A Timeless Grammar of Iconoclasm?[1]

Review of:

Kristine Kolrud and Marina Prusac (eds), *Iconoclasm From Antiquity to Modernity*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, 248 pages, 29 b&w illustrations, hardback, ISBN 978-1-4094-7033-5, £60.00

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Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity is one of several recent contributions to scholarship on the subject of iconoclasm, deploying a particularly broad set of historical approaches that present 'different perspectives on the understanding of the term in relation to various episodes of image destruction'.[2] The volume provides case studies from Antiquity to the early modern era, but also considers in its penultimate chapter how twentieth-century examples might shape our understandings of earlier iconoclastic traditions. The volume explores diverse methodologies and historical periods in a similar manner to *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms* (eds Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay), *Negating the Image, case studies in iconoclasm* (eds Anne McClanan and Jeffrey Johnson), and more recently, *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present* (eds Stacy Boldrick, Leslie Brubaker and Richard Clay). Seemingly, the publication of *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity* is the result of a conference held in 2009 at the University of Oslo. The editors, Kristine Kolrud – a research fellow in the History of Art at the Centre for Medieval Studies at Stockholm University, and Marina Prusac – an Associate Professor of Classical Archaeology, and Keeper of the Egypt and Antiquity Collections at the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, successfully present a cross-disciplinary volume about iconoclastic practices. While a wide range of examples and perspectives are explored, the editors point out that 'all of the contributors predominantly understand iconoclasm as the destruction or alteration of images or objects imbued with some kind of symbolic value'.[3]

The introduction to the volume notes that 'a central question is the distinction between iconoclasm and other forms of destruction' but, in referring to Dario Gamboni's work it is highlighted that 'the present volume is not so much a

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[1] Dario Gamboni, 'Image to Destroy, Indestructible Image' in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds), *Iconoclash: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art*, Cambridge, Mass and London: MIT Press, 2002, 89. The introduction to the volume refers to Gamboni's reluctance to suggest that the recurrence of several traits relating to iconoclastic acts means that a 'timeless grammar of iconoclasm exists', while the editors state that 'certain common denominators do exist', Kristine Kolrud and Marina Prusac, 'Introduction – Whose Iconoclasm?' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 3.
[2] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction', 1.
[3] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction', 1.

question of the boundaries between vandalism and iconoclasm as what kind of ideological motives or intentions may be said to pertain to iconoclastic attacks'.[4] Gamboni is certainly mindful of the terms associated not only with 'iconoclasm' but also with regards to the objects whose physical treatment is under scrutiny, noting that 'we are required to be watchful of labels such as 'work of art', 'image', 'monument' or 'cultural object' given that such categories can be used 'as a means to claim or deny protection, to condemn or justify destruction'.[5] Like Gamboni, in consideration of the terminology used to describe destruction, Richard Clay has demonstrated that 'vandalism' is too pejorative, suggesting that historians have increasingly opted to use 'iconoclasm' as a less loaded alternative. However, as Clay has noted, the term 'iconoclasm', nevertheless, 'constrains the field of study' with its focus on images (icons) and he suggests instead interpreting iconoclastic acts 'in terms of remaking and semiosis' and not just as breaking (clasm).[6] The editors of *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity* make it clear that the term iconoclasm is, of course, subject to varied interpretations, particularly in different cultural traditions, but that the volume distinguishes itself from the more 'radical uses of the term', focusing on 'the actual or potential transformation of the object'.[7] Like Gamboni, and, more recently, as explored by Jaś Elsner, the contributors are concerned with the *longue durée* practices of iconoclasm.[8] The volume 'attempts to shed new light on the term itself and related expressions, as well as how our understanding of the definition may change in accordance with contemporary events'.[9]

Louis Réau devised various categories of destruction, referring to the *psychologie des vandales*.[10] However, as Clay has argued, Réau's observations and judgements regarding so-called vandalism were 'informed by modern discourses about art that identify objects belonging to that privileged category as deserving to be treated as if they were autonomous of struggles of the wider world'.[11] Like Gamboni and Clay, Bruno Latour avoided the use of "vandalism" by coining the neologism 'iconoclash', taking the emphasis away from '-breaking' (*eikon* – image, *klastes* – breaking) and connoting instead uncertainty or tension.[12] The editors of *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity* acknowledge that 'the exhibition and exhibition catalogue, *Iconoclash*, edited by Latour and Peter Weibel, have made a

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[4] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction', 2.

[5] Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: iconoclasm and vandalism since the French Revolution*, London: Reaktion, 1997, 11.

[6] See Richard Clay, 'Introduction - Contested objects, contested terms' in Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, 5.

[7] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction', 2.

[8] See Jaś Elsner, 'Iconoclasm as discourse: From Antiquity to Byzantium', *The Art Bulletin*, 94:3, 2012, 368-94.

[9] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction', 9.

[10] Louis Réau, *Histoire du Vandalisme: Les monuments détruits de l'art français, Tome I, Du haut moyen âge au dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris: Hachette, 1959, 16.

