with reference to the treatment of museum collections in wartime: many objects were stolen by British troops in occupation. Surprisingly, at the arrival of Allied soldiers, objects were still located in the museum rooms – some of them unboxed – as opposed to the almost total evacuation of museum collections in the whole Italy at the outbreak of the war. Unquestionably, the fact that objects were still housed in museum rooms when troops requisitioned the building made it such that Museo Stibbert resulted as being among the Italian museums which suffered the highest consequences from Allied soldiers' occupation of its building. The reason why Museo Stibbert's collections were still located in the museum at the arrival of Allied troops is a topic that merits further investigation. Examining the circumstances around the protection systems adopted for Museo Stibbert's collections in wartime will open a debate which is beyond the scope of this study.

In conclusion, the findings discussed in this chapter, along with the ones investigated in chapter 5 regarding Mostra d'Oltremare, have provided supporting evidence for the main topic of this research project, concerning the role of Allied troops in damaging and stealing activities towards cultural assets in occupied Italy.

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## **SECTION 4 – CONCLUSION**

## Chapter 7 – Analysis and conclusion

“L’occasione fa l’uomo ladro” goes an Italian saying: “*opportunity* makes the thief”, as was well-known to General Hilldring, who, back in 1943, had warned the *Roberts Commission* that soldiers are not *vandals* but need a little watching.<sup>665</sup>

The citation above, from a passage in Dagnini Brey’s ground-breaking work on MFAA’s activities in Italy in World War II, summarises some of the topics analysed in this thesis. Firstly, it mentions the main features of Allied troops’ art theft actions: their disarray and randomness, differently from Nazi art looting campaigns – Allied soldiers had been mainly moved by impulsivity and opportunities. Secondly, the quote also refers to the role that the Roberts Commission and, by extension, the MFAA played in preventing those unlawful activities. Finally, it addresses one of the main propagandist depictions that Nazis and Fascists constructed around Allied troops: they were described as ‘vandals’ – destroyers of art treasures and art thieves.

This last chapter aims at providing a final analysis and conclusion to the themes presented in the thesis, considering the main research topic of the project: the involvement of Allied troops in the illicit treatment of historical monuments, artworks, and artefacts in occupied territories of Italy in World War II. It will also put forward an explanation for the role covered by MFAA officers in preventing Allied soldiers’ unlawful activities against cultural assets – the sub-theme of this research project.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first one (*Allied Art theft and damage in World War II*) analyses the findings of the research project, describing the features that characterised Allied troops’ illicit treatment of cultural properties in Italian occupied territories, resulting in damaging and stealing activities. The second section (*Reflecting*

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<sup>665</sup> Dagnini Brey 2009, p. 97 (emphasis added). General John H. Hilldring (1895-1974) was Commanding General of the American 84<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and later Chief of the Army’s Civil Affairs Division.



*on cultural objects' value*) considers why the objects damaged or destroyed by Allied soldiers were acknowledged as of secondary importance. The third section (*Lessons for contemporary practice*) examines the contribution that the findings of this research project make as historical lessons for the protection of cultural heritage in contemporary conflicts. The following section (*Limits of archival research*) analyses the limitations of the present thesis, concerning the archival research conducted. Finally, the last section (*Future lines of reflection*) engages with possible further developments of this research project, especially incorporating the study into debates over the potential motives that drove Allied troops into committing illicit activities towards cultural heritage, and over the importance of addressing Allied soldiers' unlawful actions in contemporary museums, by constructing a narrative around the works of art stolen by the Allies and later returned, and around the events that affected the requisitioned museum buildings.

## **Allied Art theft and damage in World War II**

This thesis has put forward an explanation for the topic of art stealing and damaging activities perpetrated by Allied soldiers in occupation of Italian territories – a theme which has never been investigated in the scholarly literature in this broad sense. Moreover, it has contributed towards a better understanding of the MFAA's responsibility in preventing Allied troops' illicit crimes against cultural assets in wartime.

The thesis has demonstrated that the damaging and stealing activities perpetrated by Anglo-American troops happened for the majority concurrently to the military requisition of monumental sites. This study has provided conclusive support to this statement by analysing an extensive number of cases of this kind in the whole peninsula: Palazzo Reale in Palermo, Castel del Monte (Bari), Palazzo Reale di Napoli, Museo Nazionale di Napoli, Reggia di Caserta, Villa and Castello Guicciardini (Poppiano, Florence), Palazzo Margherita (Rome), Villa Torlonia (Rome), Palazzo Venezia (Rome), Villa Da Porto (Trissino, Vicenza), and many others. The investigation into the two case studies on which this project has been developed – Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples) and Museo Stibbert (Florence) – supports these conclusions.

It is clear from the present thesis that the indiscriminate military exploitation of monumental sites was generated primarily by two factors. The first circumstance was a general permissiveness especially in an early phase of Allied advance in new territories, when controls over troops' actions was ephemeral. Accordingly, monuments officer Lt. Frederick Hartt defined MFAA's efforts in managing troops' requisition of monumental buildings 'a matter for considerable diplomacy under immediate post-combat conditions'.<sup>666</sup> This happened especially in Southern Italy, where MFAA officers had been deployed in the war field only weeks after troops' entrance in liberated cities and, thus, they had not been able to implement regulations on the protection of heritage in the period between combat itself and effective occupation. However, also with the northward advance, monuments officers had to deal with frequent unlawful requisitions caused especially by commanders who, negligently, occupied historical palaces – mainly villas – for the quartering of their troops. This happened frequently following the confused situation of the early phases after the liberation of cities, when the need for places to quarter troops was stronger than the limits posed to the requisition of certain sites.

The second aspect determining the indiscriminate military exploitation of monumental buildings was troops' careless attitude towards heritage, derived from a lack of education in the cultural property protection field. Findings suggest that most soldiers considered works of art solely as objects with an economic value, and that they were convinced that it was not their duty to protect them from destruction or illicit appropriation. Moreover, many soldiers did not care about the existence of *Lists of Protected Monuments* – including all the monumental sites that needed to be safeguarded from damage and destruction, and whose military occupation was forbidden – neither of the placing of 'off-limits' signs on historical buildings. An example is the occupation of Museo Stibbert, requisitioned despite its mention in the *Lists for Tuscany* and its later 'out-of-bounds' declaration. In Southern Italy, this careless attitude characterised also high-ranking officials' actions, guided by the belief that crimes against cultural heritage were not usually punished by the army. This took place despite the early regimentation on the matter with the 1907 *Hague Convention*

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<sup>666</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 6.

(artt. 47 and 56), the 'ADM Planning Instruction n. 12' (June 1943), and the 'Order on Wilful Damage and Looting' (August 1943).

Apart from the placing of patrolling units and 'off-limits' signs on historical buildings and the publication of the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, MFAA officers organised also awareness-raising campaigns directed to soldiers of all ranks, aiming at sensitising them of the importance of protecting cultural heritage. These campaigns were based on the organisation of tours and exhibitions, the publication of articles, and the issue of guides on the most significant Italian cities from the point of view of their artistic importance (Naples, Rome, and Florence among the others). Furthermore, Allied governments circulated instructions and orders to regulate the responsibility that combatant troops should have towards cultural assets. Undeniably, the most pertinent one in the journey through the recognition of troops' primary role in the cultural property protection field was the pamphlet *Preservation of Works of Art in Italy*, issued in May 1944.<sup>667</sup> There, for the first time, soldiers had been defined as 'art trustees', and the thoughtless abuse of heritage had been described as a 'crime against civilisation'. The publication was closed by the consideration that the positive behaviour of Allied troops would be essential in the construction of a strong counter propaganda against the Nazis and Fascists.

If, on the one side, MFAA's awareness-raising campaigns generated from monuments officers' recognition of soldiers' lack of knowledge towards cultural property protection; on the other side, Allied governments' renewed interest in the matter was caused primarily by the will to contrast enemy propagandist allegations. This thesis has demonstrated that Allied governments' implementation of policies on the protection of cultural assets in time of war had been triggered by their intention of opposing Nazi and Fascist propagandist depictions of Anglo-Americans as art thieves and destroyers of cultural treasures. Moreover, this study has argued that enemy propaganda against the Allies in World War II laid its foundation during the British campaign in Cyrenaica (1941), when the Fascist government published a pamphlet entitled *Che Cosa Hanno Fatto gli Inglesi in Cirenaica* (1941 – Fig. 19), depicting British troops as brutal forces

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<sup>667</sup> AMG-11a 1944.

who committed crimes against the local population and the heritage preserved in the occupied areas.<sup>668</sup> Most of the accusations were false, as the staged photographs showing the alleged damage done by troops at the Museum of Cyrene (Figs. 20 and 21). Nevertheless, British soldiers in Cyrenaica had a negligent attitude towards heritage, causing damage to archaeological sites. These unlawful events were few if compared to the accusations raised by the Fascists. The enquiry that followed – guided by Sir Leonard Woolley – proved that the illicit events were caused primarily by soldiers' lack of knowledge on the importance of preserving past memories from damage and destruction. The enquiry triggered a series of events that drove forward the implementation of policies in the cultural property protection field, which saw its highest point in World War II with the distribution to troops of the already mentioned *Preservation of Works of Art in Italy*. Apart from the issue of rules and regulations, the renewed interest by Allied governments in the safeguarding of cultural objects and monumental sites in time of war brought to the founding of the Roberts Commission (American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in Europe) and, subsequently, of the MFAA.

Another watershed in the path through the final recognition of the importance of preserving cultural assets in wartime by the hand of combat troops was the appointment of the Collier Commission of Enquiry (1943-1944). The Commission's aim was to investigate illicit activities perpetrated by Allied troops regarding the heritage of occupied Southern Italy's regions, especially in conjunction with the requisition of monumental buildings in Naples and its hinterland. Despite the limits deriving from the Commission's outcomes, which will be investigated in the next section of this chapter, it was thanks to it that the definition of the responsibilities by occupying troops in respect of cultural heritage and the MFAA's role within the army had been finally defined, with the subsequent issue of General Alexander's letter (Fig. 10) and the 'ADM Instruction n. 10' on the 'Preservation of Property of Historical and Educational Importance in Italy' (Appendix 1). Of a totally different opinion was the Superintendent for Monuments and Galleries of the Campania region, Bruno Molajoli, who stated that 'from the effectiveness of such arduous investigations there were not instant

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<sup>668</sup> Ministero della Cultura Popolare 1941.

consequences', mentioning the requisition of Palazzo Reale di Napoli, which began only one month after the issue of the Collier Commission's report.<sup>669</sup> Molajoli, instead, recognised the fundamental help provided by MFAA officers in trying to contrast troops' military occupations of monumental buildings in Naples.<sup>670</sup>

As thoroughly analysed in this thesis, the MFAA was created with the purpose of protecting works of art, monuments, archives, and other cultural sites in theatres of war from destruction, damage and theft. This included providing first-aid assistance to historical buildings damaged by the passage of war – as, for example, in Pisa with the restoration of Campo Santo, or in Florence with the reconstruction of Ponte Santa Trinita – enquiring on Nazi art looting campaigns and locating and returning the stolen properties – e.g., the case of the Florentine museums' works of art returned in July 1945 or the Montecassino's stolen objects recovered in May 1945 – preventing Allied troops' illicit activities towards cultural heritage of occupied territories. Thus, this thesis has gone some way towards explaining that one of the MFAA's tasks was disciplining Allied troops' treatment of cultural assets in occupied territories of Europe, overturning the common public opinion that the purpose of the sub-commission was solely to fight Nazi illicit appropriation of works of art.

This last idea has been, unfortunately, instilled by the sensationalised treatment of the topic given in popular non-fiction books like *Monuments Men. Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (2009) and *Saving Italy. The Race to Rescue a Nation's Treasures from the Nazis* (2013) by Robert M. Edsel, upon which George Clooney's film *The Monuments Men* (2014) was based.<sup>671</sup> Contrarily to what has been described by those books and the film, one of the major problems encountered by monuments officers deployed in the field was the military occupation

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<sup>669</sup> Molajoli 1948, p. 48. The quote has been translated by the author from the original Italian text: 'Dell'efficacia di tale laboriosa inchiesta non si ebbero invero segni immediati' (*Ibid.*).

