

Heritage Diplomacy as a Tool for Protecting Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

Heritage diplomacy is a relatively new field that links heritage studies with international relations studies. It plays a pivotal role in strengthening and enhancing political, economic, and cultural relations among countries around the world. In light of the increasing and growing proportion of conflicts and armed conflicts around the world, it has become important to find space to talk about the common heritage of mankind, away from the memory of previous colonialism and current geopolitical interests. Since, heritage is considered as the cumulative memory of humanity, which reflects the identities and values of societies, many experts believe that heritage diplomacy has the ability to build international relations depending on the dialogue between different cultures; in order to achieve mutual understanding through collective action and mutual benefits among all parties to achieve international peace and security. Hence, diplomacy becomes an integral part of the formation of heritage, especially in areas that have suffered from violence or political upheaval, whether in the past or present. Therefore, this paper discusses the main question: “How is Heritage diplomacy used as a tool for protecting cultural heritage?”. Firstly, by determining the concept of heritage Diplomacy. Secondly, by studying the challenges that face the heritage Diplomacy. Thirdly, by presenting a number of previous international experiences that used heritage diplomacy to protect cultural heritage around world. Finally, by studying the future of protecting heritage sites in the light of diplomacy as one of soft power tools.

Keywords: Heritage Diplomacy - Cultural Heritage - Soft Power – Tangible Heritage - Archaeological Sites.

Introduction

The heritage preservation occupies an important and rapidly growing position as one of the most important factors for strengthening economic and political ties between countries, which at the same time plays a role in linking countries and populations around the world.

Heritage diplomacy is a relatively new field that links heritage studies with international relations studies. It plays a pivotal role in strengthening and enhancing political, economic, and cultural relations among countries around the world especially in an increasingly interconnected world.

In light of the increasing and growing rates of conflicts around the world, it has become important to find space to talk about the common heritage of mankind, away from the memory of previous colonialism and current geopolitical interests. Since, heritage is considered as the cumulative memory of humanity, which reflects

the identities and values of societies, many experts believe that heritage diplomacy has the ability to build international relations depending on the dialogue between different cultures; in order to achieve mutual understanding through collective action and mutual benefits among all parties to achieve international peace and security.

Hence, diplomacy becomes an integral part of the formation of heritage, especially in areas that have suffered from violence or political upheaval, whether in the past or in the present.

Therefore, this paper discussed the main question: “How is heritage diplomacy used as a tool for protecting cultural heritage?”.

- Firstly, by determining the concept of heritage diplomacy.
- Secondly, by studying the challenges that face the heritage diplomacy.
- Thirdly, by presenting a number of previous international experiences that used heritage diplomacy to protect cultural heritage around the world.
- Finally, by studying the future of protecting heritage sites in the light of diplomacy as one of soft power tools.

I. The Concept of Heritage Diplomacy.

In this part, the researcher discusses the origin of the heritage diplomacy concept.

1.1 Diplomacy in the Modern Era.

There is no doubt that diplomacy is a balanced mix of art and science, through which nations, groups and individuals manage their affairs, in a way that preserves their interests and enhances their political, economic, cultural and scientific relations; in order to protect the international peace and security.¹ Diplomacy usually uses established methods to influence the decisions of other countries, taking into account the state sovereignty of each country stipulated in the United Nations Charter, through dialogue, negotiation and other measures away from the old traditional methods (such as: wars or violence) that violate the state sovereignty and threat the human security of million people .² It is worth noting that modern diplomacy has become open and transparent diplomacy compared to the old school, which adopted traditional diplomacy based on secrecy. The comprehensive development witnessed in the modern era has led to tangible developments in diplomatic methods. Therefore, it is noticeable that diplomacy include different types and forms, including (Public diplomacy, Economic diplomacy, Cultural diplomacy, Science diplomacy, Cyber diplomacy, Energy diplomacy, Heritage diplomacy, Education diplomacy, Health diplomacy, Sports diplomacy...). Not only does the difference limit to the types of diplomacy, but also it includes the modern diplomatic practices that differed by the twentieth century. Diplomacy has taken new and modern forms of communication between nations (e.g. Summit meetings, international conferences, international activities of supranational and subnational entities, NGOs...).