[11] Richard Clay, *Iconoclasm in Revolutionary Paris: the transformation of signs*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2012, 2.

[12] Bruno Latour, 'What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World Beyond the Image Wars?' in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds), *Iconoclash: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art*, 14.

decisive impact on approaches to the subject', noting Latour's suggestion to group 'iconoclasts according to their general attitudes towards images'.[13] Also, in contrast to Réau's somewhat pejorative categorisations, Latour and Weibel posed a series of questions such as 'why do images trigger so much furor?', 'why are images so ambiguous?' and 'why is destruction necessary for construction?' which facilitated cross-historical debates between scholars of religion, science and art.[14] In Latour's opening chapter he asked 'what has happened that has made images (and by the image we mean any sign, work of art, inscription, or picture that acts as a mediation to access something else) the focus of so much passion?'[15] By way of a contrast, this volume's conclusion by Siri Sande questions whether, in 2011, during a political demonstration in Rome when apparent representatives from the Black Bloc smashed a crucifix and a statue of the Virgin Mary, the acts could be considered as examples 'of violent iconoclasm' or 'sheer vandalism'.[16] She suggests that 'there probably always will be a certain amount of vandals among the religiously inflamed crowd', which seems not too far removed from Réau's judgemental categorisations.[17]

Leslie Brubaker has offered another valuable alternative term to apply to such historically and historiographically contested actions. She has explained that the term 'iconoclasm' is a modern hybrid applied to the Byzantines, which has misconstrued understandings of the image struggles from the period.[18] Brubaker notes that, instead, Byzantines referred to 'iconoclasts' (someone opposed to idols) and 'iconophiles' (someone in favour of icons), naming the debates about images 'iconomachy' (image struggles).[19] Indeed, iconomachy is more appropriate to the evidence regarding actual image destruction from this period. As noted by Brubaker, material evidence and accounts written by pro-image Byzantines are both unreliable indications of actual image breaking. As shown above with regards to Réau, the historiography on iconoclasm can also be biased. Thus, iconomachy is a useful way of thinking about all discussions of iconoclastic acts, regardless of the period in question and particularly when considering the author's viewpoint.

Eberhard Sauer opens *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity* with his chapter 'Disabling Demonic Images: Regional Diversity in Ancient Iconoclasts' Motives and Targets'. His emphasis is on material evidence which, although scant and problematic, provides important observations regarding iconoclasm in Antiquity, a particularly underexplored area in studies on iconoclasm. From this, he explores potential motives for destruction. While Sauer's Post Script points to the emergence of new research in this area he argues that his work responds to a gap in scholarship

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[13] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction', 3; see Latour, 'What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World Beyond the Image Wars?', 26.

[14] See Latour, 'What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World Beyond the Image Wars?' 14.

[15] Latour, 'What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World Beyond the Image Wars?' 14.

[16] Siri Sande, 'Conclusion: Iconoclasm in History and Present-day Use of Images' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 171.

[17] Sande, 'Conclusion: Iconoclasm in History and Present-day Use of Images', 171.

[18] Leslie Brubaker, 'Making and Breaking Images and Meaning in Byzantium and Early Islam' in Boldrick, Brubaker and Clay (eds), *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013, 18.

[19] Brubaker, 'Making and Breaking Images and Meaning in Byzantium and Early Islam', 18.

caused by a 'lack in evidence of the destruction of pagan symbols', noting that the geographical focus of the few published studies is particularly narrow.[20] Therefore, Sauer's comparison of regional variations is helpful in evaluating varied responses to pagan images. As the author states, 'within studies of the Christianisation of the Roman and medieval world', commentary is mostly confined to 'Christian art and architecture'.[21] He also outlines the problem of material evidence and the reliability of written sources when investigating early examples of iconoclasm. With a view to the volume's later focus on modern examples of iconoclasm, Sauer highlights that 'Egyptian and Athenian iconoclasts, as well as their counterparts at Hawarte, robbed the images of their ability to see and act. They did not consider them empty shells, but to possess dangerous demonic powers and the ability to use their limbs and eyes, and in this they differed from modern image-haters'.[22] Sauer's comments are perhaps indicative of the potential problems with a cross-historical approach based on identifying motives and chimes with Eric Reinders and Fabio Rambelli's 2007 observation that 'intention is a category of interpretation, not authorship', or in Tom Gretton's words, intentions are almost always 'retrodictive fictions'.[23] But, perhaps Sauer is right to avoid exploring what James Simpson has referred to as the 'bog of intentionality', focusing instead on the recurring theme of memory that is prevalent in studies of iconoclasm.[24]

Nevertheless, Sauer's contribution highlights the problem in determining whether archaeological fragments have resulted from intentional destruction by human hand or accidental damage. His comparison of regional differences leads to his conclusion that 'while all Christian iconoclasts will have been led by the Old Testament's hostility to paganism in general and pagan art in particular, the manner and focus of destruction differed, depending on the individual perpetrator'.[25] He suggests that the mode of destruction helps to offer a clue to the motives behind it and discusses 'evidence for disapproval of displays of nudity', where statues from public baths only had their genitalia removed, contrasting this example with a statuette of Dionysus that had been reused as a holy water flask, where Sauer suggests that the owner 'seems to have had no objections against nudity in art', only adding Christian monograms to the statuette.[26] Similarly, Réau referred to *le*

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[20] Eberhard W. Sauer, 'Disabling Demonic Images: Regional Diversity in Ancient Iconoclasts' Motives and Targets' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 15.