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>671</sup> Secondary sources like Coccoli 2017 and Pollard 2020a rightly emphasise that the focus of MFAA's activities, especially in an initial phase, was on the protection of heritage in areas occupied by ground forces. For a detailed analysis of *The Monuments Men* film's historical deficiencies, cf. the review published by Nigel Pollard on *History Extra*: <https://www.historyextra.com/period/historian-at-the-movies-the-monuments-men-reviewed/> (Accessed 26 April 2021).

of monumental sites and the subsequent illicit treatment of objects preserved there. This thesis has argued that the problem concerned MFAA officers not only in a first phase of the Italian campaign, but during the entire course of their residence in the peninsula. Moreover, they had to confront the issue also during the occupation of France and Germany.

The explanation of the problem's extensiveness in Italy and the fact that this was not related exclusively to an early phase of the Italian campaign represents one of the main contributions of this study. In that sense, this thesis differs from previous research which has generalised the problem, restricting it solely to Southern Italy.<sup>672</sup> Even Allied governments' reports emphasised that what happened in Southern Italy – and particularly in Naples – was never repeated in the course of the Italian campaign. The advocate for this idea was the report generated from the Collier Commission of Enquiry.<sup>673</sup> Nevertheless, this study has been able to document numerous cases of Allied troops' illicit treatment of cultural assets in Central and Northern Italy: Villa and Castello Guicciardini (Poppiano, Florence), Villa Acton/Capponi (Florence), Villa Landau-Finaly (Florence), Museo Stibbert (Florence), Villa La Torre A Cona (Tuscany), Villa Reale di Poggio a Caiano (Tuscany), Palazzo Margherita (Rome), Castello della Crescenza (Rome), Villa Da Porto (Trissino, Vicenza), and others.

More precisely, the events that affected Museo Stibbert in Florence – one of the research project's case studies – show similarities with the ones that interested Mostra d'Oltremare in Naples – the other case study analysed in this dissertation. In both places, damaging and stealing actions towards cultural properties were widespread, and there was a high level of appropriation of the requisitioned buildings, resulting in the ruining of the buildings' architectural structures. Thus, the analysis of Museo Stibbert's events, and its comparison to the ones at Mostra d'Oltremare, helps in demonstrating that troops' illicit actions were extensive in Central Italy too, although in that area – as in Northern Italy – instances of troops' misconduct were fewer than in Southern Italy. The two case studies altogether are in some way representative of

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<sup>672</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 213.

<sup>673</sup> AMG-11 1946.

more general circumstances and events with regard to the loss of and damage to cultural heritage during Allied troops' occupation of Italy.

What the Collier Commission's report emphasised can be considered accurate only considering the proportion of the problem. In Southern Italy, the issue was more extensive for two reasons: on the one hand, the regulation around cultural property protection by soldiers in the combat field was still at an embryonic state; on the other hand, MFAA officers were not still allowed to enter cities at their liberation but weeks after, because their role within the army was not clearly defined yet, leaving therefore grounds to troops to act unlawfully. The other discrepancy between the military occupation of monumental sites in Southern and Northern Italy that this thesis has been able to prove regards the typology of buildings exploited. In Southern Italy, troops occupied every type of monumental sites – museums, archives, libraries, archaeological areas, etc. – while, in Central and Northern Italy, requisitioned historical buildings were for the majority private villas. The motivation can be found in the fact that the regulations concerning the military occupation of private historic villas were less restrictive than the ones regarding public buildings, such as museums and monumental sites – regulations which, as already previously mentioned, had been implemented in the course of the Italian campaign. Moreover, many villas had not been reported in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*, providing grounds for troops to occupy them, as in the case of Villa and Castello Guicciardini.

Furthermore, the reason why with the northward advance cases of troops' illicit treatment of cultural heritage gradually decreased – but never disappeared – must be sought between the success of aforementioned awareness-raising campaigns organised by the MFAA. Exemplary in this regard are some instances regarding Tuscany, reported in Hartt's book *Florentine Art under Fire* (1949). There, commanders often aided monuments officers in enforcing cultural property protection regulations. Otherwise, this did not happen in Naples, as thoroughly investigated in this study. In this city, MFAA officers had to frequently confront with the non-recognition of their role by higher military personnel, who did not understand the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Likewise, troops obstructed MFAA's activities – for example, when during an inspection of Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds

soldiers resisted monuments officers' enquiries. Other evidence supporting this claim regards Archivio di Stato in Naples. When the building's rooms were occupied by American soldiers who ransacked their contents using documents and furniture to light fires, the Archive's custodian immediately informed monuments officer Maj. Paul Gardner. He, in accordance with the commander of the troops in occupation, gave disposition to erect walls in some of the building's rooms to separate the ones occupied by soldiers from the ones still in use by Archive personnel. Nevertheless, the day after, an American General forbade the dispositions given by Gardner and even prohibited Archive staff to enter the building. Gardner, outranked, could do nothing against the General's order.<sup>674</sup>

Despite the positive outcomes deriving from the awareness-raising campaigns, the idea that the protection of cultural heritage by the army was not of primary importance was never eradicated, even after the end of the war. Exemplary is a passage reported by Carlotta Coccoli, citing a letter from an American soldier to the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*:

Why should AMG spend 'many' hundreds of millions of lire restoring war-damaged monuments and works of art? Why not let the scars of this war forever serve as a reminder to the Italian people to rise up against future power-mad directors?<sup>675</sup>

Here, the soldier author of the letter clearly described an attitude common to many others serving in the army: not understanding the importance of preserving past memories for future generations and for their significance in re-framing the cultural identity of societies that had been governed by a dictatorship for years.

The same lack of knowledge on the relevance of safeguarding cultural heritage is demonstrated by the recurrent juxtaposition between military necessity and military

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<sup>674</sup> Borrelli 2005, p. 113. The General's name is not specified in the account of events recounted in Borrelli 2005. The Macmillan Committee has provided another explanation for the decrease of events concerning troops' unlawful treatment of art with the northward advance into the Italian territories. The first cause was the rapidity of the advance with the subsequent lack of places for quartering troops. The second one was recognised in the thorough use of 'off-limits' signs on historical properties, which however, as already noted, was not as efficient as the Macmillan Committee thought (British Committee 1946).

<sup>675</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 20.



convenience in the motivations provided by commanders for the occupation of historical buildings – most of the time a simple convenience was disguised as an urgent military necessity.<sup>676</sup> In that sense, highly pertinent is the example of General Eisenhower's requisition of Reggia di Caserta, converted into the Allied Force Headquarters for the Mediterranean theatre of operations, as investigated in chapter 5. Strident is the opposition between his occupation of this three-stars listed monument and his words from the letter he circulated in December 1943 on the importance of preserving cultural heritage by the army (Fig. 9). There, he stated that historical buildings not of extreme operational necessity should be safeguarded.<sup>677</sup> Moreover,

the phrase 'military necessity' is sometimes used where it would be more truthful to speak of military convenience or even of personal convenience. I do not want it to cloak slackness or indifference.<sup>678</sup>

Thus, he acknowledged that a personal or military convenience should not be a latent motivation for the occupation of monumental sites, disguised as an operational necessity. Nevertheless, in requisitioning Reggia di Caserta, he acted the opposite recognising a sort of military necessity which in reality was masquerading a simple personal convenience. This juxtaposition was a leitmotiv characterising not only the Italian campaign, but the entire European campaign, with instances reported by the MFAA officer James Rorimer in his memoir of wartime activities conducted in France and Germany (*Survival*, 1950). More specifically, he described that he warned Louvre Museum's authorities not to provide billeting places for troops even if their intentions proved to be moved by a real military necessity, because,

... they [Louvre authorities, ed.] might regret their open-handedness later when it might prove difficult to dislodge units from what once used as a military position, might come to be considered a military necessity.<sup>679</sup>

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<sup>676</sup> Pollard 2020a, pp. 171-220.

<sup>677</sup> Commission 1944, p. 57.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>679</sup> Rorimer 1950, p. 52.

It is clear from the current study that a common thread during the whole Allied military campaign in Italy was an extensive administrative laxity in the cultural property protection field. The fact that, in Southern Italy, MFAA officers had been deployed in the field only weeks after the liberation of cities – leaving ground to troops to perpetrate unlawful acts against cultural assets – has been already addressed.

A remarkable passage describing the administrative difficulties faced in the early phase of the Allied occupation is included in a book published in 1948 by the Superintendent Bruno Molajoli, on the events that interested Naples' museums and galleries in World War II:

Attempts in preventing such requisitions ... had been tried out from the very first days, without any luck and with discouraged bitterness; during those days, was not even easy to find, in the newly established Allied offices, who was willing, or authorised, to deal with our problems.<sup>680</sup>

This excerpt clearly describes the state of confusion that characterised AMGOT's organisation just after Allies' landing in Southern Italy, especially with reference to the cultural property protection field. Molajoli experienced difficulties in finding someone in the AMGOT willing to help him solving requisition's issues because, at that time, the MFAA was not present in the field yet.

A similar problem concerning MFAA's organisation was faced in Tuscany. This time, monuments officers were able to enter cities with combat troops, however they were not enough for the extensive job they had to undertake in the region. They had to care for first-aid repairs to the large number of historical buildings damaged by battlefield operations, for inspecting the numerous art refuges all around Tuscany, and for recovering the works of art looted by Nazis. These more immediately pressing needs, and the very few officers at disposal able to undertake them, did not give enough time for contrasting properly Allied troops' requisition of monumental buildings – mainly

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<sup>680</sup> Author's translation from: 'Tentativi di scongiurare siffatte occupazioni ... furono sperimentati, con nessuna fortuna e con sconsolata amarezza, fin dai primissimi giorni; durante i quali non era nemmeno facile trovare, negli uffici alleati in corso di costituzione, chi fosse disposto, od autorizzato, ad occuparsi dei nostri problemi.' (Molajoli 1948, pp. 45-46).

villas. Furthermore, several among the requisitioned historical properties had not been listed, and they had been declared 'off-limits' only after their military occupation – e.g., Villa and Castello Guicciardini. This is another symptom of the extensive administrative laxity on the matter of cultural property protection. Nevertheless, to be noted is that *Lists of Protected Monuments* had been mainly compiled taking into account Baedekers at disposal prior to the war – certainly, tourist guides did not mention the large number of historic villas in the Italian countryside. Only in a second phase, after the arrival of MFAA officers in freed territories, were the *Lists* updated. Furthermore, even when monumental sites had been listed and declared 'off-limits', there had been instances of unlawful requisitions, such as at Museo Stibbert. A statement describing the problem of illicit occupation of listed buildings is included in a MFAA report dated November 1944:

With the arrival of winter there has inevitably been an increase in the scale of occupation of Listed Monuments by troops, principally in the North, although isolated instances still occur in Southern Region ... not infrequently the Instructions of AAI Admin. Instruction No. 10 have not initially been complied with.<sup>681</sup>

The fact that regulations were frequently not followed by commanders can be explained with the late distribution of *Lists* and the poor dissemination of rules and orders on the matter. For example, Allied governments' instructions on the protection of cultural assets reached commanders deployed in Naples not before December 1943/January 1944, months after the arrival of Anglo-American troops in the city (September-October 1943).<sup>682</sup> This represents another evidence of the inadequate administrative organisation in the cultural property protection field by Allied governments, especially in the early phase of the Italian campaign.

A pertinent passage outlining the features characterising Anglo-American troops' behaviour towards cultural properties is reported in James Rorimer's book. In the

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<sup>681</sup> *Italian Report* 1946, p. 3.

<sup>682</sup> AMG-11 1946, p. 22.

following excerpt, he refers to the German territory, but his considerations can be applied to the Italian context, too:

There are many ... disgraceful accounts of American disregard for cultural objects. These instances prove the *inability* of an army, however well-intentioned its higher policy, to cope with such conditions *during a period of disorder*. No one officer, no group of officers, can discipline the men under battle conditions and *in the early months following combats*. With the constantly shifting commands and relocation of troops, it is impossible to ensure the kind of order to which we are accustomed in our well-run cities. *We did not have sufficient MFA&A officers* to protect many of the most important repositories. The defeated Germans were completely disorganized and could not protect cultural objects in buildings from which they were evicted by military personnel. Our own *basic lack of training* in simple good manners and Christian principles has resulted in this outrageous behavior in foreign lands. Until fundamentals of civilized living are inculcated into all of our people, our men will go abroad as poor ambassadors of a nation working so that others may not starve, caring for the sick and the underprivileged, and protecting treasures and cultural objects as a heritage for future generations [emphasis added].<sup>683</sup>

Here, Rorimer rightly summarised some of the points already analysed above regarding Allied troops' unlawful treatment of art. This was mainly caused by a lack of organisation in the period immediately following the liberation of territories, characterised by an extensive disorder. Moreover, soldiers' misconduct was also caused by an insufficient presence of MFAA officers in the field, working to protect the heritage of occupied territories. In Rorimer's words, these circumstances were amplified by a 'basic lack of training' not only with regards to the importance of preserving cultural properties, but generally in connection with 'simple good manners and Christian principles'.