1.2. Heritage in International Relations.

It is generally known that cultural heritage plays a major role in transmitting and preserving the human values of societies over time, which forms a historical connection between the past and the present. Due to globalization and development, the world gradually became an interconnected unit, and culture turned into an element of cross-national connection. Since then, culture has become an essential element in international relations, with multiple implications that affects political, economic, and strategic interests.³ Culture heritage has emerged as an essential element in relations between states, peoples, and other actors. It is worth mentioning, France was the first country to be interested in organizing a foreign cultural policy. In this way, France created formal institutions focused on planning and implementation, then followed by Germany, Italy and later the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.⁴ Moreover, after the establishment of the European Union, it was keen to include the cultural dimension in its policies and in its international relations with various countries, by providing training, capacity building, and knowledge transfer activities with its regions and with partner countries around the world.⁵ For this reason, the importance of cultural heritage and its relations with the international relations among countries has increased and has attracted the attention of a number of heritage and international relations scholars.

1.3. Definition of Heritage Diplomacy.

Since ancient times, people and things (e.g. national products, monuments, crafts, stones, metals, fine textiles ...) have been considered unofficial agents of diplomacy to present their civilizations and cultures to the others in different countries during their travels around the world. After the World War II, the destruction of great number of tangible cultural heritage, in addition to what was looted during the national and international conflicts led to the emergence of heritage diplomacy and its connection to politics as a kind of movement towards internationalism in politics. The heritage diplomacy was formulated to support the objectives of traditional diplomacy and to serve as a common concept for protecting aspects of culture around the world. Hence, heritage was used to play a role in strengthening relations between many countries, encouraging mutual understanding, and repairing relations by building bridges on the international scene.⁶ This created a kind of close relationship between heritage and international relations among countries, Despite that, researchers in the fields of international relations and political science have not paid much attention to the impact of heritage on diplomacy in the light of globalization.⁷ This was reflected in the lack of agreement on a specific definition of heritage diplomacy among scholars and specialists, whether in the field of heritage or in the field of political science. Scholars differ in defining heritage diplomacy into two groups, while the first group believes that heritage diplomacy is just another name for public diplomacy or cultural diplomacy.⁸ While the second group believes that heritage diplomacy is a different concept, and it is distinguished from other types of diplomacy. The specialists in the second group distinguish between heritage diplomacy

and Cultural diplomacy on the basis that heritage diplomacy is one of the means through which political values are displayed, while cultural diplomacy is used as one of the means to promote cultural political values abroad, and thus obtain a different type of soft power. It is important to recognize that there are many overlapping points between heritage diplomacy and cultural or public diplomacy, but at the same time there is a difference in both aspects and conditions for the two types.⁹ Heritage diplomacy is implemented through several steps and at different levels depending on each case. For example, there are high-level negotiations between state parties regarding preservation decisions such as: working to include the monuments by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the World Heritage List; donations, financing, providing expertise to a country of strategic value; holding exhibitions and display of countries' heritage products as a means of strengthening bilateral ties or repairing damaged relations.¹⁰

According to Tim Winter heritage diplomacy is defined as “*set of processes whereby cultural and natural pasts shared between and across nations become subject to exchanges, collaborations and forms of cooperative governance*”¹¹. Therefore, there are two approaches to understand heritage diplomacy: “heritage in diplomacy” and “heritage as diplomacy”. For further understanding the difference between the two approaches, it is obvious that: “Heritage in Diplomacy” works mainly in endangered heritage sites, to support “universal” heritage values. This situation is evident when a country participates in supporting the heritage within another country, by providing funds, exchanging knowledge and experiences, and conducting negotiations to recognize heritage in another country. While “Heritage as Diplomacy” appears when there is a common heritage between more than one country. In this case heritage is the main driver for finding common ground between different countries, to create joint dialogue at various levels, and to build bridges of communication by identifying the common past, or to put it another way “making the past works to achieve profits to communities affected by conflict”.¹²

II. Challenges before Heritage Diplomacy.

Preserving cultural heritage is all the measures and procedures that are taken to preserve and protect cultural heritage, considering the physical characteristics of cultural heritage; in order to achieve sustainable development for ensuring the preservation of this heritage for current and future generations. The measures of protection include preventive conservation, adaptation, reconstruction, and restoration. There are many challenges facing the preservation of Cultural heritage around the world that the paper will discuss some of them below:¹³

1. **Funding:** Funding is one of the most basic problems that face the preservation of cultural heritage. It is known that many historical sites and buildings are at risk of deterioration or destruction due to lack of financial resources. Therefore, it is important that governments and organizations give priority to financing cultural heritage preservation projects and allocate sufficient resources to protect these historical sites.