[21] Sauer, 'Disabling Demonic Images: Regional Diversity in Ancient Iconoclasts' Motives and Targets', 15.

[22] Sauer, 'Disabling Demonic Images: Regional Diversity in Ancient Iconoclasts' Motives and Targets', 17.

[23] See Fabio Rambelli and Eric Reinders, 'What does iconoclasm create? What does preservation destroy? Reflections on iconoclasm in East Asia', 19 and Tom Gretton, 'Clastic icons: prints taken from broken or reassembled blocks in some 'popular prints' of the Western tradition', 149 in *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*.

[24] This pithy comment was made at the 'Iconoclasms' round table event that was convened by Professor Leslie Brubaker and hosted by Dumbarton Oaks (Harvard) in 2011.

[25] Sauer, 'Disabling Demonic Images: Regional Diversity in Ancient Iconoclasts' Motives and Targets', 31.

[26] Sauer, 'Disabling Demonic Images: Regional Diversity in Ancient Iconoclasts' Motives and Targets', 21.

vandalisme pudibond (prudish vandalism) - material transformations caused by moral outrage rather than religion, and cited several examples of nude figures in paintings and sculptures that had been defaced or destroyed throughout history.[27] It is worth noting that the sites of display mentioned by Réau included places of worship and public spaces such as museums or theatres. Could the space of display explain why Sauer's examples of the treatment of nude figures differed?

Sauer expands the study of iconoclasm beyond the treatment of images and architecture. He discusses sacred trees and venerated fires, both of which held prominent positions in the landscape and were treated in a similar way to pagan figurative images. He notes that a study of iconoclasm would by definition exclude both examples, which would suggest that the destruction of images should not be isolated from wider visual transformations. Indeed, Henry Chapman and Benjamin Gearey have discussed intentional breaking with regards to the prehistoric landscape, arguing that its alteration would have been meaningful to a social grouping for whom the divine resided within that environment, particularly with reference to tree clearances.[28] Also, Kristine Kolrud's essay in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity* explores the purging of both the church and the surrounding landscape in relation to the seventeenth-century Waldensian residents in the Duchy of Savoy.

Within this cross-disciplinary volume, it would have been helpful to the reader if there had been further interaction between individual essays. In the following chapter, Marina Prusac points out that her contribution 'addresses the metaphysical aspect of the images or idols which attracted and exposed them to violent actions rather than the attacks per se, which are described by Eberhard Sauer in the previous chapter'.[29] Her essay, '*Presence* and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD' suggests that 'the relocation of pagan sculpture from sacred to secular places may have been regarded as a way of neutralising the '*presence'* of the divine images'.[30] Notably, like Sauer, Prusac refers to sculptures in public baths that had been mutilated, mostly in their vital organs, in particular the genitals, 'which in ancient times had been a symbol that was believed to offer protection'.[31] As a reader, it would have been interesting to know Sauer's response to Prusac's observations and whether they had any bearing on his own case study, particularly given his comments regarding the varied responses to nude figures.

Prusac states her awareness of the complex and changing relationship between images and religious beliefs, situating her argument in relation to Jaś

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[27] Réau, *Histoire du Vandalisme*, 21.

[28] Henry Chapman and Benjamin Gearey, 'Iconoclasm in European Prehistory? Breaking Objects and Landscapes' in *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*, 32. Also it is worth comparing Sauer's and Chapman and Gearey's examples to Ramon Sarró's discussion of the symbolic removal of trees in West African villages during the twentieth century, see 'Hermetic huts and the modern state: the politics of iconoclasm in West Africa' in *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*, 261-277.

[29] Marina Prusac, 'Presence and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 41.

[30] Prusac, 'Presence and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD', 49.

[31] Prusac, 'Presence and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD', 50.

Elsner's approach to ancient image traditions and their controversies.[32] Prusac considers the changing use of images in direct relation to the legal status of Christianity. Her essay remarks that '*presence'* was of fundamental importance to the ways in which certain images were banned and others worshipped in the fourth century. Prusac notes Ambrose's comment that 'it was sacrilege to keep sculptures of individuals subjected to *damnatio memoriae*, for they could be used as focal points for the forces of opposition, conspiracy and usurpation. Such stances demonstrate political reasons for the destruction of images other than religious'.[33] This raises the question of how societies respond to the fragments of past cultures. Prusac highlights that there are 'several examples of Christian collectors of pagan art, and archaeological material demonstrates that the social elite and art collectors sometimes saved art pieces from the lime kilns'.[34] Her observation shows that discussions on iconoclasm have been shaped not only by what has been destroyed, but also by what has been preserved, which resonates with numerous instances of cultural change. For example, James Simpson has discussed the Enlightenment museum as 'the place where images are protected from the iconoclast's hammer', with the public institution taking on the role of the private art collector as protector and promoter of taste.[35] In a similar way, the Christian collectors of pagan sculptures have shaped understandings of iconoclasm, demonstrating that destruction is often accompanied by contemporaneous preservation.