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<sup>683</sup> Rorimer 1950, p. 248.

Finally, as a conclusion to the discussion on the findings investigated in this thesis, and on their implications, I analyse here some passages from a memorandum sent by Bruno Molajoli to the Italian government regarding the measures to be adopted for preventing damage from the military occupation of museums and historical buildings (*Memorandum Riservato al Governo Italiano per Prevenire i Danni dell'Occupazione Militare nei Musei ed Edifici Monumentali*, dated 5 April 1944).<sup>684</sup> This document is significant because it reports all the main features characterising the Allied military occupation of historical buildings in Italy, as discussed in this thesis. Molajoli opens his memorandum by addressing the recurrency of requisitioning events of museums and monumental sites, converted into army bases, billeting sites, and soldiers' clubs, despite the opposition of Superintendents. The military occupation is often undertaken without a formal document of approval. Once a requisition starts, it is almost impossible to obtain its withdrawal, even with a prompt request to the AMG, or to MFAA officers. Molajoli then goes on by briefly describing the role covered by monuments officers, especially working as interlocutors with the AMG and military high commander on matters concerning the protection of cultural heritage. Nevertheless, their actions against the military occupation of historical buildings are often hindered by commanders' appeal to alleged military necessities. Molajoli, then, describes the consequences deriving from troops' requisition of monumental sites, resulting in acts of vandalism and in unpredictable and often irreparable damage to cultural objects and to the buildings themselves. Finally, Molajoli closes the memorandum by listing some measures to be adopted to minimise the aforementioned consequences, like transferring movable cultural properties to a deposit, which has to be closed with brick walls since simple doors and windows are easily forced open by soldiers. Also the placing of 'off-limits' signs do not constitute a deterrent, as demonstrated by many examples analysed in this thesis.

To conclude, this research project has gone some way towards a better understanding of the problem of Allied troops' illicit treatment of cultural assets in occupied

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<sup>684</sup> The memorandum is copied in Molajoli 1948, pp. 122-124. A partial copy of the original Italian text is included in Appendix 7.

territories of Italy in World War II, resulting in damaging and stealing activities. This study has enabled a number of generalisations regarding the main features characterising the issue: unlawful activities mainly occurred concurrently to the military requisition of historical sites; there was a general permissiveness in an early phase of Allied advance in new territories; wide-ranging was troops' lack of education in the cultural property protection field; the requisitions of 'off-limits' monumental sites were frequent; the administrative laxity on the matter, with, especially, the poor dissemination of *Lists* and orders and the late recognition of the MFAA's role, was extensive; the magnitude of the problem interested the whole Italian campaign. All these features characterised not only Allied troops' illicit treatment of cultural assets in Italy, but also in France and Germany, as this study has been able to demonstrate. This thesis, to my knowledge, constitutes the first extensive scholarly examination on the topic of Allied unlawful activities towards cultural heritage in World War II.

Location	Damage/Theft	Subjects involved	Subsequent events
Torre della Leonesa (Lucera, Foggia, Apulia)	Broken into by troops, who dislodged and thrown down blocks of masonry		
Convent of San Giovanni in Venere (Fossacesia, Chieti, Abruzzi)	Sever damage to 13 <sup>th</sup> -century frescoes and stone walls, fire-scarred		
Ara Fontana archaeological area (Larino, Campobasso, Abruzzi)	Fragments dislodged and some pieces stolen by troops and civilians		
Historical Archive of Bari (Apulia)	Damage and removal of historical documents		
Historical Archive of Potenza (Lucania/Basilicata)	Damage and removal of historical documents		
Pompeii archaeological area (Campania)	Damage to frescoes, sculptures and walls, on which soldiers carved their names	Casual soldiers visiting the area	
Palazzo Reale (Naples, Campania)	Removal and destruction of furniture, inlaid woodworks, art objects, wall brocades, damasks, painting on canvas	British, American, French troops	
Museo Nazionale (Naples, Campania)	Damage to Pompeii's lava samples	British Medical Corps	
Museo Duca di Martina (Naples, Campania)	Damage to ceramics and porcelains; theft of paintings; severe damage to the building's architectural structure	British and American soldiers	
Museo di San Martino (Naples, Campania)	Severe damage to the building's architectural structure		
Reale Accademia di Belle Arti (Naples, Campania)	Damage and destruction of classical casts, studio equipment, bibliographical material		
Castel Nuovo (Naples, Campania)	Damage to paintings on canvas	Air Force units	
Reggia di Caserta (Campania)	Removal of furniture, carpets, paintings; damage to the building's architectural structure	General Eisenhower's headquarters	
University of Naples (Campania)	Damage and ransacking of the scientific departments' contents	American troops, 82 <sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division	
Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples, Campania)	Theft and damage of artworks and artefacts	American 5 <sup>th</sup> army	Some of the stolen objects were later recovered; some are still missing

Castello Montalera (Panicle, Perugia, Umbria)	Soldiers stole the silverware, Chinese and Japanese porcelains, damask tapestries, 17 <sup>th</sup> -century prints, bronze wooden statues, paintings (by Guercino, Guidoreni, Carracci), the Holy vessels from the castle's chapel	Canadian troops	
Etruscan Necropolis of Tarquinia (Lazio)	Troops intentionally vandalised frescoed paintings		
Villa Adriana in Tivoli (Lazio)	Damage to precious masonry pavements	British soldiers	
Castel Fusano (Ostia, Lazio)	Damage to furniture and works of art	American troops	
Abbazia di Montecassino (Lazio)	Soldiers behaved as souvenir-hunters	New-Zealander soldiers	Troops returned part of the stolen goods
Minturno (Latina, Lazio)	Books pertaining to the University Library of Naples were stolen and offered to a London dealer	British officers	Books returned to the University Library
Castello della Crescenza (Rome, Lazio)	Theft of art objects and household goods	American troops	
Colosseum (Rome, Lazio)	Soldiers visiting the site damaged the walls by carving their names on them	Casual soldiers visiting the site	
Villa and Castello Guicciardini (Poppiano, Florence, Tuscany)	Deliberate damage to two Naldini's paintings ( <i>Madonna Seduta in Gloria</i> and <i>La Carità</i> ) and to Pontormo's <i>Visitazione</i> ; damage to other paintings, used as camp beds	New Zealander soldiers	
Villa Landau-Finaly (Florence, Tuscany)	Theft of books, small statues and paintings, ornaments, carpets	British and American troops	
Villa Acton/Capponi (Florence, Tuscany)	Theft of minor objects	U.S. 133 Infantry Brigade Division	
Villa I Tattoli (Florence, Tuscany)	Damage to some antique furniture and pictures		
Villa Torrigiani (Florence, Tuscany)	Removal of some antique furniture and pictures		
Museo Stibbert (Florence, Tuscany)	Theft of 130 objects; damage to artworks and antique furniture	British troops	One object returned in 2010; others still missing
Villa Da Porto (Trissino, Vicenza)	Considerable damage to the whole property	British troops	

Table 2 - Cultural heritage losses in Italy during the Allied occupation.

The table is not exhaustive of the entire Italian scenario, but it includes exclusively the examples mentioned in the present dissertation. © The Author.



## Reflecting on cultural objects' value

A clarification is necessary concerning the analysis of the extent of damaging and stealing actions undertaken by Allied soldiers in occupied Italian territories. If, on the one side, this thesis has argued that unlawful activities involved a large part of the Italian peninsula resulting in numerous damaging acts and thefts; on the other side, most of the contemporary reports diminished the extent of the problem. The reason is to be found in the different approaches to the evaluation of the issue, especially in relation to the cultural significance of the objects subjected to these unlawful activities.

A remarkable example is represented by the outcomes deriving from the Collier Commission of Enquiry. It concluded that little damage occurred to objects in buildings occupied by Allied troops in the Naples area, despite the evidence which proved the opposite, such as the major ransacking events that interested the University of Naples and Palazzo Reale with the loss of a large portion of collections. At this point, an important question would be: why is there such a discrepancy between evidence and outcomes?

In this sense, Nigel Pollard has emphasised that the answer to the question is a simple matter of perspectives: for heritage specialists every cultural object is valuable and its destruction or damage is undoubtedly seen as irreparable and horrendous; for nonspecialists, like the compilers of the Collier Commission's report, however, objects of art are rated into categories, following a hierarchy system.<sup>685</sup> A ranking classification with zero to three stars was employed, for example, in the *Lists of Protected Monuments*.<sup>686</sup> Thus, from this point of view, the objects damaged in Naples during the occupation of cultural sites can be recognised as having a low cultural value considering that the most important ones had been moved to refuges. This analysis is realistic in light of the tremendous state of the city of Naples at the end of the war. What happened at, for example, the University and Palazzo Reale was nothing if compared to the total destruction of important cultural sites such as Chiesa di Santa

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<sup>685</sup> Pollard 2020c.

<sup>686</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 199.

Chiara and Archivio di Stato – the first one completely destroyed by a bombing raid; the second one set on fire by retreating German troops.

A slightly different interpretation of Pollard's answer is possible when considering the words of monuments officer Frederick Hartt, who in his book on the activities he undertook in Tuscany as MFAA Regional Commissioner stated that,

the occasional individual examples of looting and damage by Allied troops involved works of little consequence.<sup>687</sup>

Therefore, even specialists like Hartt founded their considerations on a ranking system of classifications of cultural objects. Considering this, a revision of Pollard's answer can be provided by arguing that there exist two different general points of view analysing objects' value: *specialists* who consider every cultural object as precious and irreplaceable; *specialists* and *nonspecialists* who evaluate each object's importance according to a ranking system.

Investigating the topic of Allied troops' art theft and damage from this last point of view suggests that the major problem arising from the military occupation of monumental sites in Italy was not the illicit appropriation of their contents, but actions resulting from their change of use. Indeed, quoting the words of Bruno Molajoli, the damage caused by the conversion of historical buildings into army bases and military hospitals 'exceeded the ones originated from air bombardments'.<sup>688</sup> For example, at Museo Stibbert, transformed into a troops' billeting site, soldiers damaged museum rooms by arranging them according to their comfort, moving display cases and furniture to better lay out their camp beds.<sup>689</sup>

The major consequences of this kind had been paid, once again, by buildings in Naples. A clear example is provided by pictures of Museo di San Martino and Museo Duca di Martina at Villa Floridiana (Figs. from 44 to 46), attached to Molajoli's book on the

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<sup>687</sup> Hartt 1949, p. 111.

<sup>688</sup> Author's own translation of: 'i danni provocati dall'occupazione militare soverchiarono di gran lunga quelli provocati dai bombardamenti' (Molajoli 1948, p. 62).

<sup>689</sup> *Elenco delle Cose Mancanti Dopo il 15 Settembre 1944 Quando il Battaglione di Fanti Inglesi Lasciò Liberi i Locali del Museo*, Museo Stibbert, Archivio Lensi, n. 324.

state of Neapolitan museums at the end of the war.<sup>690</sup> Museo di San Martino had been occupied by Allied troops for three years, from 1943 to 1946. During this period, pavement's marble slabs were ruined by the frequent passage of hundreds of soldiers, wagons, and motorcycles; partitions for kitchens and toilets were built in the museum rooms; walls were painted with lime without taking care of architectural and sculptural elements. Museo Duca di Martina had been occupied by Anglo-American military divisions for two years, from 1943 to 1945. During their requisition, showers, sinks and kitchens were placed in the rooms decorated with stucco and gilt; electric wires, vents and pipes were installed on walls covered with silk, perforating pavements and painted ceilings; iron grating was settled on windows.<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>690</sup> Molajoli 1948.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.



MUSEO DELLA FLORIDIANA -- STATO DEI LOCALI DOPO L'OCCUPAZIONE MILITARE



MUSEO DELLA FLORIDIANA -- STATO DEI LOCALI DOPO L'OCCUPAZIONE MILITARE

Figure 44 - Museo Duca di Martina at Villa Floridiana (Naples) after the Allied military occupation. The pictures show the damage caused to the museum rooms by the conversion into an army base.