2. **Climate Change:** There is no doubt that one of the greatest threats to cultural heritage is climate change. Therefore, climate change has had a major impact on World Heritage sites, both directly through damage resulting from weather changes, but also indirectly through the failure to implement sustainable development and the negative effects of development projects, which increases the vulnerability of World Heritage sites.¹⁴
3. **Public Policy & Governance:** Protecting heritage and appreciating its value is part of the broader field of public policy and governance. For this reason, it is normal to find some differences in points of views about the importance of preserving a particular heritage, which is a natural part of public policy processes. (For example, heritage preservation versus neo-heritage preservation, or a question such as which is the most important development projects or heritage preservation? These problems require radical solutions by using legal means to get government decision.¹⁵
4. **Threat of Extinction:** Exposure to the risk of extinction resulting from theft, vandalism, or even lack of concern for the loss of these heritage treasures, in addition to conflicts of interest among stakeholders. Therefore, the communities should pay attention to protect heritage. Sometimes indigenous people consider their cultural heritage to be uncivilized and an obstacle to their ability to reach “modern society” and economic wealth. Thus, it has become important to create a system that values and respects minority culture, and to work to make local communities aware of the value of their cultural treasures and help them find ways to preserve those treasures.¹⁶

In addition to many of the traditional challenges of heritage preservation at the global level, we find that heritage diplomacy faces another type of challenges, represented by reinterpreting the past to expand the country’s importance in international affairs, while working to increase political ambition under the guise of a discourse of peaceful communication and harmonious dialogue, as in the China Road Silk project. Also among the challenges is the accusation of the centrality of discourse from countries that address other countries, which can be called the return of a colonial mentality when it is viewed as a global guiding principle for international cultural relations, which is evident in the model of the European Union initiative, which includes all 27 European Union countries to preserve heritage diplomacy on a global scale.¹⁷

III. International Experiences in Using Heritage Diplomacy to protect Cultural Heritage around the World.

For a long time, heritage diplomacy has focused on heritage threatened by natural and man-made disasters. In this part of the research paper, the researcher discusses a number of global experiences in heritage diplomacy based on a number of political and social movements, in addition to the interwoven culture around the world. The

difference between models that used heritage in diplomacy and heritage as diplomacy becomes clear here.

3.1. Heritage in Diplomacy:

There are many examples that reflect the heritage in diplomacy between states from a long time. Some of these examples will be mentioned below in detail.

3.1.1. Egypt.

The High Dam of Aswan in Egypt represented a clear paradigm of heritage in diplomacy, many countries (such as: the Netherlands, the United States of America, Italy, Spain...) contributed into the international campaign launched by the UNESCO to save the monuments of Nubia from drowning in the waters of Lake Nasser. It was a campaign to move 22 antiquities in Lower Nubia, in southern Egypt and northern Sudan, between 1960 and 1980. The success of the project, in particular the establishment of a coalition of 50 countries behind the project, led to the establishment of the World Heritage Convention in 1972, and thus to the modern World Heritage site system.¹⁸

Nubia was not the only example of the heritage diplomacy in Egypt. Egypt is the cradle of civilizations and has many monuments and antiques. So, there are many experiences of countries that have contributed to preserving its heritage as one of the means of heritage diplomacy. One of these projects was the project to preserve the Dome of Imam al-Shafi'i. This restoration was funded by the United States (US) Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation with a grant of \$695,000¹⁹, in addition to funding from the United States Embassy in Cairo. Barakat Trust-UK; Netherlands Embassy in Cairo; Prince Claus Fund; And Alif Foundation.²⁰

The project was composed of two stages the 1st stage included:²¹

- *Conservation of dome exterior, including stucco, lead cladding and metal boat finial.*
- *Masonry repair including crack repair, grouting, stone exchange, and repointing.*
- *Conservation of wooden elements and mosaic floor.*
- *Repair and insulation of roofs.*
- *Excavation and repair of subsidence problems.*
- *Conservation of marble cladding.*

While the 2nd stage included:²²

- *Conservation works in the entrance and the corridor to the mosque.*
- *Masonry works.*
- *Conservation of painted wooden ceilings.*
- *Conservation of the dome interior.*
- *Conservation of carved stucco windows.*
- *Conservation of painted wood decoration on the interior surface of the dome.*
- *Conservation of the wooden doors and windows.*