Prusac's example of the Christian collector of pagan statues and the potential destruction of those objects during later religious tensions can be compared to Bente Kiilerich's essay, 'Defacement and Replacement as Political Strategies in Ancient and Byzantine Ruler Images'. Kiilerich proposes that the mass media's exposure of Saddam Hussein's headless statue tumbling combined with public punishments of his effigies, can be viewed within a longer tradition in Iraq/Mesopotamia wherein statues had substituted the real body of the leader since the Roman and Byzantine periods.[36] In this way, she discusses examples of *damnatio memoriae* with regards to figurative sculptures and notes some of the parallels between Roman practice and late Antique and Byzantine uses of portraits. She also considers the Arch of Constantine in Rome as an example of 'a sort of endless semiosis', with several layers of reuse and transformation throughout the centuries.[37] Kiilerich's essay demonstrates the difficulties in identifying precise moments of defacement when examining material evidence, noting that in some cases it is difficult to establish whether damage to the arch dates from the fourteenth or sixteenth century. Kiilerich suggests that reuse and some examples of erasure and replacement are ideologically charged. Whereas, she describes defacement without replacement as a 'negative and

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[32] Prusac, 'Presence and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD', 42; see Elsner, 'Iconoclasm as discourse: From Antiquity to Byzantium'.

[33] Prusac, 'Presence and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD', 48.

[34] Prusac, 'Presence and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD', 50.

[35] James Simpson, 'Iconoclasm and the Enlightenment Museum' in *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*, 114.

[36] For a comparison of the treatment of statues of kings see Clay's discussion in *Iconoclasm in Revolutionary Paris: the transformation of signs*, 152-195.

[37] Bente Kiilerich, 'Defacement and Replacement as Political Strategies in Ancient and Byzantine Ruler Images' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 65.

iconoclastic act', noting the importance of the visible empty space.[38] Kiilerich suggests that there is a clear distinction between transformed images and absences, which is appropriate to both the material evidence of destruction and discourses on iconoclasm. Her observation seems to indicate that examples of replacement correspond with what could be described as iconophilia, or the continuity of a particular regime or institution, while absences signify a fundamental break, which is an idea explored in the following essay.

Anne Karahan's chapter, 'Byzantine Iconoclasm: Ideology and Quest for Power', engages with the controversy regarding images. She posits the Byzantine debates in relation to modern sensitivities regarding powerful images, noting that certain images evoke emotions and sensations within human beings and have the potential to remain in memory. This chapter addresses the process of theorising representation, as manifested through iconomachy – the term referred to by Brubaker as noted above. She also considers the social implications of arguments between iconophiles and iconoclasts in that the controversy involved the distribution of power, as well as political and religious ideology.[39] She argues that such debates allowed for the questioning of individual emperors as men, rather than the institution or concept of empire, which could be represented visually through replacement, as discussed in Kiilerich's essay. Karahan provides a useful overview of the theological debates regarding images and draws from Brubaker and John Haldon's work to highlight that imperial intervention politicised debates in support of iconoclasm.[40] She also cites Peter Brown's comment that 'iconoclasm was a tool to reaffirm the official and central religious authority of the Church over the holy man and his associate, the icon'.[41] Therefore, she proposes that 'holy images are neither decoration nor art, in a modern sense, or proper symbols, but didactic theology'.[42]

Thomas Noble's essay 'Neither Iconoclasm nor Iconodulia: the Carolingian *Via Media*' presents the 'quieter dispositions' of 'iconophobia and iconophilia'.[43] Noble's comment that Carolingians 'never lapsed into iconoclasm or iconodulia' can be compared with other seemingly 'quiet' periods in the histories of iconoclasm. He describes this attitude as a *via media*, or middle ground, with the Carolingians

[38] Kiilerich, 'Defacement and Replacement as Political Strategies in Ancient and Byzantine Ruler Images', 60.

[39] Anne Karahan, 'Byzantine Iconoclasm: Ideology and Quest for Power' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 87. For further discussion of reuse and replacement, see Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (eds), *Reuse Value: spolia and appropriation in art and architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

[40] See Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c.680-850): The Sources, an Annotated Survey*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman monographs 7, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

[41] Karahan, 'Byzantine Iconoclasm: Ideology and Quest for Power', 87; see Peter Brown, 'A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy', *English Historical Review*, 88:346, 1973, 1-34.

[42] Karahan, 'Byzantine Iconoclasm: Ideology and Quest for Power', 89.