Source: Molajoli 1948.





MUSEO DI S. MARTINO — LOCALI DANNEGGIATI DALLE BOMBE  
E DALL'OCCUPAZIONE MILITARE



MUSEO DI S. MARTINO — STATO DEI LOCALI DOPO L'OCCUPAZIONE MILITARE

*Figure 45 - Museo di San Martino (Naples) after the Allied military occupation. The pictures show the damage resulting from the building's requisition.*

*Source: Molajoli 1948.*



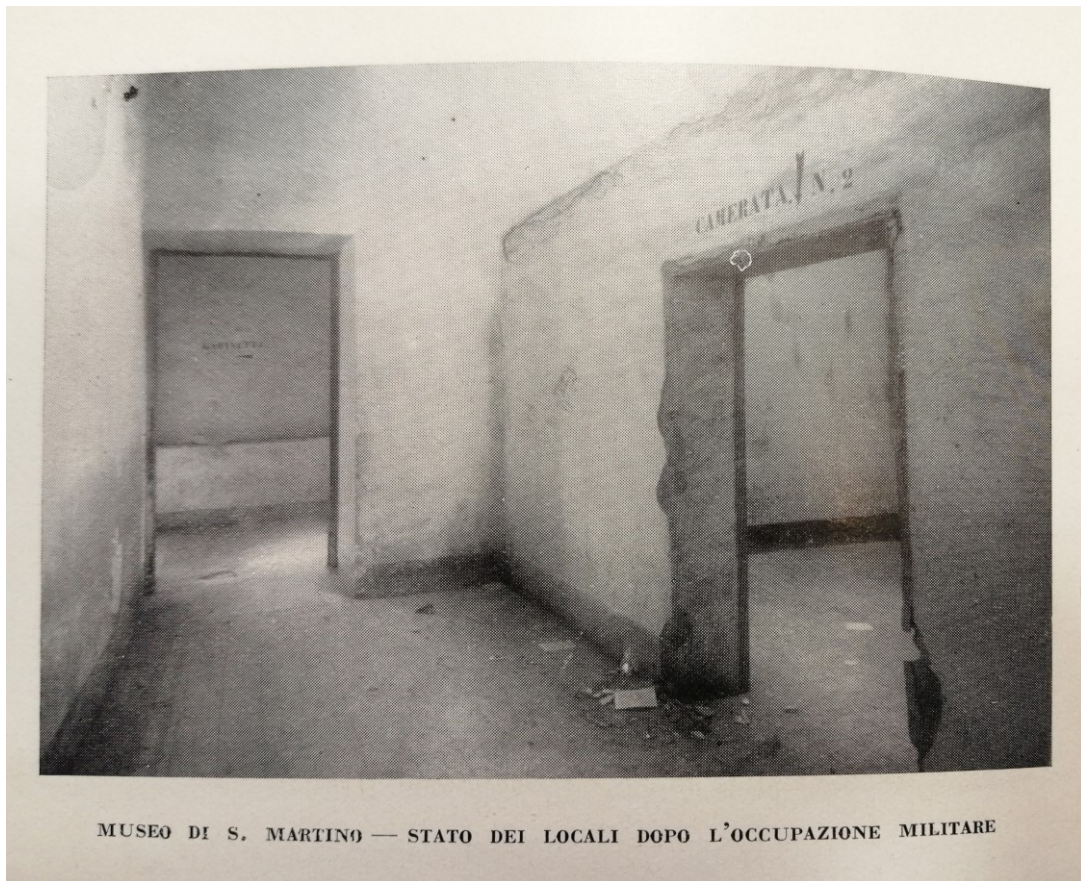


Figure 46 - Museo di San Martino (Naples) after the Allied military occupation. Over 1943-46, the building was requisitioned by Allied troops, who converted the museum spaces to their own use, without taking care of architectural elements, as this picture shows.

Source: Molajoli 1948.

Another point to consider is the urgency of establishing, in modern total wars, which work of art was to be safeguarded, starting from the assumption that it was materially impossible to protect every cultural object for reasons associated to money, time, and resources. In 1939, the ICOM (International Council of Museums) published, through the pages of *Museum*, a first classification dividing artworks and artefacts into three categories: irreplaceable, important, of secondary value. Similarly, in 1938, the Italian Ministry of National Education asked Superintendents to provide lists of cultural objects ordered into categories: works of pre-eminent artistic interest, works of artistic interest, remaining works.<sup>692</sup>

<sup>692</sup> Franchi 2013, p. 441. The debate around the value of objects of art continues to this day. Cf., for example, the works by the art historian Paul Crowther on the aesthetic judgement and definition of art: Crowther 2007 and 2011.

The difficulties encountered in choosing which artworks were worthy of entering the first category are clearly described in the following passage by Emilio Lavagnino (1898-1963), director of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica (Rome):

When we had to select a certain number of works of art to be removed ... it wasn't always easy to decide which paintings and which sculptures, since everything seemed worthy of being rescued, as much as possible, from the risks of war.<sup>693</sup>

He then emphasised that, because of the exclusive protection of major works of art, the artworks of minor artists were the ones that suffered the heaviest losses at the end of the war.<sup>694</sup> This, indeed, is what happened in Italy during Allied troops' military requisition of monumental sites.

Then, it is reasonable to conclude that it was during these modern conflicts that the need of establishing a ranking system for cultural objects' value was inaugurated,

pushing to the extreme that process of memory and oblivion that characterizes every human society, choosing what is worthy to be preserved for future generations.<sup>695</sup>

In conclusion, the considerations presented above on the value of works of art imply that the analysis of the extent of unlawful activities undertaken by Allied soldiers in Italy should be characterised by two opposing perspectives. One perspective considers every cultural object as valuable, and that the number of artefacts destroyed or stolen by Anglo-American soldiers was significant. Another perspective characterises objects' value on a ranking system, which suggests that no objects of primary importance suffered consequences from troops' exploitations.

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<sup>693</sup> Lavagnino, E. quoted in Franchi 2013, p. 441.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442.

## Lessons for contemporary practice

The findings analysed in this thesis may have wider validity in the context of the implementation of cultural property protection regulations relevant to this day.

Reiterating the words of Nigel Pollard,

the experiences of the Second World War are of great value in developing contemporary policies and practices for protecting heritage in war zones.<sup>696</sup>

One of the implications of this study lies specifically in providing valid examples in the field of treatment and protection of heritage sites in conflict zones, with a particular focus on the regulations concerning troops' occupation of historical buildings analysed in the preceding chapters, and on the establishment of a unit deployed in the field with the task of implementing those regulations and other rules relating to the safeguarding of cultural heritage (the MFAA).

During World War II, the lessons learned in the cultural property protection field led to the immediate issue of the 1954 *Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, which continues to be the primary significant international legislation on the matter (with its subsequent Protocols). Nevertheless, this was the sole immediate outcome deriving from World War II practices. Indeed, many of the lessons learned were later largely forgotten.<sup>697</sup> In this context, Pollard cites the relevant instances of damage, destruction and looting occurred of heritage during the recent conflicts in Yugoslavia, Africa, and the Middle East.<sup>698</sup>

As far as the topics analysed in this thesis are concerned, troops' exploitation of cultural assets is still a relevant issue in contemporary conflicts. Accordingly, Peter Stone – UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace, and President of the Blue Shield – emphasises that,

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<sup>696</sup> Pollard 2020a, pp. 1-2.

<sup>697</sup> Alcalá 2015, pp. 209-210; Pollard 2020a, p. 7; Stone 2016, p. 44.

<sup>698</sup> Pollard 2020a, pp. 7-9. Other instances regarding the failures in the cultural property protection field during the invasion of Iraq are included in Stone 2016.



souvenir and trophy collection is still a characteristic of troops and others returning from conflict.<sup>699</sup>

He specifically indicates that soldiers and civilian personnel today steal cultural objects with two purposes: souvenir collection and trophy hunting.<sup>700</sup>

The problem is so urgent that,

most countries now insist on stringent searches of the baggage of both military and civilian returning personnel.<sup>701</sup>

Significantly, the U.S. army archaeologist Laurie Rush provides the outstanding example of a decorative architectural feature removed by American soldiers from one of Saddam Hussein's palaces (Iraq), stolen as a war trophy and currently on display in an American military museum.<sup>702</sup> Saddam Hussein's palaces were largely exploited by the Americans, who transformed them into billeting sites and army bases, changing their resemblance by building room partitions for locating dormitories, telephone kiosks and military offices.<sup>703</sup>

Another striking example regarding troops' wrongful actions towards cultural heritage today has been reported by Ronald Alcala – Major, Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. army – regarding American forces which, in April 2003, occupied the city of Babylon (Iraq) without caring for its precious archaeological significance, transforming the architectural resemblance of the city into a Coalition military base – 'Camp Alpha' – by excavating, bulldozing and crushing the site.<sup>704</sup> All the mentioned occurrences are strikingly similar to the actions perpetrated by Allied soldiers in occupied territories of Europe in World War II, investigated in this thesis. Those examples constitute testimonies that history repeats itself, and that many of the lessons learned in World War II were later forgotten.

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<sup>699</sup> Stone 2016, p. 45.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>702</sup> Rush 2012, p. 42.

<sup>703</sup> Manaugh 2009.

<sup>704</sup> Alcala 2015, p. 209.

Therefore, given the pressing problems of troops' unlawful activities towards cultural assets today, the findings analysed in this study can provide historical examples for contemporary cultural property protection. In practical terms, the rules and regulations issued in World War II regarding the role that combat troops have in the safeguarding of heritage, and the subsequent practical procedures in applying the principles contained in those rules and regulations are still relevant to modern military procedures.<sup>705</sup>

Pollard suggests that the fundamental lessons to be learned today in the context of preventing troops' exploitation of cultural assets are: securing movable collections away from troops and civilians; controlling access within the building as well as external entrances; and avoiding mixed occupation of buildings.<sup>706</sup> This thesis adds to Pollard's considerations some practical historical examples on the need, during conflicts, of preventing the military requisition of monumental sites through the use of patrolling units and 'off-limits' signs, and of avoiding a general permissiveness in an early phase of troops' advance in new territories (through a rigid control over soldiers' actions). Moreover, this study has demonstrated that in a planning operational phase it would be necessary to sensitise and educate soldiers on the importance of protecting cultural heritage – especially through awareness-raising campaigns directed to all military ranks – and to regulate the responsibility of combatant troops towards cultural assets by implementing clear orders on the military occupation of all the existing typologies of monumental sites (archaeological areas, museums, libraries, archives, historic villas, etc.). Those orders should be properly distributed to troops.

Furthermore, pertinent to contemporary cultural property protection is the discussion, included in this thesis, around the responsibilities covered by the MFAA in the combat field, and the solutions in overcoming its poor early organisation and lack of authority. In this context, the study demonstrates that the placing of cultural specialists within the army or, better, the establishment of a unit dedicated to the safeguarding of heritage in combat field have a positive implication in wartime periods. More precisely,

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<sup>705</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 9.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

a unit of this kind is essential during the planning of military operations, and subsequently in the war field, in preventing art looting events, in disciplining troops' treatment of heritage, and in providing first-aid assistance to historical sites damaged by the passage of war.

One advocate for the fundamental historical lesson that the MFAA can provide for today's conflict situations is Rush, who argues that World War II cultural property protection efforts must be taken into consideration for today's military operations, under the assumption that 'those who fail to study the past are doomed to repeat it'.<sup>707</sup> She suggests that central would be the presence of cultural property advisors within the military personnel, like World War II monuments officers. Moreover, she argues that essential in preserving heritage in conflicts would be the use of lists similar to World War II *Lists of Protected Monuments* (in the form of detailed geographic information systems maps), the partnership with local personnel, and the production of immediate documentation in case of unlawful activities. Finally, she emphasises the primary importance that respecting and preserving 'items and places of cultural importance in a community' play in reconstructing social systems in post-combat operations.<sup>708</sup>

Concluding this section, I have been able to demonstrate that this thesis can provide historical lessons to be followed during today's military operational planning. The placing of cultural specialists within military organisations, the education of military personnel towards the protection of cultural heritage, and the distribution of information on cultural properties are undoubtedly the most important points to be taken into consideration. Those constitute topics currently under discussion in modern cultural property protection circles, as emphasised by Pollard. Among the discussed topics, there are also the balance between protection and military necessity, the relationships with local heritage specialists, the value of cultural heritage in post-

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<sup>707</sup> Rush 2012, p. 37.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-42. Since 2006, the Blue Shield has provided lists of cultural properties to be protected during the recent conflicts in Libya, Mali, Syria, and Northern Iraq (Stone 2016, p. 45).

conflict stabilisations, and the modalities of addressing potential damage caused by aerial bombardment and ground combat.<sup>709</sup>

### **Limits of archival research**

One of the limitations of this study is represented by the archival research conducted to assess the extent of Allied troops' damaging and stealing activities in Italy in World War II. As already thoroughly investigated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the research has been mainly based on the analysis of documents preserved at NARA, the BSR, the AAR, Archivio Poggi, and Museo Stibbert's archive. Nevertheless, the research project could have been extended to many other archival records preserved in cultural institutions between the U.S., Italy, and the U.K..