- *Site presentation and lighting.*

The U.S. Charge d'Affaires Thomas Goldberger, during his visits to the project, confirmed that the US pays great attention to heritage diplomacy as a part of its foreign diplomacy with countries by saying “*Cultural heritage is a great way to enhance mutual understanding between people of diverse backgrounds and nations, and it endures as a reminder of the contributions and historical experiences of humanity. We are very proud of our partnership with the Ministry of Antiquities to preserve this important site.*”²³ It is worth noting that Egyptian American cooperation in the field of heritage preservation started since 2003. Egypt has received more than \$1.5 million as a support from the Ambassadors Fund to preserve Egyptian antiquities from various eras.²⁴

3.1.2. Libya:

The Archeological sites and their treasures were one of the main aspects of life that was seriously affected by the military intervention in Libya. Although Libya possesses a huge and unique heritage of antiquities left by various civilizations that were succeeded since prehistoric times until the present day, this distinguished cultural heritage is severely threatened today due to the political and security chaos spreading in the country. Although Colonel Gaddafi was playing a great role in stabilizing his country for a longtime, during his long ruling period, the former president Ghaddafi did not pay a great attention to archeology because he believed that the archeological sites are remains of colonialism.²⁵ But in recent years the news of cultural heritage destruction became the headlines of the news. The destruction of archaeological sites in Libya, Syria and other regions in the Middle East led the head of the UNESCO to declare that these destructions in the conflict zones must be considered as war crimes.²⁶ Although the NATO announced that they did not cause serious damage to the Libyan heritage by adopting the methodology of estimating collateral damage and accurate targeting,²⁷ the country was suffered of the chaos and instability as results of armed conflicts. Therefore, some of the destructions of the Libyan heritage during the armed conflicts will be mentioned below:

- **In 2011:** a valuable collection of coins amounting to about 7700 coins made of gold, silver and bronze was stolen in one of the most important archeological thefts in history. This treasure known as Benghazi treasure dating back to ancient eras, especially the era of Alexander the Great.²⁸
- **In 2012:** extremist militants destroyed a great number of Sufi shrines, graves and mosques including: the Uthman Pasha Madrasa built in 1654 in Tripoli, in the city of Zlitan they attacked the shrines of Al Shaab al Dehman and Abdel Slam el Asmar.²⁹
- **In 2013:** the destruction of the famous shrine of Mourad Agha, the first Othman ruler of Tripoli between 1551 and 1553.³⁰
- **In 2014:** the Othman era Karmanali Mosque was damaged in Tripoli, which led the UNESCO head to condemn these attacks that targeted the Libyan cultural heritage.³¹

Not only does the destruction affect the shrines and mosques, but also extended to many valuable monuments in Libya, such as:

- **In August 2013:** Parts of the necropolis of the UNESCO World heritage site of Cyrene, the ancient Greek city, were destroyed by the farmers there to pave the path for building homes and shops. According to the archeologist Areeg Khatib 200 vaults, tombs and parts of a bridge dating to the 3rd Century were destroyed. Meanwhile, the locals have thrown the artifacts into river.³²
- **In 2014:** the disappearance of a bronze statue that dates to the Italian colonial era. The statue, which is called the gazelle, represented a naked woman caressing a gazelle.³³ Suspicions were directed to the Islamic armed groups in the disappearance of this statue.

The presence of armed groups inside the archaeological sites and the hostilities that were taking place near or inside some of these sites, e.g., archaeological site in Sabratha, led to the continuation of the threats. According to the Italian newspaper “La Stampa”, ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) has found an ally in Italy, where the fundamentalists exchange looted archaeological finds in Sirte for Kalashnikovs and anti-tank RPGs brought by the Calabrian mafia from Moldova and Ukraine thanks to the Russian mafia.³⁴ The matter that made the situation even more difficult was the departure of foreign missions whose presence had contributed to preserving these sites.

Given Libya's unique historical, cultural, and civilizational situation that extends from prehistoric times to the present day, the international community was keen to protect the Libyan heritage. This heritage was subjected to attacks and looting as a result of the political chaos and the security vacuum that followed the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Therefore, this part will discuss some of the efforts made to preserve the Libyan cultural heritage from all concerned parties:

A. On the International level:

1. For protecting Libyan Heritage of all the damage that was caused by the armed conflicts and of the threat of more damage that could be occurred in the future, the World Heritage Committee decided to put five World Heritage sites in Libya on the List of World Heritage in Danger. These sites are: Archaeological site of Cyrene, Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna, Archaeological Site of Sabratha, The Old Town of Ghadames and Rock-Art Sites of Tadrart Acacus. According to the UNESCO, putting these sites on “World Heritage in Danger” will help in getting funds and financial supports to protect them.
2. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) decided to celebrate the World Day for Cultural Diversity for

Dialogue and Development by launching a campaign called “Unite 4 Heritage” in Libya on the 21st of May 2015.