[43] Thomas Noble, 'Neither Iconoclasm nor Iconodulia: The Carolingian *Via Media*' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 95.

considering it 'heretical either to worship or destroy works of art'.[44] Noble comments that the 'Carolingians insisted that the Byzantines did not understand the difference between an image and an idol, whereas they did', offering an insightful consideration of the *longue durée* discourses on iconoclasm.[45] Just as the pro-image Byzantines portrayed a negative representation of the iconoclasts, the Carolingians conveyed the Byzantines as ignorant, which echoes Gamboni's argument that 'ignorance is a key concept in the stigmatization of iconoclasm'.[46] Similarly, Clay has noted that the term 'vandalism' was coined and used by the post-Terror government in Republican France because of its etymological reference to the Germanic tribe, the Vandals, who sacked Rome in the first millennium, signifying to the educated classes, 'the damage of objects of aesthetic and/or historical value' as barbaric.[47] Noble comments that he is 'inclined to think that, at least where religious art is concerned, there must be iconodulia for there to be iconoclasm', which is certainly supported by modern instances of iconoclasm in art galleries, albeit an aspect not explored in this volume's modern case studies.[48] Noble points out that 'Carolingian writers simply did not believe that images were beyond mere pictures, and they denied that images could actually do anything', indicating that the relationship between discourse and subsequent acts of iconoclasm deserves further attention.[49] His discussion of the Carolingian response to Byzantine iconoclasm is a useful way of thinking about who is responsible for writing histories of image-breaking and what their agenda might be with regards to their own society.

In 'Iconoclasm and Religious Images in the Early Lutheran Tradition' Tarald Ramussen offers a concise and informative discussion of the relationship between image and text during the Protestant Reformation. Ramussen considers the theological support for the removal of images, sculptures and, indeed, other objects related to worship. He notes that on the one hand, Andreas Karlstadt defended iconoclasm based on a literal reading of Scripture, while on the other, Luther concluded that iconoclasm is to be rejected.[50] Ramussen suggests that 'Reformation Iconoclasm' is an anachronism, drawing on Hans Belting's observation that 'the status of the religious image was fundamentally changed […] the iconoclastic actions of the Reformation were most often not directed against the status of the images as images, but against what they represented: against their 'execution of

[44] Karahan, 'Byzantine Iconoclasm: Ideology and Quest for Power', 98.

[45] Karahan, 'Byzantine Iconoclasm: Ideology and Quest for Power', 99.

[46] Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution*, 13.

[47] Clay, *Iconoclasm in Revolutionary Paris: the transformation of signs*, 1; see also Bronislaw Baczko, *Ending the terror: the French Revolution after Robespierre*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

[48] Noble, 'Neither Iconoclasm nor Iconodulia: The Carolingian *Via Media*', 103. For examples of attacks in art galleries see Gamboni, 'Image to Destroy, Indestructible Image', in *Iconoclash*, 120-128.

[49] Noble, 'Neither Iconoclasm nor Iconodulia: The Carolingian *Via Media*', 102.

[50] Tarald Ramussen, 'Iconoclasm and Religious Images in the Early Lutheran Tradition' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 110.

power and occupation of the public sphere in the name of images, or in reality: with the help of images''.[51]

Ramussen notes that in the early modern period access to religious images in the private sphere increased with printed Sermons being accompanied by images. He argues that, the image was 'no longer only connected to the edifices of the religious elites (churches and monasteries)', but increasingly, 'religious images became part of the individual religious life of the inhabitants of the cities'.[52] He points out that cultic images were rejected by the Protestant Reformers, either by iconoclasm or by neglect, whereas, 'the word, distributed in printed books, gave them [a] kind of direct access to the holy'.[53] Thus, the debates regarding religious images were about temporal authorities negotiating a relationship between God and believers, and, implicitly, between believers.

Ramussen highlights that Protestants had a particular affinity to epitaphs, wherein portraits of the deceased were intended to strengthen faith and those depicting religious heroes of Lutheranism had a commemorative function.[54] This led to the commemoration of a wider community of the faithful, which extended beyond royalty, archbishops and popes, to include local clergy, lower nobility and other outstanding persons. Epitaphs 'replaced late medieval altars and images for the cult of the saints, which had earlier been attacked by the iconoclasts'.[55] In this way, the essay relates back to earlier discussions of defacement and replacement in the Byzantine period.[56] There is also a parallel to be drawn with eighteenth-century Protestant culture in Britain, where, as has been explored by Matthew Craske, the erection of 'pantheon-like monuments commemorating individuals of national significance in Westminster Abbey was an attempt to rectify the destruction wrought by past religious "enthusiasm"', referring to the Reformation.[57]

Ramussen's discussion of the appropriate use of images by Reformers is a theme continued in Andrew Spicer's essay 'Iconoclasm on the Frontier: Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1566'. In a similar tradition to Luther and the Carolingians discussed in Noble's essay, Spicer notes that 'in spite of Calvin's attack on religious imagery and educating the faithful through sermons and the catechism, the Genevan Reformer

[51] Ramussen, 'Iconoclasm and Religious Images in the Early Lutheran Tradition', 112; see Hans Belting, *Das echte Bild: Bildfragen als Glaubensfragen*, Munich: Verlag C.H.Beck, 2005.