Firstly, it could have comprised the investigation of monuments officers' private papers regarding their activities throughout Europe: George Stout's records at the Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institute (Washington D.C., U.S.); Deane Keller's papers at the Yale University (New Haven, U.S.); Frederick Hartt's archive at the National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C., U.S.); and James Rorimer's records distributed between the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, U.S.), the Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institute (Washington D.C., U.S.), and the National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C., U.S.). The aforementioned papers can help in deepening our understanding of the main topics and case studies discussed in the present thesis, but also to extend the investigation to the entire European scenario. Such a broad analysis was beyond the scope of this study.

Secondly, the investigation conducted in chapter 2 on the preventive measures adopted by Allied governments in wartime in the cultural property protection field should have also included the study of the papers produced by the Macmillan Committee between 1943 and 1947 preserved at the British National Archives

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<sup>709</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 9. Regarding cultural property protection discussions in contemporary military planning operations, cf. also: Rush 2012 and Stone 2016.

(London, U.K.).<sup>710</sup> These have been excluded from the present research project because an investigation on the activities of that committee was not the primary focus of this thesis.

Furthermore, another limitation concerning the archival research conducted interests also the case study of the military occupation of Mostra d'Oltremare's exhibition grounds. The enquiry has been based primarily on papers of NARA and the BSR, along with secondary sources. However, the findings can be integrated by a thorough analysis of records preserved at Archivio di Stato di Napoli (Naples, Italy) and at Archivio Storico Architettonico Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples, Italy). Finally, as far as visual records are concerned, closer examination of the images preserved in the photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum (London, U.K.) and the National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C., U.S.) can expand the research that has been conducted for the present study.

In conclusion, as mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, archival research is a subjective process of locating and investigating documents to answer a specific research question.<sup>711</sup> For the purpose of providing a tentative preliminary analysis of the issue of Allied troops' unlawful treatment of art in World War II Italy, the study has been limited to papers at NARA, BSR, AAR, Archivio Poggi, and Museo Stibbert's archive. Therefore, it does not claim to present a final and complete investigation of the problem. On the contrary, as seen with all the archival records left behind, the thesis presents limitations that offer new beginnings: opportunities for further research.

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<sup>710</sup> T209, British Committee on the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives and Other Material in Enemy Hands (Macmillan Committee), 1943-47, Public Record Office. London, National Archives.

<sup>711</sup> Hill 1993; Howell and Prevenier 2001; McDowell 2013.

## Future lines of reflection

### *Investigating troops' potential motives*

This study raises a number of questions concerning the potential motives that drove Allied soldiers into committing illicit crimes against cultural assets in occupied territories of Europe.

As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Allied troops' unlawful acts were not organised and sometimes even accidental. Some of the MFAA reports investigated in this research project have revealed possible intentions that moved soldiers into committing unlawful actions against cultural properties. These documents refer specifically to destructive actions driven by the will to punish the enemy for provoked injustices, and stealing activities guided by the intention to hunt for souvenirs, to obtain a profit from their sale or, again, to hurt the opponent. A noteworthy report of possible intentions is included in the document *Notes on Safeguarding and Conserving Cultural Material in the Field* (1943), which describes potential motives as follows:

Even the best disciplined troops tend to regard themselves as free to use anything which is obviously abandoned or damaged, especially in an enemy country. There is also a temptation to destroy objects which appear to symbolize the enemy. ... Looting and theft on any scale by occupying troops may be very improbable. But there is always likely to be the taking of things as souvenirs, or as extra comfort for barracks and billets; and occasional theft for gain is always possible.<sup>712</sup>

Thus, the document includes, among the possible motivations, the will of punishing the enemy, a potential profit, souvenir hunting, and personal comfort.

Also the Collier Commission of Enquiry's report mentions souvenir hunting as the primary motive for troops' stealing activities. While describing the losses from Reggia di Capodimonte (Naples), attributable to Allied troops, the report emphasises that 'the

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<sup>712</sup> *Notes on Safeguarding* 1943, pp. 15-19.

objects ... were probably taken away as souvenirs'.<sup>713</sup> Again, in the report's attached interview to the Superintendent Bruno Molajoli, he characterises the missing ancient and medieval objects from the Cathedral and Museum at Capua (Caserta, Campania) as follows:

We are trying to recover these things but the places are completely open and the troops go through souvenir hunting.<sup>714</sup>

Also some of the secondary sources investigated for this research project address the topic of troops' potential motives. For instance, the historian Seth Givens, in his 2014 publication, provided a preliminary analysis of the justifications that American soldiers gave for their looting of civilian possessions in Germany: wartime necessity, opportunities for profit or trade, keepsakes, revenge for Nazi atrocities.<sup>715</sup> He argues that when Allied soldiers arrived in Germany, they saw looting as something morally and legally justifiable as reprisal for the devastation and misery caused by the Nazi regime especially in Western Europe: 'We were giving the Germans a taste of what they had been doing to others for years'.<sup>716</sup> He also characterises stealing for profit as a 'standard practice', describing the frequent looting activities towards civilian properties and the subsequent sales. Finally, he demonstrates that soldiers took objects as souvenirs: 'acquiring mementoes was generally a form of tourism'.<sup>717</sup> Givens focuses his attention exclusively on the illicit activities perpetrated by American soldiers against civilian properties in Germany, however his work can be a starting point for the enquiry on the possible intentions that drove troops to commit unlawful acts towards cultural heritage in World War II.

A study of soldiers' potential motives must take account of investigations in the field of psychology, especially in connection to warfare. Moreover, in-depth research on private documents produced by soldiers in wartime is essential in understanding the attitude of soldiers in the combat field. Finally, since searching for possible motives

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<sup>713</sup> AMG-11 1946, pp. 18-19.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>715</sup> Givens 2014, p. 33.

<sup>716</sup> Pfc. Richard Courtney, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.

was not the focus of my project, an additional thorough analysis of the reports by the MFAA – preserved at NARA, the BSR and the AAR – is indispensable.

All things considered, further research is necessary before reaching a conclusion on the intentions behind Allied soldiers' unlawful actions. Nevertheless, a preliminary account of the potential motives that drove Allied troops into committing illicit crimes against cultural assets in World War II can be summarised as follows: *economic*, based on a profit obtained by the sale of the stolen objects; *political*, namely the stolen/damaged/destroyed items were perceived as spoils of war; *aesthetic*, that is to say that objects were stolen exclusively because of their beauty as products of craftsmanship and, therefore, treated as souvenirs.

#### *Considering hidden narratives in museums*

The findings presented in this thesis provide a starting point for a further examination on the reasons why the illicit crimes committed by the Allies against cultural properties in World War II have not been properly addressed by museums that have suffered consequences from those unlawful activities, both in terms of objects' disappearance and buildings' damage.

For instance, as investigated in this study, Palazzo Reale di Napoli in wartime was transformed into a military quarter for Allied troops, who indiscriminately destroyed and depredated its contents. In a remarkable passage reported in chapter 5, the Superintendent Bruno Molajoli listed in detail the damaging and destructive actions undertaken by soldiers, including the removal and destruction of furniture, inlaid woodworks, art objects, wall brocades and damasks, and paintings on canvas.<sup>718</sup> Despite the tremendous consequences suffered during the Second World War, today in the museum there is no mention of these, obscuring this important phase of museum history. Moreover, apart from not considering a fundamental phase in the palace's history, museum curators do not address potential gaps in museum collections, by not explaining why some museum objects are not present anymore.

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<sup>718</sup> *Italy 1945*, pp. 704-707.



Understanding museum history means to better comprehend museum collections: the connection between objects; the evolution of the collection itself; the reasons why a specific object entered the museum or at some point it 'disappeared'.<sup>719</sup> Thus, given the importance of constructing narratives around museum history today, why are museum curators leaving aside such a fundamental phase in the history of Palazzo Reale and its collections?

Another example is represented by Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna, where an object stolen in wartime by Allied troops is now on display. The object is the sixteenth-century Captain Bernardo's shield, stolen by Anglo-American troops occupying Mostra d'Oltremare, where it had been loaned in 1940, as already thoroughly investigated in chapter 5. The wartime history of the object has been addressed exclusively during an exhibition organised in 1996 for its return to the museum (*Incontri & Arrivi. Lo Scudo del Capitano Francesco Bernardo*, October 1996). Nevertheless, in today's museum display there is no mention of the illicit activities associated with the shield in wartime, nor to its later recovering (Fig. 47). This is in contrast with current theories investigating the importance of constructing narratives around object biographies in contemporary museums. These are situated within the idea that 'objects gathered meanings through associations with people they encountered'.<sup>720</sup> Therefore, museums should provide visitors with 'all the information necessary to enrich their understanding', including the biography of objects.<sup>721</sup> Thus, considering the importance of objects' biography in contemporary museums, why did museum curators decide not to address the shield's wartime history?

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<sup>719</sup> Tulliach 2020.

<sup>720</sup> Alberti 2005, p. 559.

<sup>721</sup> Greco 2019, p. 5.



*Figure 47 - Captain Bernardo's shield on display at Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna (room 18). The current museum display does not mention the controversial history of the shield.*

*Picture taken by the author in November 2017. © The Author. Reproduction courtesy of Musei Civici d'Arte Antica di Bologna – Museo Civico Medievale.*

Apart from being excluded from museum narratives, the topic of Allied art theft and damage in World War II is also poorly investigated in the literature, where few studies analyse the problem in detail.<sup>722</sup> As mentioned in chapter 1, fundamental secondary sources on World War II cultural property protection only cite the problem without investigating it broadly.<sup>723</sup> Moreover, the issue is largely unknown to the public, who is more aware of the extent and consequences of Nazi art looting campaigns.

Possible answers to the aforementioned questions about absent museum narratives, and about the lack of public knowledge on the topic of Allied art theft and damage, probably sit within both the sensationalised treatment of Nazi art looting given in the

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<sup>722</sup> Alford 2011, Pollard 2020a.

<sup>723</sup> Coccoli 2017, Dagnini Brey 2009, Nicholas 1994.

past years, and more ‘political’ and ideological implications. Firstly, recent books and films have constructed around Nazi art looting campaigns an aura of mystery that has captivated the public, while emphasising the ‘evil’ motivations of some Nazi officers involved in these thefts. It is the case, for example, of the already mentioned books by the best-selling author Robert M. Edsel (*Rescuing Da Vinci: Hitler and the Nazis Stole Europe’s Great Art, America and her Allies Recovered it*, 2006; *Monuments Men. Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, 2009; and *Saving Italy. The Race to Rescue a Nation’s Treasures from the Nazis*, 2013), and of the films *Monuments Men* (2014) and *Woman in Gold* (2015). Thus, promoting a painting or an artefact subjected to a Nazi theft and later returned to a museum attracts more visitors than publicising a similar object stolen by an Anglo-American soldier.

Secondly, addressing histories connected to Anglo-American art stealing and destructive actions can cause ideological and ‘political’ problems, because the common opinion is to consider the Allies as positive characters in World War II history, where the Nazis are the morally problematic ones. Undoubtedly, the Anglo-Americans were morally more respectable than the Nazis. However, as investigated in this thesis, they committed illicit crimes, too – not only connected to cultural heritage, but also to people’s private sphere (rape crimes, house plundering, etc.).