3. In May 2016, several international archaeological experts from various organizations, including: The Libyan Department of Antiquities and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), met in Tunis to design a convenient action plan for protecting the Libyan cultural heritage in cooperation with the different parts of civil society.³⁵
4. In February 2018, the United States of America had signed an agreement with the Libyan government to work together on:³⁶
 - a. Increasing the cooperation between the two countries concerning Libyan heritage for achieving cultural, educational, and scientific goals.
 - b. Encouraging Libya to coordinate with other countries to fight any types of archaeological trade.
 - c. Presenting different type of technical assistances to the Libyan government to protect its heritage.
5. Many universities proposed projects to save and protect Libyan heritage by a scientific method. For example: LAaR: the Libyan Antiquities at Risk, which is a project funded by the Society for Libyan Studies at the University of Leicester, the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund that supported the Training in Action project (TinA) during the period from 2017 to 2019, and the King's College London that had a great role in reducing Libyan heritage damages by cooperating with the Libyan Department of Antiquities to preserve Libyan cultural heritage.
6. Due to the presence of many Roman antiquities in Libya, Italy provided financial support for the protection of Libyan heritage.³⁷

B. On the Regional Level:

1. **The League of Arab States (LAS):** known as Arab league (AL) is the regional organization entrusted with the affairs of the Arab member states. The Arab cultural heritage reflects the civilization of the Arab region, which is the cradle of human civilization. Therefore, the League of Arab States and its institutions are keen to protect the Arab heritage from any damages, because the destruction of any antiquity represents a threat to the disappearance of an entire civilization from the surface of the globe and the obliteration of a historical accumulation of the region. However, the absence of an Arab entity responsible

for preserving and protecting the Arab heritage and antiquities limited the role of the League of Arab States and its affiliated institutions, such as the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science (ALESCO), to conferences and recommendations without actual intervention on the ground. For this reason, during the 7th meeting of the Technical Committee for Arab Tourism that was held in the League of Arab States with the participation of member states in October 2021, the General Authority for Tourism in Libya presented two proposals: the first proposal required to prepare a “guideline for accessible tourism” for people with special needs. The second proposal required to create the “Human Heritage House” project to be a haven for local human communities, which aims to preserve the historical heritage in Libya sustainably and effectively. The recommendations issued by this meeting were submitted to the Executive Office, which in turn submitted it to the Arab Ministerial Council for Tourism in its next session in December 2021 to decide on its approval and action. This gives great hope for a real and tangible Arab role on the ground in the coming period.

2. **The cooperation between Egypt and Libyan government:** Since the beginning of the crisis in Libya, Egypt has been interested in giving a hand to Libya in the field of preserving Libyan heritage and antiquities. For Egypt, the heritage is an integral part of the history and identity of the Arab world. So, the countries should cooperate to avoid what was previously occurred in the Mosul Museum in Iraq by the terrorist organizations. Therefore, in 2013, the Egyptian minister of Antiquities affirmed the desire of Egypt to provide all available capabilities for protecting the cultural and civilizational Libyan heritage. The Egyptian minister met with the Libyan ambassador in Cairo to discuss the different ways to exchange experiences in various fields of archaeological work. Then, in 2015, the Egyptian minister of Antiquities and the Libyan Minister of Culture, Information and Antiquities agreed to cooperate in the fields of joint antiquities and to dispatch Egyptian experts in archaeological work; in order to benefit from their expertise in the fields of restoration and museums by developing work in archaeological sites, establishing archaeological museum stores, excavating underwater antiquities, and training cadres of Libyan archaeologists.³⁸

C. On the National level.

All these exerted efforts made by the international community led to encourage the national authority to preserve its heritage. So, we could say that HD led to increase the awareness of national power to work inside the state itself.