[52] Ramussen, 'Iconoclasm and Religious Images in the Early Lutheran Tradition', 112. Also, examples explored in *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms* include spaces of 'an ever changing area of human activity – collective meaning-making' with certain public spaces mediating relationships between leaders and followers, from Clay, 'Introduction – contested objects, contested terms', 6.

[53] Ramussen, 'Iconoclasm and Religious Images in the Early Lutheran Tradition', 114.

[54] Ramussen, 'Iconoclasm and Religious Images in the Early Lutheran Tradition', 115.

[55] Ramussen, 'Iconoclasm and Religious Images in the Early Lutheran Tradition', 115.

[56] See Kiilerich's essay, 'Defacement and Replacement as Political Strategies in Ancient and Byzantine Ruler Images' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity.*

[57] Matthew Craske, 'Westminster Abbey 1720-70: a public pantheon built upon private interest' in Richard Wrigley and Craske (eds), *Pantheons: transformations of a monumental idea*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, 60.

condemned iconoclasm'.[58] As considered above in relation to Noble's essay, Spicer's example also relates to the disparity between who condemns images through words and who carries out their removal, defacement or destruction. Spicer notes that 'the removal of religious imagery was not the responsibility of the ordinary people but the lawfully ordained authorities'.[59] Similarly, in *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*, Matthew Hunter's discussion of English Reformation iconoclasm in economic terms (or what he calls "econoclasm") suggested that idolatrous intent, that is, an excess of material goods in churches, signified 'laxity and poor household management by ecclesiastical authorities'.[60]

Spicer highlights that, according to the Council of Trent in 1563 Bishops were charged with the responsibility of instructing the faithful in 'the legitimate use of images' of saints.[61] He notes that in the official account by a Reformed preacher, Jean Leseur, one of the followers, Jacques du Chastel, stated that while he had been present during official destruction, 'he had neither broken nor damaged anything, but that he had reassembled the broken candelabras and other things in order to make a profit'.[62] Spicer suggests that 'emphasis in studies of iconoclasm has tended to focus on the religious dimension to the destruction while the opportunities and instances of looting have generally been downplayed'.[63] Later in the volume, Jens Braarvig's discussion of modern cases of iconoclasm refers to economically motivated instances of 'plundering' cultural objects.[64] However, the concept of cultural heritage is politicised and contested. Therefore, the notion of plunder is complicated by legal and ethical questions regarding property, not to mention the implications on cultural identity at local, national and global levels.[65] Indeed, such questions relating to ownership are worthy of further examination with regards to iconoclasm debates. It is worth referring back to Prusac's chapter and her observation that pagan statues were saved from lime kilns by Christian collectors, rendering them rarities as a result of their action.[66] Such instances of collecting and preservation have a bearing on ideas relating to cultural heritage, as was the case

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[58] Andrew Spicer, 'Iconoclasm on the Frontier: Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1566' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 126.

[59] Spicer, 'Iconoclasm on the Frontier: Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1566', 126.

[60] Matthew Hunter, 'Iconoclasm and consumption; or, household management according to Thomas Cromwell' in *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*, 60.

[61] Spicer, 'Iconoclasm on the Frontier: Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1566', 128.

[62] Spicer, 'Iconoclasm on the Frontier: Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1566', 132.

[63] Spicer, 'Iconoclasm on the Frontier: Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1566', 132.

[64] See Jens Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 154-160.

[65] For discussions relating to cultural heritage see Matthew Rampley, 'Contested Histories: Heritage and/as the Construction of the Past: An Introduction' in Rampley (ed.), *Heritage, Ideology and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe: Contested pasts, contested presents*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012 and André Chastel, 'La notion de patrimoine' in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire: La Nation*, Vol II, Paris: Gallimard, 1986. Regarding plunder, see Margaret Miles, *Art as plunder: the ancient origins of the debate about cultural property*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

[66] Prusac, '*Presence* and the Image Controversies in the Third and Fourth Centuries AD' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 50.

with the nationalisation of property belonging to the Church, *émigrés* and the monarchy during the French Revolution.[67] Thus, iconoclasm is in many instances, as argued by Hunter, a case of 'econoclasm', with economical concern being the reason for the destroying (or saving) of images.[68]

Kristine Kolrud's chapter, 'The Waldensians and the *Piedmontese Easter* of 1655', discusses the pamphlet wars between Protestants and Catholics during the struggle for what she refers to as 'visual dominance' in the Duchy of Savoy.[69] In their pamphlets, the Protestant Waldensians drew attention to 'the destruction and looting of their churches, and the participation and even instigation of friars, monks and priests is emphasised. Church bells also appear to have been of particular interest'.[70] Kolrud notes that bell towers often would have been the only element to give away a Waldensian Church, and were considered symbols of the Waldensian struggle against Catholicism. She suggests that the mention of friars, monks and priests symbolised foreign power, or more specifically, representatives of the papacy who misinformed the duke and claimed to be acting on his behalf.