Considering all the implications briefly analysed in this section, the problem unquestionably merits further investigation. In this thesis, my aim has been to uncover a hidden history in the account of actions (transfer, removal, destruction, damage) that involved cultural objects in specific sites during the Second World War: Allied troops’ treatment of those objects in their occupation of Italian territories. It is now time, 77 years after the end of the Second World War, to start studying unlawful activities committed by Anglo-Americans, to provide a complete and exhaustive analysis – the most objective possible – of World War II events. This thesis constitutes a step forward in this direction.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1 – ‘ADM Instruction n. 10’**

The following ADM Instruction was published on 30 March 1944.<sup>724</sup>

HQ AAI (ADM ECHELON)

ADM INSTRUCTION NO. 10

30 Mar 44

### **PRESERVATION OF PROPERTY OF HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE IN ITALY**

1. Attention is directed to the personal letter to all Commanders issued by the GOC-in-C dated 17 Feb 44 on the above subject. The following instructions are issued as a guide to Commanders and in amplification of the letter above referred to.
2. Tactical considerations must obviously influence the occupation of historical buildings etc, during actual fighting, but a rigid control over such occupation will be imposed by Commander as soon as fighting has ceased.
3. It is not proposed to forbid the occupation by troops of any specific buildings except that churches will NOT be used for normal troops accommodation. In cases of extreme necessity churches may be used temporarily to shelter wounded personnel awaiting evacuation. This authority is not to be interpreted that they may be used as Casualty Clearing Stations or Hospitals. The responsibilities of decision as to whether an historical building is to be occupied or not is delegated to Commanders, not below the rank of Divisional

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<sup>724</sup> *Italy* 1945, pp. 5-9. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. – RG239, M1944, Materials Concerning the Submission for Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives.

Commander or officer of equivalent status, except that during actual fighting, in cases of extreme operational urgency, lower Commanders may have to act.

4. To assist Commanders in their decisions ACC/AMG have prepared lists of the principal historical monuments, deposits of important documents (Archives), and artistic treasures of ITALY, with the degree of their importance indicated by stars. These lists will be known as 'Lists of Protected Monuments' and will supersede the lists printed in the Zone Handbook of Italy, and AFHQ General Order No. 68 of 29 Dec 43 insofar as it refers to the Zone Handbook. For easy reference these Lists are printed in sections on a regional basis, and will be issued by ACC/AMG on demand as follows:

- a. HQ Armies, independent formations, Districts and Base sections will demand sufficient copies now to hold a complete set at their HQ and to issue to the undermentioned those sections which affect their areas of occupations or administrative control:

HQ Corps	HQ Sub Areas
HQ Divisions	Town Majors
HQ Areas	Real Estate Officers.

- b. It will be the responsibility of Army, independent formations, District or Base Section commanders when planning the capture or eventual occupation of territory to demand and distribute the relative sections down to all battalion or equivalent Units.

Attached as Appendix A to this Instruction, as a guide for demanding, is an index showing the subdivision of the Lists by areas.

5. All buildings listed in the 'Lists of Protected Monuments' will be deemed 'historical buildings' and will not be occupied when alternative accommodation

is available or without the express authority in writing of the appropriate commander as laid down in paragraph 3 above.

6. As by far the greater part of the damage is likely to occur between the time the battle moves forward and the time reserve formations and administrative units assume full control, it will be the responsibility of commanders to place guards on all historical buildings during this phase, in-so-far as their resources allow, so that their eventual occupation will be planned and orderly.
7. Whenever it is found essential for operational reasons to occupy any such buildings, the commander of the occupying troops will be responsible for seeing that ACC/AMG are informed at the earliest opportunity and that every reasonable precaution is taken to prevent careless or wilful damage and especially souvenir hunting. In the case of museums, galleries, libraries, repositories of documents and other cultural institutions, the contents will be stored separately from the parts occupied, communicating doors between the occupied and unoccupied parts of the building will be blocked, as will also all unnecessary entrances from outside whether to the occupied or unoccupied parts. Notice boards will be erected, and all troops billeted in the building will be issued with passes and will be the only troops permitted to enter.

Responsible Italian officials will, if available, be consulted when such measures are being considered.

8. Partial occupation of a large historical building, i.e. the occupation of only a small corner, or occupation by troops of more than one Allied Nation will be avoided wherever possible. In the past buildings so occupied have suffered a high proportion of loss and damage, not necessarily attributable to the occupying unit(s).
9. ACC/AMG has a staff of officers with expert knowledge of such matters who should be consulted in all cases of doubt. Where such officers rule that specific



items e.g. of furniture should be included in those stored separately, their ruling will be binding subject to the right of appeal of the occupying unit to this HQ through the normal channels.

10. In addition to the monuments etc. mentioned in the lists, there are known to exist repositories to which the more valuable treasures of museums and galleries have been removed for safety. The sites of such repositories are not at present known; when found they are to be regarded as starred monuments, and their location reported.
11. In the case of written papers and books it is to be noted that even those which do not appear to be ancient may be of great importance, not only historically but as containing information necessary for the practical purposes of the war. Casual destruction or dispersal of such collections, wherever found, will not be permitted.
12. All Operation and Administrative Orders involving the occupation of territory containing historical buildings will contain clear and specific instructions to troops on the lines indicated in this instruction.

/s/ J.H. ROBERTSON

Major General,  
Chief Administrative Officer.

/DISTRIBUTION.

## **Appendix 2 – *Preservation of Works of Art in Italy***

The following pamphlet was published on 8 May 1944.<sup>725</sup>

### PRESERVATION OF WORKS OF ART IN ITALY

#### FOREWORD

In war great damage to buildings, including churches and those of great historical value, has to be accepted when it is operationally unavoidable. To add to such destruction either by wanton action or through thoughtlessness is a crime against civilization.

The objects of this pamphlet are to:

a. Outline the history of Art in Italy.

b. Emphasize that whereas the Germans look upon collections of objects of Art belonging to occupied countries as fields for vandalism and lucrative looting, it is the duty of each member of the United Nations when in occupied territory to regard himself as a trustee for such possessions.

I wish all officers and men to study this little pamphlet which should help to give a true perspective of the importance of preserving all that is old and rare in any country which they may enter in the course of the war.

Wilson

General.

Supreme Commander,

Allied Forces Mediterranean Theater.

Allied Force Headquarters

8 May 1944

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<sup>725</sup> AMG 11a 1944. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. – RG239, M1944, Materials Concerning the Submission for Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives.

## 1. What Is a Work of Art?

Man is distinguished from the beasts by his power to reason and to frame abstract hopes and ideas. Art, like literature and science, is one of the supreme ways in which that power can be expressed in tangible and visible shape. We all have, in varying degrees, these ideas and feelings at the back of our minds, but most of us lack the power to express them. The artist is the man who, by his special skill, can put them for us into concrete shape, whether in stone or paint or words.

Art is not the mere copying of nature. If it were, the wax-works at Madame Tussaud's would be greater works of art than the sculptures of Michaelangelo. An artist needs technical skill, like any other craftsman. But only if he has also inspiration and vision will his product be a work of art, and the deeper that vision the greater the art. The work of an artist like Raphael or Botticelli ranks with that of the great thinkers, writers and scientists, among the supreme achievements of the human race.

## 2. What Is the Value of a Work of Art?

A work of art has a money value, often very large. The 'Blue Boy' by Gainsborough, was sold for £180,000; and Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne' fetched £250,000. Even so, works of art are not like diamonds. However valuable a diamond may be, you can always get another like it. But the "Mona Lisa" or the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican are unique. Their creators are dead, and no money could ever replace them.

But, apart from the money value, what useful purpose does a work of art serve? Should we not be just as well off without any? The answer is best given by the fact that, whatever the reason may be, wherever men are, they do find themselves compelled to try to express the artistic sense within them, and their fellow-men do get

inspiration and pleasure from their work. Some of the earliest known works of man are not 'useful' at all, in the sense that tools and weapons are useful, but paintings of animals and ivory-carving, such as are found in the famous Stone Age caves of Pyrenees; and even the most primitive of present-day tribes-men have an art of their own, often surprisingly advanced both in ideas and in technique—for example, the wood-carvings of West Africa. We ourselves, quite unconsciously, every day enjoy the inherited artistic tradition of centuries in our homes, in our furniture, and in our cities. There have been a few nations completely without art or learning, like the Hun or the Vandal; but they perished swiftly, and their names remain only as a by-word for ignorant savagery.

### 3. Why Is Italy so Rich in Works of Art?

Of all European countries, Italy is the richest in art treasures. For over twenty-five centuries there has been an almost uninterrupted tradition of artistic creation; and in spite of a long and troubled history, Italy has succeeded to an astonishing degree in preserving its artistic heritage. Even today there is scarcely a town or village that does not boast at least one building of historical and artistic value.

The most powerful single influence has been the Church. Imperial Rome has been the center of the ancient civilized world, and the Roman Church inherited that position. Throughout the Middle Ages it was the great patron of the arts—architecture, painting, sculpture, music, literature. It was also their protector. Classical science and literature have survived because they were preserved in monastic libraries, while church treasures were the great storehouse of ancient and medieval craftsmanship. The Vatican collections were the first museum as we know it in Europe.

While the Popes were making Rome a city of monuments, great ruling families such as the Medici in Florence, the Sforza in Milan, the d'Este in Ferrara were the patrons of the artists of their day and collectors of the art of the past. City-councils too

employed architects and artists to build and adorn municipal palaces and other public buildings. All these influences of public as well as private patronage have gone to make Italy the home of many of the noblest achievements of the human spirit.

4. How Have the Germans Behaved?

The Nazis have systematically stripped large parts of Europe of their movable works of art. It is easy to see why:

- a. In their opinion, Germany has to be supreme in Art collections as in everything else.
- b. To destroy a nation utterly, as Germany has tried for example to destroy the Poles, you must also destroy its cultural heritage of science, literature, and art.
- c. Works of art, like jewelry, are a good form of investment against the day of reckoning.

This organized looting is supervised by the Special Cultural Branch of the German Foreign Office under von Ribbentrop; some is done by open appropriation, some by fictitious sale, some by 'exchange' for third-rate German works of art.

Much of the booty has passed into the hands of the Party Leaders. When Greece fell, Ribbentrop sent a special convoy of lorries to rob the museums of Athens. Goering has a fine collection of Modern French art, while Goebbels is said to prefer the Flemish painters. The great central collection of all was to be at Linz, as a memorial to Hitler's mother. Here it was planned to bring together the greatest works of art in the world, the pick of the museums and galleries of Europe and America.

Italy, until recently an ally, has so far fared better at German hands. But since the Italian armistice, there have been at least two cases of wanton and deliberate savagery. The library of the Royal Society of Naples they burned, together with its irreplaceable collection of manuscripts; and at Nola they deliberately destroyed the contents of the Filangieri museum and the six-hundred-year-old state archives of the Kingdom of Naples.

5.     Is Art National or International?

This tale of organized robbery and senseless destruction makes it all the more important that we, by comparison, should ensure by our behavior in occupied territory that we cannot be accused of such crimes. It is inevitable that, in the actual fighting and in the bombing of military targets, historic buildings and works of art will suffer. That is only one of the many tragedies of war. But we can, see that what is left is preserved from all further harm.

Art and science are not things that belong to any one nation. The Nazis do not agree. They tolerate an artist or a scientist only insofar as he works for Nazi ends—and as a result, the standard of both has deteriorated in Germany. We believe, on the other hand, that science and art are international, and only if men are absolutely free to follow their own spirit can they produce and enjoy great work. Even the Nazis were beaten when it came to excluding Shakespeare from Germany; they had to call him ‘an essentially Germanic poet’. And in turn, generations of Englishmen (Shelley, Byron, Browning, Ruskin, Sir Christopher Wren, the Adams brothers, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, to name only a few) have been inspired by the art of Italy and have passed that inspiration on to us. In the words of the notice in the park—‘This is yours; look after it’.

6. What You Can Do.

Most of the damage that is done to works of art in wartime is done by sheer thoughtlessness. Here are a few suggestions:

Don't carve your name, chip off 'souvenirs', or cut out bits of pictures.

If you are billeted in a historic building, treat it as you would expect a stranger to treat your own home.

Books and libraries are going to be badly needed for the re-education of the Italian people. Help to preserve them from damage.

The man who gave you your torch-battery was an Italian scientist, Volta. The research of Italian doctors has helped to save Allied lives. Treat the collections and laboratories, on which such work depends, with respect.

Have you thought who, in the long run, pays for the damage you do?