1- Although the Libyan institutions and legislations, throughout their history, have been concerned with cultural heritage, Libya is still lagging in the protection issues on the ground.³⁹ Therefore, when the people decided to write a new constitution to the country in 2014, some points related to antiquities and heritage were proposed. Then, they were written down in the draft constitution issued on 3 February 2016 in Article 35 including:

- a) The state is committed to protecting, preserving, rehabilitating, and excavating antiquities, cities, and historical regions. It is prohibited by the constitution to assault, traffic in, or gift them, in addition to take all the necessary measures to recover what was seized from them. Further all crimes related to heritage do not have a statute of limitations.
- b) The state guarantees the protection of manuscripts, documents, and historical coins, and works to protect and to preserve them from any abuse and tamper. Crimes committed against them do not have a statute of limitations.
- c) In case that a private property is considered as an archaeological nature, the relationship between the stakeholders and the state shall be governed by a special law to guarantee their legitimate rights.

Despite the amendments made to the draft of the constitution, the lawmakers continued their keenness on the Libyan heritage. Therefore, these three points came together in Article No. 29 of the “consensual draft of the constitution” issued on April 16, 2017. In addition, the Article No. 56, which is interested in cultures and languages by guaranteeing the right of individuals and groups to use and learn their languages and participate in cultural life. Further, the state guarantees the protection and promotion of local cultures, heritage, traditional knowledge, literature and arts, and the dissemination of cultural services. Moreover, the Article No. 57 concerning the preservation and protection of private property and not to expropriate it except in the case of the public interest with the provision of fair compensation.⁴⁰

2- The Libyan Antiquities Authority works seriously to bring back the smuggled antiquities in accordance with the international regulations and agreements. Also, the Authority works on managing, preserving, and maintaining archaeological sites, museums, and stores, as well as supervising the excavation of archaeological sites, and preparing practical research and reports related to the Libyan cultural heritage.

- 3- The Libyan embassies, in many western countries, succeeded in cooperation with Libyan experts to return many pieces that were illegally smuggled outside the country during the armed conflicts. For example, in 2019, for the first time, Libya succeeded in getting a group of valuable stolen artifacts that were smuggled to Italy. The pieces included a set of pottery vessels and arrows dating back to prehistoric times.⁴¹ In addition, through continuous diplomatic efforts, Libya received from Austria the head of a rare marble statue of Lady Faustina, daughter of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, and Empress Faustina (the Great), 75 years after it was smuggled out of the country during World War II; The origin of the statue dates to the Antonine era. The Libyan embassy in Austria had succeeded in recovering the statue from the International Museum in Graz, in the presence of ambassadors and officials from both sides.⁴² Many countries, including Britain and the US, handed over to the Libyan authorities some of the precious artifacts, and the country prevented other pieces that were on their way to be smuggled out.

- 4- the Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord signed the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Libya. The authority identified that this convention aims to preserve oral traditions and expressions, including language, viewing arts, social practices, rituals, and festive events, in addition to knowledge and practices related to nature and the universe, as well as skills associated with traditional craft industries. Moreover, the convention obligates the states to take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage existing on their territories, and to prepare two lists, the first representing the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and the second for the intangible cultural heritage that needs urgent safeguarding work. It is worth noting that the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in October 2003, entered into force in April 2006, and Libya is considered as the 181st country to ratify it.⁴³

- 5- Although some people exploit the state of security liquidity in Libya for personal gains, there are citizens who willingly hand over antiques they find, or that were in their possession.

- 6- Many Libyans launched several campaigns on social media to protect the cultural heritage in Libya, such as: the campaign to protect the Libyan heritage (Save the Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies and its archives), the (Heritage for All) campaign, and many other campaigns.

3.2. Heritage as Diplomacy.

It is worth noting that at the political level, the use of “heritage as diplomacy” is more important than “heritage in diplomacy.”⁴⁴

3.2.1. Sufi Poet Rumi

The importance of the “Heritage as Diplomacy” is clear in the using of Turkey and Iran to their culture and heritage as a platform for expanding their soft powers in the Middle East, the Balkans, Central and Southeast Asia, as well as the Caucasus. This example is evident in the two countries’ relationship with the Sufi poet Rumi, who was born in Iran and moved to Turkey, where he founded his school and was buried there. Many countries, including Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan, thus claim Rumi as their own, and this ownership is seen as a means of national branding, a soft power projection, which means that Rumi became cultural brand to Iran and Turkey. Therefore, this case is considered as a transnational state of heritage used in politics as international power.⁴⁵