The previous essays have shown that iconoclasm is often a case of negotiating power relationships. Kolrud suggests that it can be difficult to distinguish between acts and events that should or should not be labelled iconoclasm, but argues that incidents beyond the defacement of figurative art, including the transformation of other artefacts or rituals can all be seen as part of the struggle for visual dominance. She argues that, for the authorities in the Duchy of Savoy these were the visible signs of worship and control of subjects, while for the Waldensians it was equally a matter of religion but, also, of a certain autonomy.[71] Kolrud refers to Martin Warnke's discussion of the 'iconoclasm of the impotent' when considering the impact of the Waldensians' letter writing and use of the press to disseminate an image of their oppression to an international Protestant readership, which gained them the support of foreign powers.[72] As a result, the Waldensians' claims about iconoclasm instigated by Catholics, whether or not the destruction of Protestant churches actually took place, put enormous pressure on the ducal authorities in Savoy.

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[67] See Philippe Bordes and Régis Michel (eds), *Aux Armes et Aux Arts!: les arts de la Révolution, 1789-1799*, Paris: Adam Biro, 1988; Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: art and the interpretation of the past*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, 237-303; Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: art, politics and the origins of the modern museum in eighteenth-century Paris*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; Dominique Poulot, *'Surveiller et s'instruire': la Révolution française et l'intelligence de l'héritage historique*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996; Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution*, 31-39; Alexandra Stara, *The Museum of French Monuments 1795-1816: 'killing art to make history'*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

[68] Hunter, 'Iconoclasm and consumption; or, household management according to Thomas Cromwell', 69.

[69] Kristine Kolrud, 'The Waldensians and the *Piedmontese* Easter of 1655' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, 145.

[70] Kolrud, 'The Waldensians and the *Piedmontese* Easter of 1655', 141.

[71] Kolrud, 'The Waldensians and the *Piedmontese* Easter of 1655', 145.

[72] Kolrud, 'The Waldensians and the *Piedmontese* Easter of 1655', 147; see Martin Warnke (ed.), *Bildersturm: Die Zerstörung des Kunstwerks*, Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1973.

From Kolrud's mid-seventeenth-century case study, the volume moves ahead to the three modern cases explored by Jens Braarvig in the penultimate chapter. Although the historical and disciplinary breadth of this collection of essays is impressive, given the omission of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century examples it is helpful to look to Gamboni's and James Simpson's work to consider the impact that the Enlightenment has had on iconoclasm discourses.[73]. Braarvig's chapter does not examine the modern cases with the same rigour as the preceding historical examples but, instead, returns to questions relating to terminology.[74] While the introduction to the volume pointed to ambiguities surrounding terms like 'iconoclasm' and 'art', Braarvig suggests that there is some elasticity in the definition of 'religion'.[75] Yet, he makes a clear distinction between what he refers to as *secular* and *religious* iconoclasm, with secular examples only being described as 'iconoclasm' because of 'sharing the traits characteristic of *religious* iconoclasm proper'.[76]

Braarvig proposes that a 'general concept of iconoclasm' might include three ideal types, aspects or motivations: economic iconoclasm, ideological iconoclasm and religious iconoclasm'. He notes that the boundaries between these three types are fluid, dependent on the definition of religion. Firstly, he discusses the 'plundering' of Khmer cultural heritage in Angkor Wat and related sites as an example of 'economic iconoclasm'. He arrives at this identification because he considers the intention as solely to pillage but, highlights the political and ideological implications of re-using the objects as displays of imperial power and the sense of 'Western pride in owning parts of an exotic oriental culture'.[77] Secondly, Braarvig refers to the destruction of Tibet's religious heritage during the Cultural Revolution as a case study for 'ideological iconoclasm'.[78] Lastly, he discusses the Taliban destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas as an instance of 'religious iconoclasm'.

Braarvig suggests that 'superficially at least [the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas] was motivated by religion', stating that the act was aimed at an international audience, with a 'strong political message to those who care for religious, historical and cultural heritage'.[79] The introduction to the volume posed the question 'does the recent focus on the rapid distribution of information change our understanding also of the use of media in the past, as well as the relation of the

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[73] Simpson argues that 'the post-Reformation Enlightenment attitude to art is intimately *responsive* to, and shaped by, iconoclasm' in 'Iconoclasm and the Enlightenment Museum', in *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*, 113; see also, James Simpson, *Under the Hammer: Iconoclasm in the Anglo-American Tradition*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010 and Finbarr Barry Flood, 'Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum, *The Art Bulletin*, 84:4, 2002, 641-659 for a discussion of the museum's role in constructing and projecting cultural identity and the nation-state.

[74] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 153.

[75] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 153.

[76] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 153.

[77] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 157.

[78] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 166.