### Appendix 3 – Extract from the Collier Commission’s Report

The following extract was attached to the *Final Report General*, compiled on 1 January 1946.<sup>726</sup>

General recommendations for the prevention of the recurrence of loss and damage in the future:

- a. Letter to be issued over the personal signature of the General Officer, Commanding-in-Chief, 15 Army Group, down to lieutenant-colonels’ commands.
- b. Letter to be issued to army, district, P.B.S. [Peninsular Base Section, ed.] and equivalent commanders.
- c. Adequate instructions to be issued when any new large scale offensive operation is being planned.
- d. Liaison between commanders and A.M.G. to be improved. Advisers with archaeological and antiquarian knowledge to be consulted when plans are being made for reserve formations and administrative troops to take over what has lately been the battlefield, and to accompany the reconnaissance party. Initial closing of historical buildings, museums, etc.
- e. A wide distribution to be made of classified lists of buildings and of maps showing their locations.
- f. Partial occupations of buildings to be avoided. Where this is inevitable, special precautions to be taken including the issue of passes, blocking other entrances and communicating doors where possible, and posting of notices.
- g. Mixed billeting to be avoided. Where it cannot be avoided, an officer to be appointed having authority over all troops in the building.

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<sup>726</sup> *Final Report General* 1946, pp. 44-45.



- h. Town majors and real estate officers to be trained in their duties and to be furnished with full instructions, and with classified lists and maps of historical buildings, etc, in their area.
- i. [*missing*]
- j. Suitable notices to be posted at the earliest possible moment after fighting has ceased.
- k. An A.B.C.A. [Army Bureau of Current Affairs, ed.] pamphlet to be produced.
- l. Appropriate passages to be inserted in the booklet 'Soldier's Guide to Italy' when it is re-printed.
- m. All orders, instructions and propaganda to be made applicable to, and to reach, the Allied sea and air forces as well as the land forces.

## Appendix 4 – Allied governments’ regulations

The following table constitutes a brief summary of the orders and regulations issued by Allied governments to discipline the treatment of cultural heritage by combat troops in World War II Italy.

Regulations	Issue date	Contents
<b>ADM Instruction n. 8</b>	June 1943	Against purchasing and exporting art objects; Precautions should be taken against troops’ requisitions; Punishment for the improper treatment of monuments and artworks
<b>ADM Instruction n. 12</b>	14 June 1943	Against souvenir hunting and the trafficking of objects; Protection of heritage as counter propaganda to Nazi looting
<b>DO’s and DON’T’s</b>	14 June 1943	Against souvenir hunting, the trafficking of objects and unnecessary requisitions of monumental buildings
<b>Order on Wilful Damage and Looting</b>	30 August 1943	General concern about damage to lives and properties, not exclusively of the cultural kind
<b>AMGOT Plan</b>	September 1943	Prohibition of purchasing and exporting objects; Historical buildings put off-limits to troops
<b>ADM Instruction n. 19</b>	9 December 1943	A preliminary list of buildings that were not to be occupied by troops: churches, religious institutions, museums, national shrines
<b>PBS Circular n. 37</b>	20 December 1943	The duty of protecting cultural heritage is placed to unit commanders
<b>General Order n. 68</b>	29 December 1943	No occupation of all the buildings in the ‘Zone Handbook’ and of all the buildings containing art collections and scientific objects (when alternative accommodations are available); Responsibility to commanders
<b>Letter by General Eisenhower</b>	29 December 1943	Historical buildings are not of extreme operational necessity and need to be protected; Recognition of the primary role of monuments officers in protecting cultural heritage; Recognition of the primary importance played by the protection of cultural heritage in military politics
<b>Letter by General Alexander</b>	17 February 1944	Responsibility to commanders; Soldiers must protect and respect the cultural heritage of occupied countries; The protection of cultural heritage is recognised as one of the goals of the Allied campaign in Italy
<b><i>Lists of Protected Monuments</i></b>	spring 1944 onwards	Detailed lists of monuments to be protected and not to be occupied
<b>ADM Instruction n. 10</b>	30 March 1944	Responsibility to commanders; Establishment of precise rules for protecting buildings and their use for military purposes; The buildings mentioned in the <i>Lists of Protected Monuments</i> must not be occupied
<b><i>Preservation of Works of Art in Italy</i></b>	8 May 1944	Purpose: making troops conscious of the issues deriving from a thoughtless abuse of monumental buildings; Destruction caused by careless and wanton action considered as a crime against civilisation; Soldiers as ‘trustees’ of heritage in occupied countries; Art pertains to the entire humanity and it should be safekept
<b><i>Field Protection of Objects of Art and Archives</i></b>	12 May 1944	Manual on first-aid assistance to cultural properties; Responsibility to occupying forces as a whole
<b><i>Army Service Forces Manual</i></b>	July 1944	Definition of ‘cultural heritage’ and the need of protecting it
<b>ADM Memorandum n. 20</b>	3 April 1945	Recognition of MFAA’s full responsibility

Table 3 - Allied governments’ cultural property protection regulations. © The Author.

## **Appendix 5 – AMG-76 report's museum list**

The MFAA report AMG-76 (1946) contains a list of museums and cultural institutions which had loaned artefacts, artworks and historical documents to Mostra d'Oltremare, not yet returned by December 1944.<sup>727</sup> A copy of the list is attached to the present Appendix.

Between December 2017 and January 2018, I have contacted some of the museums and cultural institutions mentioned in the list searching for information about the objects loaned to the exposition. In the table attached to present Appendix, a summary of the fieldwork done, and of the information obtained.

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<sup>727</sup> AMG-76 1946, p. 6.

AMG-76  
(10)

PALERMO: Coll. Principessa Trabia-Buttara  
ROME: Coll. Passini  
PALERMO: Coll. Marinelli  
TORINO: Coll. Mazzaronis, Coll. Pasini, Museo  
d'Artiglieria  
VENICE: Ca' d'Oro, Coll. Capodista, Museo Correr,  
Gall. d'Arte Moderna.

5. EXHIBITS STILL REMAINING WITHIN THE EXHIBITION GROUNDS

The following items only were located, after exhaustive search on 29 June 44 by Dr. L. Penta, Prof. S. Ortolani and Capt. A.S. Penneyer. All three are convinced that these represent the sum-total of exhibits remaining within the exhibition-grounds.

a. Antiquities:

Two Corinthian capitals and a base in Libya Pavilion  
Two male Roman marble figures (one headless) in the  
Albania Pavilion  
Fragments of mosaic in Libya Pavilion.

b. Oriental Objects:

Marble Buddha, De Gubernatis 1885, )	
In Libya Pavilion	
Buddha (bronze)	} all in vaults of Amphitheatre
Buddha (wooden)	
Bronze Dragon	
Bronze Buffalo	
Bronze Child	

c. Twenty crates under lock and key in vaults of the Arena. These crates were unopened and no facilities could be obtained for their inspection without removal elsewhere. Dr. Penta however, claimed that he knew the contents and stated that they were of no historical or artistic significance.

d. S/Sgt Peebles in addition located in June 44 a small number of assorted ethnographic items in the Recreation Room of 45 U.S. General Hospital stationed in the Exhibition Grounds. These had been collected from a "pile of furniture", since dispersed, and no doubt indicate the fate of other small items not previously removed. The objects in question were of no intrinsic importance.

6. SOURCES WITHIN ITALY FROM WHICH EXHIBITS WERE DRAWN (NOT SINCE RETURNED)

The following collections within Italy are known to have sent exhibits to the Mostra d'Oltremare, which have not yet been returned. The list is certainly incomplete.

AMALFI:	Comune, Coll. Lucibello
BARI:	Museo Provinciale, Coll. Netti
BARLETTA:	Palazzo Comunale
BAESANO VENETO:	Collezione E. Azzolini
BRESCIA:	Ateneo
CANOGLI:	Museo Marinare
CAGLIARI:	Museo

AMG-76  
(11)

CASERTA: Palazzo Reale  
COMO: Museo Civico  
CONEZZA: Soprintendenza Belle Arti  
CREMA: Coll. Stramezzi  
FLORENCE: Accademia di Belle Arti, Uffizi Gallery, Bargello, Museo Bardini, Pitti Gallery (Museo degli Argenti), Museo Stibbert, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, R. Archivio Storico, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Coll. C. Furlan, Coll. Vitt. Furlone.  
GASTA: Comune  
GENOA: Municipio, Museo Navale, Deputazione Storia Patria, Palazzo Binaco, Castello Albertis, Consorzio Autonomo, Coll. A. Palice, Coll. Russo, Coll. Serra.  
LA SPEZIA: Museo Navale  
MILAN: Brera, Castello Sforzesco, Museo d'Arte, Museo Artistico, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Coll. Marchese Zaccaria, Coll. E. Consona, Coll. Lamina  
NAPLES: Palazzo Reale, Pinacoteca, Accademia Belle Arti, Palazzo Comunale, Palazzo Donna Anna, Capodimonte Conservatorio S. Pietro a Maiella, Museo S. Martino, Museo Duca di Martina (Floridiana), Coll. Olmo, Coll. Marino, Coll. Russi  
NOVARA: Comune  
PALOVA: Cathedral, Museo Civico  
PALERMO: Museo d'Arte Antica  
PARMA: Galleria  
PERUGIA: Musei Civici  
PIACENZA: Galleria Ricci-Oddi  
PIA: Chiesa dei Cavalieri  
REGGIO EMILIA: Galleria Comunale  
ROME: Galleria Borghese, Museo Pigorini, Mostra della Romanita', Accademia S. Luca, Galleria Corsini, Galleria d'Arte Moderna.  
TURIN: Museo Civico, Coll. Sanari  
TRINTE: Museo Revoltella  
VENICE: Accademia, Museo Correr, Palazzo Ducale, R. Galleria, Museo Navale, Scuola di S. Marco, Ca' Pesaro, Chiesa dei Frari, Coll. Brass, Coll. Querini-Stampella, Coll. Rava.

7. EXHIBITS LOANED FROM OUTSIDE ITALY (INCLUDING SARDEGNA)

A. ALBANIA

The information available about the Albanian exhibit is imprecise and in places contradictory. It is hoped that Prof. Mustilli and Prof. Sestieri, both recently in charge of the Superintendency of Monuments and Antiquities in ALBANIA and at present in NAPLES and SALERNO respectively, may be able to provide more detailed information. Eight crates of assorted exhibits (3 of them sealed and no record of contents), one case, and a bronze bust are stored at MERCOLIANO. (See section 3.A and appendix J, MFAA Inventory 3; compare MFAA Inventory 41). It is not yet clear from what collection or collections these exhibits were drawn. The sword and helmet of Skanderbeg are variously recorded as in

Figure 48 - Excerpt of the AMG-76 list, mentioning the institutions whose objects experienced acts of theft and damage while on loan to Mostra d'Oltremare (Naples).

© The National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. - RG239, M1944, Materials Concerning the Submission for Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives.

City	MFAA list entry	Institution's current name	Information obtained	Notes
Florence	Museo Bardini	Museo Stefano Bardini		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Museo Stibbert	Museo Stibbert	One object still missing	Documents consulted on site
	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze	Objects returned in July 1946 – June 1947	Documents consulted on site
	Regio Archivio Storico	Archivio di Stato di Firenze	One object destroyed	Information provided via email by Dr. Carla Zarrilli
Milan	Brera	Pinacoteca di Brera		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Castello Sforzesco	Castello Sforzesco		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Galleria d'Arte Moderna	GAM – Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Milano		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
Padua	Cathedral	Basilica Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Museo Civico	Musei Civici agli Eremitani		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
Parma	Galleria	Galleria Nazionale di Parma	Objects returned in 1949	Information provided via email by Dr. Marina Gerra
Piacenza	Galleria Ricci-Oddi	Galleria d'Arte Moderna Ricci Oddi	Objects returned in September 1947	Information provided via email by Dr. Costanza Alberici
Reggio Emilia	Galleria Comunale	Musei Civici di Reggio Emilia	Sixteen objects still missing	Documents consulted on site
Rome	Galleria Borghese	Galleria Borghese		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Museo Pigorini	Muciv – Museo delle Civiltà	Two objects damaged	Information provided via email by Dr. Filippo Maria Gambari
	Accademia S. Luca	Accademia Nazionale di San Luca		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Galleria Corsini	Gallerie Nazionali Barberini Corsini		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Galleria d'Arte Moderna	GNAM – Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea	Three objects damaged	Documents consulted on site
Venice	Accademia	Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia	No documents related to Mostra d'Oltremare in their archives	Information provided via email from Dr. Lorenza Troian
	Museo Correr	Museo Correr	Objects returned in post-war period	Information provided via email from Dr. Andrea Bellieni
	Palazzo Ducale	Palazzo Ducale		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	R. Galleria	Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Museo Navale	Museo Storico Navale della Marina Militare		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>

	Scuola di S. Marco	Scuola Grande di San Marco		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Ca' Pesaro	Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Chiesa dei Frari	Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari		<i>Contacted. No further information provided</i>
	Coll. Querini-Stampalia	Museo della Fondazione Querini Stampalia	One object still missing	Information provided via email by Dr. Cristina Celegon
<b>Cagliari</b>	Museo	Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari	Not aware of the events related to Mostra d'Oltremare	Information provided via email by Dr. Roberto Concas

Table 4 - The fieldwork done on the AMG-76 list.