3.2.2. The Pantun

Meanwhile, the Pantun, which is a form of Malay verse used to express intricate ideas, thoughts and emotions⁴⁶, is considered as heritage diplomacy between Indonesia and Malaysia. This has led to many disputes between the two countries and strained relations between them, because each country wants to keep this cultural heritage for itself to gain political interests on all levels whether regionally or internationally. In 2017, the two countries succeeded in registering the pantun as a joint cultural heritage with UNESCO. Then, the UNESCO considered the pantun as the world's intangible cultural heritage that come from Indonesia and Malaysia together. This achievement played a great role in strengthening the role of Indonesia and Malaysia in ASEAN as great countries that cooperated together to protect a shared cultural heritage.⁴⁷

IV. Future of Heritage Sites in the light of Heritage Diplomacy as Soft Power.

In the twenty-first century, with the development of globalization concept and its practices, the international arena has become larger, and more complicated than it was in the past. In fact, art is such a powerful medium that it has such an intense impact on people through cultural events, art exhibitions, music festivals, archaeological sites, architectural monuments, among others. Therefore, it is an essential pillar of international strategies to influence the population of other countries using persuasion and attraction instead of using violence and military force.⁴⁸ For this reason the importance of the concept of soft power is becoming more important than any other century in mankind history. especially with the international conflicts that destroy many archaeological sites. There is no doubt that economic power may constitute a tool for pressure from external countries and international governmental organizations, which have various geopolitical motives, during the reconstruction of

cultural heritage in the post-conflict phase through financing reconstruction. In this case, heritage becomes a “soft power” tool to build their influence and establish their position as guardians and preservers of cultural heritage. So, paying attention to all factors related to soft power, whether history, civilization, culture, art and heritage, is extremely important for the future and must be part of the checklist for decision-makers and officials in the future.⁴⁹

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, heritage scholars have paid increasing attention to heritage diplomacy due to the launch of many political initiatives and policies around the world that work to strengthen the relationship between cultural heritage and diplomacy. The main initiatives are 1- China's Belt and Road Initiative launched in 2013 and 2- The EU document “Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations” published in 2016. These initiatives will be discussed in detail in this part as a paradigm to protect heritage through heritage diplomacy in the 21st Century.⁵⁰

4.1. China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2013.

China is a major contributor to the development of global communications, transportation, and infrastructure. It also plays a major role in promoting the importance of international cooperation, as it is clearly evident from its Belt and Road Initiative or the largest infrastructure project in human history. The Belt and Road Initiative is one of the global strategies for infrastructure development, which is built on the ruins of the Silk Road in the nineteenth century; in order to connect China with the world. China designed this initiative, which is considered as a cornerstone of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's foreign policy, in 2013 to make investments with more than 150 countries and international organizations. It is a plan that will link different routes and continent and, most importantly, would advance China's interest through cooperation with other states.⁵¹ By examining the Belt and Road Initiative, the researcher found that it is a key element in the strategy of “big-state diplomacy” adopted by Xi Jinping, which urges China to assume a greater leadership role in global affairs consistent with its power and rising status. It is worth noting that since August 2023, 155 countries have signed the Belt and Road Initiative, representing around of 75% of the world's population and representing more than half of the global GDP.⁵² The importance of studying this initiative is due to what is expected it will take heritage diplomacy to a completely new level.⁵³ The most important effect of the heritage diplomacy that it will help many other states in conserving their heritage by providing different technical (such as technology transfer, capacity building, or institutional support,...)⁵⁴. Undoubtedly, China's grand strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative, is a model that urges openness, connectivity, cooperation and harmony, as well as transforming the OSCE and the world at large. This initiative will work to overcome conflicts and disputes between countries to achieve all projects, that will grow within a framework of continuous cooperation, harmony, economic growth and infrastructure development, which lack direct or indirect support from many countries

and entities, whether in Europe or anywhere else in the entire world.⁵⁵ Finally, for achieving heritage diplomacy it is important for all international partners to recognize the cultural context of each country and how to find common ways to cooperate to preserve this human heritage.⁵⁶