[79] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 167.

local to the international?'[80] Indeed, just as Kolrud demonstrated with regards to the religious struggle between the Waldenisans and the Catholic authorities when the former used the printing press to write their own history of Catholic iconoclasm, the same can be said of the international media in response to the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. While Braarvig highlights the importance of the international media attention surrounding the destruction of the statues, he does not address the role that the media plays in the construction of the iconoclast's motives.[81] In contrast, Finbarr Barry Flood has suggested that 'Taliban iconoclasm can be understood as constituting a form of protest against exclusion from an international community in which the de facto hegemony of the elite nations is obscured by the rhetoric of universal values'.[82] Similarly, Jamal Elias has argued that a consideration of the local press, rather than the international media, in response to the destruction shows this act to be sacrificial within Islamic culture.[83] While, as Braarvig points out, no Afghans are Buddhists and, therefore, the statues no longer represented a site of worship, both Elias and Flood have emphasised that the destruction raised political questions such as the seeming hypocrisy on the part of the Western international community – 'money was offered to the Taliban to save the statues and therefore transform them from artefacts into idols that would be venerated more than human lives'.[84] Flood draws an interesting comparison with the Suffragette cause in Britain, noting a parallel with the reactions to Mary Richardson's attack on Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* at the National Gallery in 1914, when she contrasted Emmeline Pankhurst's actual suffering with the idolising of an inanimate object.[85] While Braarvig attempts to 'describe the phenomenon of iconoclasm in general', his categories could appear to be reductive. After all, his case studies do not fit easily into distinct 'types, aspects or motivations' and, as he points out, 'the boundaries between these three types may be fluid'.[86]

Siri Sande's conclusion of the volume focuses on the acts of destruction, rather than the ideological systems to which both iconoclastic acts and written accounts are bound. For example, as shown by her comments regarding the Black Bloc noted earlier, while she mentions the context of the political protest she nevertheless infers that the objects destroyed should be excluded from contemporary struggles. Sande suggests that revolutionary iconoclasm is often defeated by 'traditions', noting that 'old' images can be 'entrenched in people's

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[80] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction – Whose Iconoclasm?', 8.

[81] See, for example, Stacy Boldrick's entry for 'Carl Andre's Equivalent VIII' in Boldrick and Tabitha Barber (eds), *Art under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm*, Exhibition catalogue, Tate Britain, London: Tate, 2013, 136-137. Boldrick refers to the verbal attacks in the British press regarding Tate's acquisition of the sculpture that preceded the physical attack. See, also, Lena Mohamed's essay 'Suffragettes: the political value of iconoclastic acts', 114-126 in the same exhibition catalogue for newspaper reports on Mary Richardson's slashing of Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus*.

[82] Flood, 'Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum', 653.

[83] Jamal Elias, 'The Taliban, Bamiyan, and Revisionist Iconoclasm' in *Striking Images, Iconoclasm Past and Present*, 148.

[84] Elias, 'The Taliban, Bamiyan, and Revisionist Iconoclasm', 154.

[85] Flood, 'Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum', 653.

[86] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 153-154, 169.

memories'.[87] As the volume shows, memory is a crucial factor in image debates, however, this does not explain the 'return' of earlier traditions. For example, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's collection of essays *The Invention of Tradition* alludes to the legitimisation of claims to power in the present by invoking notions of heritage.[88] This power struggle exists with regards to aspects of the past that are intentionally erased, re-written or resurrected, which is, of course, pertinent to discussions regarding iconoclasm.

As noted in its introduction, this volume 'attempts to shed new light on the term [iconoclasm] and related expressions, as well as how our understanding of the definition may change in accordance with contemporary events'.[89] Indeed, Braarvig's chapter considers how the term can be employed in relation to contemporary examples of, in his words, 'the destruction of *religious* objects and heritage, and connected to the religious beliefs and behaviours of *one* of the parties of the conflict'.[90] In this way, the volume presents the evolution of iconoclasm from attacks on statues believed to have demonic presence to more nuanced written discourses relating to image destruction. Yet, rather than crossing the boundaries between cultures and periods, as has been explored in publications such as *Iconoclash* and James Noyes's recent book *The Politics of Iconoclasm: Religion, Violence and Culture,* this volume perhaps lacks the interdisciplinary cohesion between chapters that could have been addressed in introductory and concluding chapters.[91] Rather than reassessing the terminology associated with iconoclasm, as shaped by a discussion of supposed motives, the volume could have situated the twentieth-century case studies in relation to the preceding chapters by further exploring themes such as memory and power, as well as the reliability of material and written evidence, particularly in the digital age of mass media. Nevertheless, *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity* is accessible to a wide range of academic backgrounds and its broad scope invites readers to make critical comparisons. The publication complements existing literature and its focus on pre-Reformation case studies offers a particularly valuable contribution to the expanding historiography of iconoclasm.

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[87] Sande, 'Conclusion: Iconoclasm in History and Present-day Use of Images', 185.

[88] See Rampley, 'Contested Histories: Heritage and/as the Construction of the Past: An Introduction', 3.

[89] Kolrud and Prusac, 'Introduction – Whose Iconoclasm?', 9.

[90] Braarvig, 'Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases', 153.

[91] James Noyes provides a useful approach in stating that 'iconoclasm has been a formative feature of both Christian and Islamic history, crossing the boundaries of religion, culture and politics'. His examination of those boundaries, rather than motives, allows for a balanced cross-cultural discussion of the politics of iconoclasm from the Reformation to the present day in *The Politics of Iconoclasm: Religion, Violence and Culture,* London: I.B. Tauris, 2013.

Iconoclasms Past and Present (eds Stacy Boldrick, Leslie Brubaker and Richard Clay, Ashgate, 2013).

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