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## Appendix 6 – MFAA officers

The present list does not constitute a complete index of MFAA officers serving in World War II in Europe, but exclusively a listing of the ones cited in the present thesis, with concise biographic details.

**T. Humphrey Brooke**, Lt. Col. (1914-1988) graduated in Modern History at the University of Oxford. He worked as Assistant Keeper at the Public Records Office (the actual British National Archives). In wartime, he was appointed as the MFAA Director of Archives in Italy. He later became the MFAA controller for Austria.<sup>728</sup>

**Perry Cott**, Lt. (1909-1998) graduated from Princeton in 1929 and later worked as curator of the European and Asian Art Section of the Worcester Art Museum. In wartime, he was deployed as officer of the MFAA in Italy – Regional Commissioner for Umbria and for Lombardia – and in Austria.<sup>729</sup>

**Edward Croft-Murray**, Capt. (1907-1980) was a curator and a renowned expert on British art and musical history. He graduated from the University of Oxford. In 1933, he was appointed Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum (London). In wartime, he served as monuments officer in Italy (Sicily, Campania, Tuscany), and in Austria. In 1953, he was promoted to Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum.<sup>730</sup>

**Ernest T. De Wald**, Maj. (1891-1968), a professor of Art History at Princeton University, specialised in medieval miniatures and in Italian Renaissance Art. His 1916 PhD thesis on Ambrogio Lorenzetti was supervised at Princeton by Professor Charles Rufus

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<sup>728</sup> <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/brooke-lt-col-t-humphrey> (Accessed 27 May 2021).

<sup>729</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 47.

<sup>730</sup> <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/croft-murray-maj-edward-teddy> (Accessed 20 May 2021).



Morey, also member of the Roberts Commission. In wartime, he served as MFAA officer in Italy – Director of the MFAA – and in Austria.<sup>731</sup>

**Roger H. Ellis**, Capt. (1910-1998) graduated in Classics from King's College, Cambridge University. He later worked at the Public Records Office (the actual British National Archives), where he studied document repair. During World War II, he served as monuments officer in Italy and Germany. After the war, he was appointed as Secretary of the Historic Manuscript Commission.<sup>732</sup>

**Roderick E. Enthoven**, Capt. (1900-1985) was an architect, graduated from Clifton College and at the Architectural Association School of London, where from 1926 he worked as lecturer. In wartime, he served as monuments officer in Italy (Tuscany, Piedmont, Veneto).<sup>733</sup>

**Paul Gardner**, Maj. (1894-1972) was an art historian and the director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. In World War II, he served as monuments officer in Italy, Regional Commissioner for Campania and Liguria. At the end of the war, he was appointed director of the MFAA for the liberated provinces of Italy. He then resumed his work at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.<sup>734</sup>

**Mason Hammond**, Lt. Col. (1903-2002) was a professor of Latin and History of Rome at Harvard University from 1928 to 1973. From 1937 to 1939, and again in the 1950s, he was director of Classical Studies at the American Academy in Rome. During the Second

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<sup>731</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 47.

<sup>732</sup> Brennan 2011, p. 194.

<sup>733</sup> <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/enthoven-capt-roderick-e> (Accessed 25 May 2021).

<sup>734</sup> Pollard 2020a, p. 173.

World War, he served as monuments officer first in Italy – as Regional Commissioner for Sicily – and later in Germany.<sup>735</sup>

**Frederick Hartt**, Lt. (1914-1991) earned a BA at the Columbia University in 1935 and a MA at the New York University in 1937. He worked as assistant and cataloguer at the Yale University Art Gallery in 1941-1942. In wartime, he was deployed as monuments officer in Italy – Regional Commissioner for Tuscany – and later in Austria. After the war, he received his PhD from the New York University in 1949. He had a distinguished career as Art History professor at several American universities (the Washington University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Virginia). He was buried in the Porte Sante cemetery of Florence in recognition of his wartime efforts in preserving the cultural heritage of Tuscany.<sup>736</sup>

**Deane Keller**, Capt. (1901-1992) was a painter. He graduated at Yale in 1923 and earned a BFA from the same University in 1926. From 1926 to 1929 he was a fellow of the American Academy in Rome. From 1929 to 1970 he was professor at the Yale School of Fine Arts. In wartime, he served as monuments officer in Italy, attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> army. In 2000, his remains were moved to Camposanto (Pisa) in recognition of his wartime efforts in preserving Italian cultural heritage and, in particular, in aiding the reconstruction of the same Camposanto, heavily damaged by bombing raids.<sup>737</sup>

**Basil Marriott**, Maj. (1902-1971), an architect and art critic of the Reimann School in London, in wartime was deployed as officer of the MFAA in Italy– Regional Commissioner for Veneto and Venezia Giulia – and in Austria.<sup>738</sup>

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<sup>735</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 39; Hammond 1980.

<sup>736</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 48.

<sup>737</sup> Brennan 2011, p. 194; Coccoli 2017, pp. 46-47.

<sup>738</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 49.

**Frederick H.J. Maxse**, Capt. (1904-1970) graduated in Arts at Oxford University. In wartime, he was deployed in Southern Italy as MFAA Deputy Director. He served in Sicily and Campania. Between 1946 and 1948, he worked with the British Military Administration in Eritrea.<sup>739</sup>

**Norman T. Newton**, Maj. (1898-1992) was an architect of the American National Park Service. He graduated at the Cornell University in 1919, won the Prix de Rome in 1923, and was appointed fellow of the American Academy in Rome from 1926 to 1929. In wartime, he was deployed in Italy as MFAA officer, attached to the 8<sup>th</sup> army, and later Regional Commissioner for Apulia-Calabria-Lucania and for Veneto and Venezia Giulia. After the war, he was professor at the Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, until his retirement in 1966.<sup>740</sup>

**A. Sheldon Pennoyer**, Capt. (1888-1957) was a painter and architect. In wartime, he served as monuments officer in Rome, Florence, and Pisa (Italy). He aided monuments officers in producing detailed photographic documentations of the works they undertook in salvaging Italian art and monuments.<sup>741</sup>

**Cecil R. Pinsent**, Capt. (1884-1963) was an architect, graduated at the Royal Academy of Architecture (London). He spent several years in Florence developing his own architectural practice. In wartime, he was deployed as monuments officer in Italy, working especially in the examination of structural damage to buildings (in Tuscany,

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<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>740</sup> Brennan 2011, p. 194; Coccoli 2017, p. 46.

<sup>741</sup> <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/pennoyer-capt-a-sheldon> (Accessed 27 May 2021).

Emilia, and Lombardia) and, in the post-war period, in the organisation of repair-works to villas in and around Florence.<sup>742</sup>

**Robert K. Posey**, Maj. (1904-1977) was an architect, graduated in 1927 from Auburn University (the former Alabama Polytechnic Institute), and in 1932 from the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design of New York. During the Second World War, he served as a monuments officer in France, being the first one landing in Normandy. He retired in 1974 after a long career as an architect.<sup>743</sup>

**Paul K. Baillie Reynolds**, Maj. (1896-1973) was a Roman archaeologist, who studied at the Oxford University and the British School at Rome. He was professor of Ancient History at the Aberystwyth University. In 1934, he was named Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the Ministry of Works. In wartime, he was one of the first monuments officers deployed in Italy, where he was named MFAA temporary Acting Director. He later served in Belgium. In peacetime, he was appointed Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments (1954-1961) and President of the Royal Archaeological Institute (1963-1966).<sup>744</sup>

**James J. Rorimer**, Capt. (1905-1966) graduated at the Harvard University in 1927. He had been assistant curator at the Department of Decorative Arts of the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York (MET) until 1934, when he was appointed curator of the Department of Medieval Art. During the Second World War, he served in France and Germany as MFAA officer, and he was later appointed as Chief of the MFAA, Western Military District. He was director of the MET from 1955 to 1966.<sup>745</sup>

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<sup>742</sup> <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/pinsent-capt-cecil-r> (Accessed 25 May 2021).

<sup>743</sup> <https://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/posey-maj-robert-k> (Accessed 20 May 2021).

<sup>744</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 44.

<sup>745</sup> *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 1966.

**George L. Stout**, Lt. Cdr. (1897-1978) was an art conservator. Before the war, he worked as Director of Technical Research at Harvard's Fogg Museums, and as conservator at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. In wartime, he helped establishing the American Defense Harvard Group. As a MFAA officer he served in France, Belgium, Germany and Austria.<sup>746</sup>

**John Bryan Ward-Perkins**, Maj. (1912-1981), professor of Archaeology at the University of Malta, graduated in Classical Studies at the University of Oxford. He was later appointed assistant at the London Museum, and Director of the British School at Rome from 1945 to 1974. In wartime, he served as monuments officer in Italy, Deputy Director of the MFAA.<sup>747</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> Coccoli 2017, p. 35.

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41; Fratarcangeli and Salvagni 2013, p. 730-731; Pollard 2020a, p. 112; Pollard 2021.

## Appendix 7 – Bruno Molajoli, *Memorandum*

The following is a partial copy, in Italian, of Bruno Molajoli's *Memorandum Riservato al Governo Italiano per Prevenire i Danni dell'Occupazione Militare nei Musei ed Edifici Monumentali*, dated 5 April 1944.<sup>748</sup> An analysis of the present extract is included in Chapter 7.

Nonostante le contrarie assicurazioni, è probabile che vengano occupati Musei ed edifici monumentali, per stabilirvi Comandi, Uffici, *clubs*, e quartieri di truppe. L'occupazione può avvenire con o senza atto formale di requisizione. Una volta avvenuta, l'esperienza ha dimostrato che è quasi impossibile ottenerne la revoca, anche rivolgendosi subito ... al Consigliere per le Belle Arti che accompagna il Governo Militare Alleato (*Allied Military Government – Division Monuments and Fine Arts*) oppure a uno dei componenti la *Subcommission Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives* in seno alla Commissione di Controllo (A.C.C. – *Allied Control Commission*). Questi ufficiali, che nella vita civile coprono cariche direttive nei Musei o sono studiosi d'arte e d'archeologia, hanno il compito della difesa del patrimonio artistico nei territori occupati e del fiancheggiamento dell'opera dei Soprintendenti, che ad essi debbono rivolgere le loro richieste come a naturali tramiti verso l'A.M.G. e i Comandi Militari. Sono di solito animati da buona volontà e da spirito di comprensione, ma la loro azione – soprattutto nei riguardi dell'occupazione dei locali per uso di truppe – è spesso ostacolata e resa vana dalle cosiddette 'necessità militari', la cui valutazione è riservata ai Comandi delle Truppe operanti. Possono tutt'al più collaborare per limitare i danni e le dispersioni derivanti dall'occupazione dei Monumenti e Musei da parte delle Truppe. L'occupazione di Musei o di edifici monumentali si risolve sempre in danneggiamenti imprevedibili e spesso irreparabili ... Possono anche facilmente verificarsi atti di vandalismo su quanto costituisce la decorazione dell'immobile ... o sulle opere d'arte ancora conservate nelle sale o in depositi non ermeticamente chiusi ... Quanto prima e quanto più rapidamente è possibile, conviene raccogliere tutto il

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<sup>748</sup> Molajoli 1948, pp. 122-124.

materiale sparso nell'edificio, concentrandolo in un unico capace deposito. ...  
*Raccogliere quanto più è possibile*: è l'unico modo per sottrarre al danno o alla dispersione ... Appena completato il concentramento del materiale, *si murino* tutti gli accessi del locale, comprese le finestre se danno su terrazze, balconi, cortili stretti, ecc. Si diffidi della presunta sicurezza delle chiusure normali: porte e finestre, anche solide, si troverebbero presto forzate. ... Non si faccia soverchio affidamento sui cartelli di *proibizione d'accesso* ...: non sempre i soldati rispettano queste proibizioni. ...  
[original emphasis].

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