4.2. The EU document “Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations” in 2016.

The Chinese initiative has encouraged many countries and other entities to be interested in working together and cooperating in many projects, at the heart of which is heritage preservation. It's well known that since the establishment of the European Union, the culture has been one of the main pillars of the European agenda in the external relations of the European Union. The European Union is one of the most important financiers of cultural projects, not only in European countries, but also in Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Asia. This is done by supporting intercultural dialogue and various cultural and heritage diplomatic activities. The support provided by the European Union to the Anna Lindh Foundation in the southern Mediterranean is a strong model of how culture and heritage influence the foreign policy of the European Union. This concern for the cultural and heritage aspect is confirmed by the statements of officials in the European Union. According to the EU High Representative and Vice-President Federica Mogherini *"Culture has to be part and parcel of our foreign policy. Culture is a powerful tool to build bridges between people, notably the young, and reinforce mutual understanding. It can also be an engine for economic and social development. As we face common challenges, culture can help all of us, in Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, stand together to fight radicalisation and build an alliance of civilisations against those trying to divide us. This is why cultural diplomacy must be at the core of our relationship with today's world."*⁵⁷ Meanwhile the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, said: *"Culture is the hidden gem of our foreign policy. It helps to promote dialogue and mutual understanding. Culture is therefore crucial in building long-term relationships with countries across the whole world: it has a great role to play in making the EU a stronger global actor."*⁵⁸ Therefore, the European Union was keen to create a platform for cultural diplomacy in February 2016, to focus on strategic countries. This new strategy is supported by a cooperation of cultural institutes in member states, in addition to a number of other partners, to provide appropriate policy advice, as well as facilitate communication, carry out activities with cultural stakeholders, and develop training programs for cultural leaders.

Conclusion

Although there are not many studies concerned with heritage diplomacy in light of the rise of globalization and the rise of non-Western countries on the political scene and their role in the new world order, using heritage to build and brand the nation has become a common practice for governments around the world. For this reason, there is no doubt that heritage is become a very important tool of soft power

that countries must pay attention to in order to influence others through it. Not only does heritage play a role of marketing commodity for culture, but because it can gather people together through their shared past, which contribute to redefining the nation's identity and determining the form of relations with other countries.

Despite that there are many challenges that threaten heritage diplomacy, there are many international experiences that express diplomacy in heritage, which involves politics in heritage, whether through bilateral or tripartite relations between countries or through diplomacy as heritage, which reflects countries with a common heritage and the trial to reach cooperation and acceptance from everyone to accept that they share the same heritage. It is worth noting that the future belongs to cultural heritage and heritage diplomacy. So, there are many major international projects such as the Silk Road Initiative, as well as the heritage strategy of the European Union countries.

Therefore, the increasing use of the concept of heritage and its importance in the field of international politics requires increased attention from academic scholars in the two fields, especially the political field, to evaluate the relationship between heritage and power in order to create a new perception of the relationship between the two fields. This is done by emphasizing that heritage is a soft power, which gives a deeper understanding of the political dynamics of heritage and cultural diplomacy.

دبلوماسية التراث كأداة لحماية التراث الثقافي

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ملخص

تعد دبلوماسية التراث مجالاً جديداً نسبياً يربط دراسات التراث بدراسات العلاقات الدولية. فهي تلعب دوراً محورياً في تعزيز العلاقات السياسية والاقتصادية والثقافية بين دول العالم. في ضوء تزايد نسبة الصراعات والنزاعات المسلحة حول العالم، أصبح من المهم إيجاد مساحة للحديث عن التراث المشترك للبشرية، بعيداً عن ذكريات الاستعمار السابق والمصالح الجيوسياسية الحالية. وبما أن التراث يعتبر الذاكرة التراكمية للإنسانية، التي تعكس هويات المجتمعات وقيمها، يرى العديد من الخبراء أن دبلوماسية التراث لديها القدرة على بناء علاقات دولية تعتمد على الحوار بين الثقافات المختلفة؛ من أجل تحقيق التفاهم المتبادل من خلال العمل الجماعي والمنافع المتبادلة بين جميع الأطراف لتحقيق السلم والأمن الدوليين. ومن هنا تصبح الدبلوماسية جزءاً لا يتجزأ من تكوين التراث، خاصة في المناطق التي عانت من العنف أو الاضطرابات السياسية، سواء في الماضي أو الحاضر. ولذلك، تناقش هذه الورقة السؤال الرئيسي: "كيف يتم استخدام دبلوماسية التراث كأداة لحماية التراث الثقافي؟". أولاً، من خلال تحديد مفهوم دبلوماسية التراث. ثانياً، دراسة التحديات التي تواجه دبلوماسية التراث. ثالثاً، عرض عدد من التجارب الدولية السابقة التي استخدمت دبلوماسية التراث لحماية التراث الثقافي حول العالم. وأخيراً، دراسة مستقبل حماية المواقع التراثية في ضوء الدبلوماسية كأحد أدوات القوة الناعمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دبلوماسية التراث – التراث الثقافي – القوة الناعمة – التراث المادي – المواقع الأثرية.

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